

Political Science 100 (173870)
INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS
Autumn 2006

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course serves as an introduction to the fundamental concepts in political science and government, presented in an explicitly comparative framework. The objectives of the course are to introduce to undergraduate students a variety of forms of government and politics in a select group of countries. We will examine the different political institutions, processes and issues found within these countries, and analyze how this knowledge can help us address two fundamental questions:

- 1) How are political institutions created, consolidated, and improved?
- 2) How does the role of the state differ both in terms of a) creating economic growth within a nation, and b) improving the socio-economic level of its citizens?

The course will compare politics, institutions, and socioeconomic developments in Germany, Russia, Mexico, and Cuba. In addition, we will use the United States as a background case against which to contrast our findings. We will learn that every one of these countries, including the United States, have throughout history experimented with a variety of solutions to their political and economic challenges, and that no easy answers or solutions exist as to one "magic formula" regarding a country's political and economic setup.

In addition, according to GEC guidelines, further learning objectives and goals of this course include:

Goals/ Rationale:

Diversity: International Issues courses help students become educated, productive, and principled citizens of their nation and the world.

Learning Objectives:

Students exhibit an understanding of political, economic, cultural, physical, and social differences among the nations of the world, including a specific examination of non-Western culture.

Goals/Rationale:

Courses in social science help students understand human behavior and cognition, and the structures of human societies, cultures and institutions.

Learning Objectives:

1. Students understand the theories and methods of scientific inquiry as they are applied to the studies of individuals, groups, organizations, and societies.
2. Students comprehend human differences and similarities in various psychological, social, cultural, economic, geographic, and political contexts.
3. Students develop abilities to comprehend and assess individual and social values, and recognize their importance in social problem solving and policy making.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Active attendance and participation is crucial for succeeding in this class, and it is therefore very important that you do not miss class. Attendance is mandatory, and will together with participation account for 10 percent of your final grade.

The reading load for this class is not excessive, and you are expected to complete assigned readings ahead of class. Not only will this greatly facilitate class discussion; you will learn that it makes the lectures far more interesting and easier to follow.

This introductory course is organized in a lecture format. However, student participation in class is strongly encouraged. Remember, there is no such thing as a stupid question. The only thing I ask of you is that you are respectful of the opinions of your fellow students, no matter how much you may disagree with their arguments. The world has never been a more exciting place, and the subjects we will cover in this class are likely to open up for a variety of discussions.

REQUIRED READINGS

Only one textbook will be used:

Mark Kesselman, Joel Krieger, and William Joseph, eds. 2006. Introduction to Comparative Politics, Fourth Edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company). ISBN. 0-618-60447-2

This new 4th edition of **KKJ** has been ordered at SBX bookstore.

In addition to the course book, several other readings will be required. Due to library renovations, these will all be made available electronically via OSU's CARMEN, found at <https://carmen.osu.edu/>. Log in, select PS100, and download and/or print the available readings. This service has been made available in order to reduce the cost of class material; please do take advantage of this opportunity and read these works before class, as they are all essential readings.

In addition to the regular material, we will as a class occasionally address current events in the countries under examination and others. Students are for this reason strongly encouraged to read articles on current political developments in reputable international newspapers. Examples of these include the *International Herald Tribune* ([www.ihf](http://www.ihf.com)), the British newspaper *The Guardian* (www.guardian.co.uk/worldlatest/), and the *New York Times* (www.nytimes.com).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS - ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

The grades for this course will be assigned based on a quiz, a midterm, a final exam, and attendance/participation.

Participation	10%
Midterm	20%
Essay	30%
Final Exam	40%

All exams will be cumulative, though more heavily focused on new material. The quiz and exams will principally be in short answer and essay format.

How to succeed: To excel in this course, you will need to do more than memorize and reproduce information; it will be essential that you make arguments in response to exam questions, and defend your position with evidence. It is very important to note that you will not be graded on the position you take – that is, whether you think me or your fellow peers will agree with you or

not. Rather, you will be graded on the strength of your argument, as well as the factual accuracy of your answers. There will be a final essay in this course; specific instructions for the essay will be given later.

To ensure fairness, make-up exams will only exceptionally be administered in cases of a documented emergency or similar unforeseen events. If at all possible, please contact me ahead of time if you can't make it to class or take an exam.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The university rules are quite simple: Do not cheat, and do not plagiarize.

I expect all of the work you do in this course to be your own. I will tolerate absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation). I will report any cases of cheating or plagiarism to the university committee on academic misconduct, and they will be handled according to university policy. Details of the university academic honesty policy are available on the OSU website (www.osu.edu).

Disability: If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact me to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. At the appointment we can discuss the course format, anticipate your needs, and explore potential accommodations. I rely on the Office for Disability Services for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. If you have not previously contacted the Office for Disability Services, I encourage you to do so.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Week 1

Thursday, Sept 21: **Introduction: Overview of class contents and requirements**

Week 2

Tuesday, Sept 26: **Thematic Class: Introduction to "democracy" and "political economy**

Required readings for this topic:

* KKJ, pp. 5-27

* W. Phillips Shively. *Comparative Governance* (McGraw-Hill, 1996), Ch: "Political Conflict," pp. 42-63. Available via CARMEN

Thursday, Sept 28: **Thematic Class: Capitalism and Freedom** (Friedman)

* Friedman, Milton. *"Capitalism and Freedom"* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 1-36. Available via CARMEN

Week 3:

Tuesday, Oct 3: **Thematic Class: Electoral Institutions**

Thursday, Oct 5: **The United States in Comparative Context** (Steinmo). **QUIZ.**

Required readings for this topic:

* Steinmo, Sven. "American Exceptionalism Reconsidered: Culture or Institutions?" pp. 106-131. Available via CARMEN

Week 4:

Tuesday, Oct 10: **Germany**, Political Institutions and History

Thursday, Oct 12: **Germany**, Political Economy

Required readings for this topic:

* KKJ, pp. 149-160; 171-194 (covers mostly political institutions)

* KKJ, pp. 160-170; 194-198 (covers mostly political economy)

Week 5:

Tuesday, Oct 17: **Germany**, and **REVIEW SESSION** for the midterm

Thursday, Oct 20: **MID TERM EXAM**

Week 6:

Tuesday, Oct 24: **Movie: To be announced**

Thursday, Oct 26: **Thematic class: Authoritarianism and Totalitarianism**

Week 7:

Tuesday, Oct 31: **Russia**, Political Institutions and History

Thursday, Nov 2: **Russia**, Political Economy

Required readings for this topic:

* KKJ, pp. 355-368; 380-404 (covers mostly political institutions))

* KKJ, pp. 368-380; 404-412 (covers mostly political economy))

Week 8:

Tuesday, Nov 7: **Mexico**, Political Institutions and History

Thursday, Nov 9: **Mexico**, Political Economy

* KKJ, pp. 473-484; 492-511 (covers mostly political institutions)

* KKJ, pp. 484-492; 511-516 (covers mostly political economy)

Week 9:

Tuesday, Nov 14: **Mexico**, wrap-up, and current issues

Thursday, Nov 16: **Cuba**, Political Institutions and History

Required readings for this topic: Available at CARMEN –to be announced

Week 10:

Tuesday, Nov 21: **Cuba**, Political Economy

Thursday, Nov 23 **THANKSGIVING DAY – NO CLASS**

Week 11:

Tuesday, Nov 28: **Cuba**, wrap-up, and current issues

Thursday, Nov 30 **REVIEW SESSION. FINAL PAPER DUE**

Week 12: FINALS WEEK

→ Tuesday, Dec 5: **FINAL EXAMINATION**. Regular Classroom, regular hours ←