INTRODUCTION

This course is designed to provide a comprehensive introduction to the comparative study of politics in political systems throughout the world. In one sense, comparative politics involves the study of politics and its social and economic contexts within individual political systems (usually nation states). Generally, such an approach involves at least implicit – often explicit – comparison of the nation under study to one’s own country or other nations. Indeed, we will focus in some detail on politics in eight diverse nations, comparing them to similar and different sets of countries. The nations are the United Kingdom, France, Germany, the Russia Federation, Japan, China, Nigeria, Mexico. We will occasionally discuss — for comparative purposes — other nations or sets of nations (e.g., Scandinavia, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, post-communist Eastern Europe).

In a second sense, comparative politics — as the term suggests — involves the systematic comparison of politics across a range of nations. As such, it provides a powerful technique for understanding the causes and effects of various aspects of politics across a large set of nations or even the entire globe. In this context, we will compare political systems, their public policies and their political and economic performance within and across the developed capitalist democracies, recently democratized post-communist polities, and developing nations.

Throughout the course, we will address a number of substantive questions that are extremely important for the course of world politics today; four such questions stand out. First, we will focus on the puzzle of why and how some nations become stable democracies. We will take a historical excursion (i.e., by studying the development of democracy from the 18th to early 20th century in Europe) as well as examine the contemporary transitions to democracy in post-communist and post-authoritarian nations. Second, we will explore in the developing, transitional, and advanced countries the variety of ways governments confront the challenge of managing the national economy. Third, and related to the question of economic management, we will focus on how “globalization” affects domestic politics. In this area, we will address the political economic impacts of international integration on a regional scale (e.g., European integration) and on a global scale (e.g., the world-wide integration of national economies through the development of global markets for goods, services, and money). Fourth, in the context of both country studies and comparative material, we will examine the politics of collective identity, especially the origins, character, and impacts of ethno-nationalism, and how governments have dealt with this problem. (We will also simultaneously stress throughout the course the economic origins and effects of political conflict, and the institutions societies establish to mitigate that conflict, as well as the interrelationships between economic and socio-cultural cleavages such as ethno-nationalism.)
In examining these and other central questions of comparative politics, we will draw upon three major approaches to political analysis. These include political economy — an emphasis on the ways politics and economics interact and shape each other, political culture — a stress on the ways in which citizens’ values, attitudes, and beliefs determine political behavior, and institutionalism — the emphasis on the importance of how “rules of the game” (e.g., constitutions) shape politics. Generally, this course covers the basic problems and principles and the major themes, theories, and concepts of political science in the subfield of comparative politics.

As part of the Core of Common Studies at Marquette, this course will contribute to students’ attainment of the three learning objectives associated with the Social and Behavioral Sciences portion of the Core. These read: “At the completion of core studies, the student will be able to (1) Understand central concepts, theories, and methods used to explain individual and social behavior in one of the social and cultural disciplines. (2) Use knowledge of social scientific methods to analyze examples of individual and social behavior. (3) Evaluate the applicability of social scientific knowledge for understanding individual and social behavior in particular contexts.

BOOKS

Required course reading will come from the two books listed below. The books are available for purchase at the Book Marq. This material will be supplemented with short class handout readings provided by the instructor.


Class Handout Readings (Short articles, tables/graphs of political data, and so forth are made available on a regular basis)

GRADING

Your grade will be based on four exams — two hourly exams, a midterm, and a non-cumulative final — and a short paper. (More about the paper in the course overview session and via a handout.) The timing of the exams is given below with the schedule of reading assignments. The exams and paper are weighted as follows to compute your final grade:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam/Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hourly Exam I</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hourly Exam II</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Students are expected to attend each session with allowances for justified absences (e.g., sickness, family commitments). Completion of the readings before class and participation in class discussion are also expected. Never hesitate to ask a question or raise what you believe to be an important point.

TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

All readings are required except those denoted by the term, "recommended." In addition, students should read a daily newspaper with good coverage of world politics (e.g., Wall Street Journal for business students, New York Times for others); a perusal of a weekly news magazine with a good coverage of politics around the globe is also useful (e.g., The Economist)

Part I: Introduction

January 13: Introduction to Comparative Politics
- syllabus distribution, introductory comments, course overview

January 15: An Overview of the World’s Political Systems and How to Study Them
- Chapter 1, “An Introduction to Comparative Politics” in Palmer
- Article 37, Thomas Carothers, “Democracy’s Sobering State” in CP:AE

Some additional recommended intro readings:
- Article 1, Laza Kekic, “The Economist Intelligence Unit’s Index of Democracy,” CP:AE
- Article 2, “The Failed States Index,” CP:AE

Part II: Developed Democracies

January 20, 22, 27: British Politics
- Chapter 2, “Britian” in Kesselman et al
- Article 9, Donley Studlar, “British Constitutional Change,” in CP:AE
- Article 11, Jane Perlez, “Muslim’s Veils Test Limits of British Tolerance” in CP:AE

January 29, February 3, 5: French Politics
- Chapter 3, “France” in Kesselman et al
- Article 13, Oliver Roy, “Liberté, Égalité, and Laïcité,” in CP:AE
February 10: **First Hourly Exam**

February 12, 17, 19: Politics in Germany

- Chapter 4, “Germany”
- Article 14, Jackson Janes and Stephen Szabo, “Angela Merkel’s Germany,” *CP:AE*
- Article 15, “Germans Split over a Mosque and the Role of Islam,” *CP:AE*

February 24: An Overview of the European Union

- handout reading: “The EU”
- Articles 26-28, in *CP:AE*

February 26: Europe versus America?

- Article 24, Timothy Garton Ash, “The Great Divide,” *CP:AE*

March 3: **Midterm Exam** (AKA Hourly Exam II)

March 5, 17, 19: Japanese Politics

- Ch. 5, “Japan” in Kessleman et al
- Article 17, “Come Together: How to Avoid a Twisted Diet, in *CP:AE*

**Part III: Post-Communism Systems**

March 24, 26, 31: The Former Soviet Union and the Russian Federation

- Ch. 8, “Russia” in Kesselman et al
- Article 29, “The Making of a Neo-KGB State,” *CP:AE*
- Article 30, Robert Skidelsky, “Putin’s Patrimony,” *CP:AE*

April 2: **Third Hourly Exam**

April 7, 9, 14: Change and Continuity in Chinese Politics

- Ch. 13, “China,” in Kesselman et al
- Article 31, Doug Guthrie, “China: The Quiet Revolution,” *CP:AE*
- Article 32, Joseph Kahn, “In China, Talk of Democracy is Just That,” *CP:AE*
- Article 33, Don Lee, “China to Join Top 3 Economies,” *CP:AE*
Part IV: Political and Economic Development

April 16, 21, 23, 28, 30: Nigerian Politics, Mexican Politics and Democratization and Modernization in the Developing World

- Ch. 112, “Nigeria” in Kesselman et al
- Article 35, Will Africa Ever Get It Right?” CP:AE
- Article 36, Lydia Polgreen, “Africa’s Crises of Democracy,” CP:AE

- Ch. 10, “Mexico” in Kesselman et al
- Article 34, “How Did We Get Here? Mexican Democracy After the 2006 Elections,” CP:AE

Short Papers Due: May 1

Wednesday, May 6 (8-10): FINAL EXAM (AKA last hourly exam)