

POSC 2401: COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Fall 2009-2010

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Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00-5:00; Thursday; 11:00-12:00; 2:00-3:50

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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 integration on a regional and a global scale (e.g., the integration of national economies through the development of international 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 primarily 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.

Mark Kesselman *et al*, *Introduction to Comparative Politics: Political Challenges, Changing Agendas* (5nd Ed). Cengage, 2009.

Comparative Politics: Annual Editions 2009/10 (27th Ed.). McGraw-Hill, 2009. (O. Fiona Yap, ed.) (hereafter, *CP:AE*)

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:

Hourly Exam I	20%	Hourly Exam II	20%
Midterm Exam	20%	Final Exam	20%
Paper	20%		

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 (for instance, *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

Sept. 1: Introduction to Comparative Politics

- syllabus distribution, introductory comments, course overview

Sept. 3: Reading Day - Prof at Annual Meeting of American Political Science Assn. in Toronto

- begin careful read of Chapter 1, "Introducing Comparative Politics" in Kessleman

Sept 8: An Overview of the World's Political Systems and How to Study Them

- finish Chapter 1, "Introducing Comparative Politics" in Kessleman
- Article 5, Ottaway, "Facing the Challenge of Semi-Authoritarian States," *CP:AE*

(Recommended: Some abstract but useful reflections on what democracies are, and are not: Article 1, Karl and Schmitter, "What Democracy Is... and Is Not," *CP:AE*; Article 8, Dahl, "What Political Institutions Does Large-Scale Democracy Require?" *CP:AE*

Part II: Consolidated Democracies

September 10, 15, & 17: British Politics in Comparative Perspective

Sept 10: Political and Economic Development of the British State

- pp. 47-70 in Chapter 2, "Britian" in Kesselman *et al*

Sept. 15: Political Institutions and Policy Making in Britain

- pp. 70-82 in Chapter 2, "Britian" in Kesselman *et al*
- Article 26, *The Economist*, "Judicial Review: The Gavel and the Robe," *CP:AE*

Sept 17: The Evolution and Contemporary Structure of Politics in Britain: Parties, Groups and the Character of Democratic Politics and Policy in the UK.

- pp. 82 to end in Chapter 2, "Britian" in Kesselman *et al*
- Article 14, Vernon Bogdanor, "The Historic Legacy of Tony Blair," in *CP:AE*

Sept. 22, 29, and October 1: French Politics

Sept. 22: Political and Economic Development in France
- pp. 99-121 in Chapter 3, "France" in Kesselman *et al*

Sept. 24: **First Hourly Exam**

Sept. 29/Oct. 1: Political Institutions, Politics and Policy in France
- pp. 121 to end in Chapter 3, "France" in Kesselman *et al*
- Article 36, Louis Uchitelle, "Job Security, Too, May Have a Happy Medium," *CP:AE*

Oct. 6, 8, 13: Politics in Germany

- Chapter 4, "Germany" in Kesselman *et al*
- Article 16, Jackson Janes and Stephen Szabo, "Angela Merkel's Germany," *CP:AE*

Oct. 15, 27 & 29: Politics in Japan

Oct. 15: Political and Economic Development in Japan
- pp. 211-234 in Chapter 5, "Japan," in Kesselman *et al*

Oct. 20: **Midterm Exam** (AKA Hourly Exam II)

Oct. 22: Midterm Break Days

Oct. 27 & 29: Political Institutions, Politics, and Policy in Japan

- pp. 234 to end, Ch. 5, "Japan" in Kessleman *et al*
- Article 20, Norimitzu Onishi, "Japan's Upper House Censures Prime Minister," *CP:AE*
- Article 35, *The Economist*, "Japanese Spirit, Western Things" in *CP:AE*

Part III: Post-Communism (Transitional) Systems

Nov. 3, 5, and 10: The Former Soviet Union and the Russian Federation

- Ch. 11, "Russia" in Kesselman *et al*
- Article 29, "The Making of a Neo-KGB State," *CP:AE*
- Article 15, Pierre Hassner, "Russia's Tranistion to a Autocracy," *CP:AE*

Nov 12: **Third Hourly Exam**

Nov. 17, 19, 24: Change and Continuity in Chinese Politics

- Ch. 13, "China," in Kesselman *et al*
- Article 33, Doug Guthrie, "China: The Quiet Revolution," *CP:AE*
- Article 37, Joseph Kahn, "Beijing Censors Taken to Task in Party Circles," *CP:AE*

Nov. 26: Thanksgiving

Part IV: Political and Economic Development

Dec. 1, 3, 8, 10: Nigerian Politics and Democratization and Modernization in the Developing World (with comparisons to Mexico and Latin America)

- Ch. 8, "Nigeria" in Kesselman *et al*
- Ch. 10, "Mexico" in Kesselman *et al*
- Article 18, Chappell Lawson, "How Did We Get Here? Mexican Democracy After the 2006 Elections," *CP:AE*

Short Papers Due: December 10

Friday Dec. 18 : FINAL EXAM (AKA last hourly exam)