

## **POSC 2401: COMPARATIVE POLITICS**

Fall 2013-2014

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Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday; 12:45 - 3:45

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### **INTRODUCTION**

This course is designed to provide a comprehensive introduction to the comparative study of politics throughout the world. In one sense, comparative politics involves the systematic study of politics across a range of nations. As such, it provides a powerful technique for understanding the causes and effects of political processes and institutions across subsets of nations or even the globe. In this context, we will compare features of 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.

In a second sense, comparative politics involves the in-depth 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. Typically, scholars and students apply broad theories of comparative politics to better understand a country of interest; they may also use the in-depth country study to develop or assess general theories of politics. 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).

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 18<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Europe) as well as examine the contemporary transitions to democracy in post-communist and post-authoritarian nations. Second, we will focus on **how domestic political institutions – the “rules of game” embodied in formal constitutions as well as established practice – fundamentally shape politics**. Specifically, we will examine the crucial importance to a nation’s politics of its electoral rules, the concentration of authority over public policy (for instance, unitary versus federal political systems), and other core dimensions of the architecture of government.

Third, in the context of both country studies and comparative material, we will examine **the origins, character, and impacts on contemporary politics of enduring political cleavages**, and how political systems have managed problems of conflict across class, religious, ethno/racial, and other cleavage dimensions. Finally, we will explore in the developing, transitional, and advanced countries the variety of **ways governments confront the challenge of managing the economy**. In these explorations, we will place some emphasis on the problems of promoting economic growth and development as well as fostering greater socioeconomic

equality in an increasingly globalized world. 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* (6<sup>nd</sup> Ed). Cengage, 2013.

*Comparative Politics: Annual Editions 2013/14* (31<sup>th</sup> Ed.). McGraw-Hill, 2013. (O. Fiona Yap, ed.) (hereafter, *CP:AE*)

Class “Handout Readings” (In addition to these short handout readings, tables and graphs of supplemental political data are made available - electronically or via hard copy - 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 (for instance, *The Economist*)

**Part I: Introduction**

August 27: Introduction to Comparative Politics

- syllabus distribution, introductory comments, course overview

August 29: Special Session (Details in class on August 28)

- begin readings for September 3 and 5

September 3 and 5: An Overview of the World’s Political Systems and How to Study Them

- Chapter 1, “Introducing Comparative Politics” in Kessleman
- Article 39, Schedler, “Authoritarianism’s Last Line of Defense,” *CP:AE*
- Article 10, Gause, “Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring: the Myth of Authoritarian Stability,” *CP:AE*
- Recommended:
  - Some useful reflections on democracy: Article 8, Schmitter and Karl, “What Democracy Is...,” *CP:AE*; Article 13 Almond, “Capitalism and Democracy,” *CP:AE*; Article 12, Dalton et al, “Advanced Democracies ..., *CP:AE*.)

**Part II: Consolidated Democracies**

September 10, 12, 17: British Politics in Comparative Perspective

Sept. 10: Political and Economic Development of the British State

- pp. 46-64 in Chapter 2, “Britain” in Kesselman *et al*
- Handout Reading: “On the Causes of Democratization”

Sept. 12: Political Institutions and Policy Making in Britain

- pp. 65-76 in Chapter 2, “Britian” in Kesselman *et al*

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. 76 to end (and review 58-64) in Chapter 2, “Britain” in Kesselman *et al*
- Article 36, Weisberg, “What Caused the Financial Crises?” *CP:AE* (Did free market-oriented policies of Reagan-Bush, Thatcher-Major, and similar governments in the 1980s to early 2000s cause the post-2007 global financial crisis?)

Sept 19, 26, Oct. 1 : French Politics

Sept. 19: Political and Economic Development in France  
- pp. 99-121 in Chapter 3, “France” in Kesselman *et al*

Sept. 24: **First Hourly Exam**

Sept. 26 & Oct. 1: Political Institutions, Politics and Policy in France  
- pp. 111 to end in Chapter 3, “France” in Kesselman *et al*  
- Handout Reading: “New Politics Parties of Postindustrial Societies”  
- Article 26, Jan Erik, “The Famous Dutch (In)Tolerance,” *CP:AE* (good overview of the Dutch far right which we can use to comparatively expand our analysis of the French National Front)

October 3, 8 & 10: Politics in Germany

- Chapter 4, “Germany” in Kesselman *et al*  
- Handout reading: “Corporatism as a System of Interest Representation: Germany and the Nordic Model Compared.”  
- Recommended:  
Pippa Norris, “The Impact of Electoral Reform on Women’s Representation”  
*CP:AE*. This is a further exploration of character/impacts of electoral systems.

October 15: **Midterm Exam** (AKA Hourly Exam II)

October 17: Fall Break!

October 22, 24, & 29: Politics in Japan

- Chapter 5, “Japan,” in Kesselman *et al*  
- Handout Reading: The State-Led Model of Development: Japan as the Prototype.

### **Part III: Post-Communism (Transitional) Systems**

October 31, November 5, 7: The Former Soviet Union and the Russian Federation

- Ch. 8, “Russia” in Kesselman *et al*  
- Article 33, Hendley, “Rule of Law, Russian Style,” *CP:AE*  
- Article 20, Volkov, “The Protesters and the Public: Putin Under Siege,” *CP:AE*  
- review/re-read Article 23, “The Resilient Authoritarians”

November 12: **Third Hourly Exam**

November 14, 19, & 21: Change and Continuity in Chinese Politics

- Ch. 14, "China," in Kesselman *et al*
- Article 43, Larry Diamond, "The Coming Wave" *CP:AE*
- review Article 23, "The Resilient Authoritarians" *CP:AE*
- Recommended:
  - Article 18, Tom Downey, "China's Cyberposse," *CP:AE*

**Part IV: Political and Economic Development**

Nov. 26 and Dec. 3: Nigeria and African in Global Perspective

- Ch. 12, "Nigeria" in Kesselman *et al*
- Recommended:
  - Article 5, Johnathan Glennie, "More Aid is Not the Answer," *CP:AE*
  - Andrew Reynolds, "Elections, Electoral Systems, and Conflict in Africa," *CP:AE*

December 5: Mexico and Latin America in Global Perspective

- selections in Ch. 10, "Mexico" in Kesselman *et al*
- Recommended:
  - Alexandro Toledo, "Latin America: Democracy with Development" *CP:AE*

**Short Papers Due: December 5**

**Thursday, Dec. 12: FINAL EXAM** (AKA last hourly exam), begin at 8:50, finish at 10 am.