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# Introduction to Comparative Politics

## POLI 2053

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Office Hours: M 11:30-12:30  
or by appointment

Louisiana State University  
Fall 2017  
Section 002  
229 Tureaud Hall  
Tu Thur 4:30pm-5:50pm

### **Course Overview**

#### *Course Description*

This course provides a university-level introduction to comparative politics by addressing broad themes related to domestic politics of countries around the world, including modern state formation, variation in regime type, political functions and their effects, as well as other central topics & concerns of the sub-field. Particular attention will be given toward theories relating to democratic transitions, autocratic regimes, political violence and collective action. While comparative politics covers a wide-ranging area of research, this course is designed to provide the student with a firm grasp and understanding of the fundamental issues, while also highlighting some of the emerging areas of current research, methods, and modes of thinking. Whereas thematic topics of discourse will be utilized for primary instruction, detailed discussion of individual countries and case studies will serve to supplement student learning.

#### *LSU Learning Competency Statement for the Social Sciences*

LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the informing factors of global interdependence, including economic forces, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic difference.

### **Required Reading**

1) The textbook listed below is required for this course. It can be found at university and area bookstores. The textbook is also available online for purchase at various online bookstores and websites.

Newton, Kenneth and Jan W. van Deth (2016). Foundations of Comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern World, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Cambridge University Press

2) Several topics and class meetings for this course will require additional readings or notes from various academic sources selected by the instructor. These materials are listed by date on the Topics and Readings Schedule, and will be uploaded to the course Moodle site in .pdf format for download. It is the student's responsibility to access and review the appropriate materials for the assigned class period. If the documents are unavailable or cannot be accessed for any reason, inform the instructor so that technical issues can be corrected/modified.

3) Students will also be required to keep up-to-date with current events and news (via selected news articles), as it pertains to topics in comparative politics and political events/activities in countries around the world. News articles will be selected by the instructor and posted to the course Moodle site throughout the semester for review by students. These news articles qualify as assigned reading, as content from the articles will form the basis for quiz material. Students may wish to supplement this material with reading additional news articles on their own, in order to become more familiar with topics in comparative politics. Recommended traditional media sources for optional supplemental reading include The New York Times, The Washington Post, BBC World News, The Times of London, and The Economist, among others.

## **Graded Requirements**

### *Participation*

Participation is key to student learning and success in this course. Participation scores will be based on regular attendance in class, involvement in student discussion, and evidence of student contribution and willingness to engage in academic content. One-half of the participation grade will be derived from attendance, with the remaining one-half being derived from involvement and contribution to class discussion. Attendance and subsequent marking of absences will be noted for each class meeting. More than three unexcused absences (per University definition) will result in a loss of participation points at 1% of participation grade for every unexcused absence following the first three (see Course Policies for further detail on why participation is necessary).

### *Quizzes (4)*

Students will take four in-class quizzes on the dates noted by instructor. As noted above, material for quizzes will be based on content from news articles provided by the instructor, as it relates to comparative politics and relevant subject matter. Quizzes will be multiple-choice. Missed quizzes cannot be made-up and will result in a score of zero. You do not need a scantron for quizzes.

### *Exams (3)*

#### -Take-home Exam

This exam is designed to test students' ability to comprehend and analyze content from the first part of the course. The Take-home Exam is to be completed outside of class, with reference to course materials (lecture notes and readings). However, the Take-home Exam must be completed independently from other students, and must be the students' own work. The format for this exam will be short answer and essay questions. Students will have one week to complete the Take-home Exam. This exam is due at the start of class (typed & stapled hard-copy) on **September 14, 2017**. Late exam submissions will be accepted at a penalty of one letter grade per day that it is late.

#### -Midterm Exam

This exam is cumulative in the respect that it will test for content covered from the beginning of the course. The format for this exam will be multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. The Midterm Exam will be administered in-class on **October 10, 2017**. You will need a small scantron, a pencil and a large bluebook for this exam. A pen is recommended for writing in bluebooks.

#### -Final Exam

This exam is not cumulative, and will test for content covered after the Midterm Exam. The

format for this exam will be multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. The Final Exam will be administered on **December 9, 2017 (Saturday) from 7:30am-9:30am**. The location for the Final Exam will be the normal classroom. You will need a small scantron, a pencil and a large bluebook for this exam. A pen is recommended for writing in bluebooks. This exam date/time is set by the University and cannot be moved, modified, or made-up.

### **Grading Policies and Exam/Quiz Schedule**

#### *Missed Exams and Make-ups*

Allowance for the excusing of missed class and make-ups of missed exams will be in accordance with University policy, which outlines valid reasons for such occurrences. Valid reasons include, but are not limited to, serious illness, death in the immediate family, religious observances, and scheduled trips for academic purposes. Proper documentation is required for any excused absence or missed examination period. If possible, let the instructor know before missing class. If you miss an exam, contact the instructor immediately so that the situation can be evaluated and arrangements made, if applicable. Note that the Final Exam schedule is set by the University and cannot be amended, meaning that make-ups are not allowed for this exam. For complete information on the University's attendance and exam make-up policy, see the Regulations section of the LSU Catalog.

#### *General Grading Policy*

Grades are based on the academic performance of the student, as it pertains to assigned coursework and examinations, and in accordance to the grading scale, weighting, and policies listed in this syllabus. Any questions or concerns about graded work are welcome, and should be directed toward the instructor in-person during office hours or by appointment.

#### *Composition of Course Grade*

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Percentage of Grade</b>
Participation	10%
Quizzes (4 x 5%)	20%
Take-home Exam	20%
Mid-term Exam	25%
Final Exam	25%

#### *Grading Schedule*

<u>Schedule of Quizzes/Exams</u>	<u>Date</u>
Quiz #1	August 31
Take-Home Exam	September 14
Quiz #2	September 28
Midterm Exam	October 10
Quiz #3	October 26
Quiz #4	November 16
Final Exam	December 9 (Sat), 7:30am-9:30am

### *Grading Scale*

Grading for this course will be consistent with the plus/minus grading scale adopted by the University, and as outlined in the LSU General Catalog.

Letter grade		Score			
A+	100-97	A	96-94	A-	93-90
B+	89-87	B	86-84	B-	83-80
C+	79-77	C	76-74	C-	73-70
D+	69-67	D	66-64	D-	63-60
F	<60				

### **Course Policies**

#### *Note on Participation and Preparation*

This course is structured to facilitate student learning through lecture, discussion and at-home assigned reading. Students are expected to come to class on-time, prepared and ready to engage in material comprehension, as well as ready to participate in classroom discussions concerning the week's topics. This means that assigned readings should be completed before each class meeting. Furthermore, exams will consist of material taken from lectures, assigned readings, and any supplemental materials presented in class. Therefore, it is imperative that class is attended on a regular and consistent basis.

#### *Special Accommodations*

LSU is committed to providing adequate accommodations to all students with documented and approved disabilities. As per University policy, special accommodations approved by LSU Disability Services will be incorporated into individual student learning, and will remain confidential. Eligible students should contact Disability Services (115 Johnson Hall, 225-578-5919), so that proper documentation can be processed. Eligible students should also notify the instructor as soon as possible.

#### *General Statement on Academic Integrity*

Louisiana State University adopted the Commitment to Community in 1995 to set forth guidelines for student behavior both inside and outside of the classroom. The Commitment to Community charges students to maintain high standards of academic and personal integrity. All students are expected to read and be familiar with the LSU Code of Student Conduct and Commitment to Community, found online at [www.lsu.edu/saa](http://www.lsu.edu/saa). It is your responsibility as a student at LSU to know and understand the academic standards for our community.

Students who are suspected of violating the Code of Conduct will be referred to the Office of Student Advocacy and Accountability. For undergraduate students, a first academic violation could result in a zero grade on the assignment or failing the class and disciplinary probation until graduation. For a second academic violation, the result could be suspension from LSU. For graduate students, suspension is the appropriate outcome for the first offense.

### *Plagiarism*

It is the student's responsibility to refrain from plagiarizing the academic property of others and to utilize appropriate citation method for all coursework. For this course, it is recommended that you use the APSA citation style. Ignorance of the citation method is not an excuse for academic misconduct. Remember there is a difference between paraphrasing and quoting and how to properly cite each respectively.

### *Technology Use*

Laptop use in class for note-taking and research purposes is contingently permitted. Cell phone use is not allowed and should be avoided. Continued abuse of technology privileges may result in punitive adjustments to a student's participation grade. Likewise, use of other technological devices is prohibited, unless approved by the instructor. Students may not record lectures or class discussions using any type of electronic device. Concerns related to this or any policy listed above should be discussed with the instructor, as amicable modifications will be based on genuine needs of the student, as it relates to learning in a university environment.

### *Communication and Conduct*

All communication with the instructor, as well as written essays/test answers and take-home tests should be written using formal, standard language. In other words, do not use "texting" language or other abbreviated jargon to communicate your thoughts and ideas for this class. Additionally, all students are required to conduct themselves appropriately at all times, and in a professional manner. This means it is necessary for you to treat others with respect and courtesy. Any behavior not in accordance with these guidelines will not be tolerated, and will be reported to the LSU Office for the Dean of Students.

### *General Statements*

If in doubt about any policy, requirement, or content-related matter, please contact the instructor. Also, it would greatly benefit students to read and become familiar with the LSU General Catalog. This catalog contains the official policies and regulations of the University. I am more than willing to provide additional information or explanation to questions related to course content posed by students. Questions or concerns may be addressed in-class, through email, in-person during office hours, or by appointment. I will respond to emails within a timely manner, but allow up to 24 hours for responses. I am also available to meet before/after class to discuss questions or concerns.

This course covers a large amount of varied material related to comparative politics including political institutions, economics, historical evolution of regimes, and cultural & societal aspects domestic politics. Therefore, students should always be looking for the connections between specific topics and "the big picture." Details are important, but so are broad generalizations and the ability to conceive how things relate to one another. Generally, this concerns how does "x" influence "y"? And how does this change if the variables are modified? Why is this topic relevant to politics and the broader world? Specific examples include how does government type and variation in elections systems affect representation and accountability to the citizens of a state? What else could be having an effect? Is one type of government more accountable in providing representation than another? What are the potential drawbacks (excluding value judgments) of a specific form of government? Thinking about comparative politics issues in this context will help students better prepare themselves for exams.

The instructor reserves the right to amend any of the policies, requirements, or statements pertaining to this course/syllabus. The Topics & Readings Schedule is listed as an appendix at the back of this syllabus. This schedule outlines the dates of class meetings, as well as corresponding topics of discussion and assigned readings. Students should note that this schedule is tentative, and has been designed to be modified, (if needed) as the course progresses, and as the instructor sees fit. Other considerations for schedule modification include unexpected events such as emergencies, abrupt cancellation of class, etc. Any changes to the course schedule will be stated in class, with as much advance notice as reasonably possible.

Have a great semester and Geaux Tigers.

>>>TURN PAGE FOR **TOPICS AND ASSIGNED READINGS SCHEDULE**>>>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings / Notes</b>
Aug 22	Course Introduction	Syllabus
Aug 24	Comparative Politics: An Introduction The Modern State ( <i>start</i> )	Lim 2016, pp. 1-11 & 17-22 Textbook, Chapter 1
Aug 29	The Modern State ( <i>finish</i> ) Regime Types	Textbook, Chapter 1 cont. Siaroff 2005, Chapter 3
Aug 31	States and Democracy	Textbook, Chapter 2 <b>Quiz #1</b>
Sept 5	Democratic Change / Persistence	Textbook, Chapter 3
Sept 7	Constitutions	Textbook, Chapter 4 <i>Take-Home Exam distributed</i>
Sept 12	Presidential & Parliamentary Systems	Textbook, Chapter 5
Sept 14	Autocracies: Varieties of Autocratic Rule	Siaroff 2005, Chapter 8 <b>Take-Home Exam Due</b>
Sept 19	Policy Making: Consensus & Majoritarian	Textbook, Chapter 7
Sept 21	Voters & Electoral Systems	Textbook, Chapter 12
Sept 26	Voters & Electoral Systems ( <i>finish</i> ) Political Parties and Party Systems	Textbook, Chapter 12 cont. Textbook, Chapter 13
Sept 28	Representation and Accountability	Przeworski, Stokes & Manin <b>Quiz #2</b>
Oct 3	Comparative Political Economy	Plümpert 2009
Oct 5	Catch-up & Review	-
Oct 10	Examination Period	<b>Midterm Exam</b>
Oct 12	Autocracies: Persistence in Control in Authoritarianism	O'Neil 2004
Oct 17	Autocracies & Institutions: Power Sharing Defense and Security ( <i>start</i> )	Svolik, Chapter 4 Newman & Van Deth 2006
Oct 19	*No Class* Fall Break	-

Oct 24	Defense and Security (finish) Political Violence and Civil War	Newman & Van Deth 2006 Kalyvas 2007
Oct 26	Political Violence and Civil War: Case Study Revolution and Repression	McAuley 2003 Goldstone 2009 <b>Quiz #3</b>
Oct 31	The Bureaucracy Pressure Groups	Textbook, Chapter 8 Textbook, Chapter 10 (pp. 205-225)
Nov 2	The Media	Textbook, Chapter 11
Nov 7	Collective Action & Social Movements Welfare and Redistribution (start)	Boudreau & Meyer 2009 Textbk., Ch. 16 (pp. 342-355)
Nov 9	Welfare and Redistribution (finish) Political Culture and Corruption	Textbk., Ch. 16 (pp. 342-355) Heywood 2009
Nov 14	Less Industrialized States Failed States	Wood 2008 Rotberg 2013
Nov 16	Anocracies: Select Case Studies	Levitsky & Way 2015, pp. 1-22 <b>Quiz #4</b>
Nov 21	Communism: A Look Back	'1989 Essay'
Nov 23	*No Class* Thanksgiving	-
Nov 28	Looking Toward the Future	Textbook, Chapter 17
Nov 30	Catch-up / Final Exam Review	-
Dec 9 (Sat)	Examination Period	<b>Final Exam</b> <b>7:30am – 9:30am</b>