

Comparative Politics/PoSc 040
Marquette University
Spring 2006

Prof. Barrett McCormick/WW413

TTh 12:30-2;W1-4

Tel: x86842/E-mail: barrett.mccormick@mu.edu

The Overall Idea

This course is about how political power is organized and used in different societies. We will consider the impact of economic markets, struggles over ethnic and religious identities, the costs and benefits of different forms of dictatorship, and the prospects for using democracy to make power more reasonable. Students will work to improve their ability to think, read, write, and speak critically in the tradition of liberal arts. By the end of the course, students will have a basic understanding of world politics and their own role in world politics.

Assessment

1. Quizzes (30%) – Administered in class some weeks. Each quiz will have two or more short answer questions covering reading assignments and lectures. (Objectives 1 and 2)
2. Papers (20% each) – No more than 5 pages. Students will write papers for three of the four country units. A list of potential topics will be distributed for each unit. Papers will make use of the concepts and methods discussed in the first unit. Some additional reading is strongly recommended. More information on format and expectations will be available in class. Due within a week of the conclusion of the respective unit. (Objectives 1-5)
3. Class participation (10%) – Students are expected to attend regularly and to be prepared to discuss the readings, questions asked in lectures, and current events. Following current events is necessary for high marks. (Objectives 3 & 4)

Miscellaneous

Late assignments will be penalized unless the circumstances are truly tragic. Leniency may be shown if problems are discussed in advance. Failure to attend may be sanctioned as specified by university policy. Academic dishonesty will receive the harshest sanctions allowed by university policy. Students who would like to improve their grade may do extra assignments or revise their papers, but must first consult with the instructor. Students seeking honors credit will be required to complete additional assignments. Students are required to send the professor their email address during the first week of the semester.

Readings

Five books (Bhagwati, *In Defense of Globalization*; Ginsborg, *Silvio Berlusconi*; Preston and Dillion, *Opening Mexico*; and Satrapi, *Persepolis 1 & 2* will be available at the bookstore. The Friedman reading will be on electronic reserve. The UNDP, Huntington and Amy readings are available online. An online version of this syllabus with links to online readings is available at <http://www.marquette.edu/polisci/Syllabi/040McCormick.pdf>.

Schedule

- I. January 17 – February 2, Concepts and methods in comparative politics, including the state, institutions, political culture and identities, political economy, and rational choice

[Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations" *Foreign Affairs*. Summer 1993, v72, n3, p22\(28\)](#)

Thomas L. Friedman, *The World Is Flat* (NY: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2005) 309-36.

[UN Development Project, "Governing Systems and Executive-Legislative Relations"](#)

- II. February 7 – 23, Political Economy and Possibilities

Jagdish Bhagwati, *In Defense of Globalization* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2004).

- III. February 28 – March 23, Democracy I: Italy

[Douglas J. Amy, "What are Voting Systems and Why are They Important?"](#)
[Douglas J. Amy, "How Proportional Representation Elections Work"](#).

Paul Ginsborg, *Silvio Berlusconi: Television, Power, and Patrimony* (London: Verso, 2004).

- IV. March 28 – April 11, Democracy II: Mexico

Julia Preston and Samuel Dillion, *Opening Mexico: The Making of a Democracy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004).

- V. April 18 – May 4, Religion and Culture: Iran

Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2003).

Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis 2* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2004).

Final Papers Due: Thursday, May 11 at 10 am.

Course Objectives

1. Learn how to recognize and use basic concepts, methods, and theories of comparative politics.
2. Learn how different concepts and theories are related to each other and how they produce different understandings and entail different values.
3. Learn about current events and contemporary trends in world politics.
4. Improve critical thinking and oral and written communications skills.
5. Develop your own understanding of how world politics could and should work and appreciate the differences between your views and others'.

Important Statement

This course covers the basic problems and principles and the major themes, theories, and concepts of political science in the subfield of comparative politics.