Government 157: Democracy and Dictatorship
An Introduction to Comparative Politics in the Contemporary World

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Spring 2009
Office hours: Thursday 2-4pm

Class meetings: TTh 10:30-11:50; FISK 302

Course overview
Comparative politics is the study of politics within nations, as opposed to international relations, which is the study of politics among nations. Given the number of nations in the world, comparative politics is an immense field and a diverse one as well. Comparative politics includes studies of the Russian revolution, party loyalties in Britain, strike activity in Argentina, corruption in Japan, decolonization in Africa, changing social values in Western Europe, modernization in developing countries, the rise of fascism in Interwar Europe, and economic stabilization in Latin America. Getting acquainted with this diversity is an essential part of a higher education in political science. For those curious about the world it can be exhilarating as well.

Course objectives
Obviously no one-semester course could possibly provide a comprehensive survey of the entire field of comparative politics. This course is therefore designed to achieve two more limited goals: (1) to broaden your expectations about the nature of political institutions and the range of political behavior and (2) to help you develop plausible, well-informed expectations for similarities and differences in the political life of countries around the world.

The focus throughout the course will be on understanding the core ideas in political science and applying those ideas to particular cases. You should come away from the course with both an understanding of the diversity of the world’s political systems, as well as an appreciation of the questions and concepts that inform the work of professional political scientists.

The course stresses the importance of comparison. Thinking comparatively within political science means continually asking yourself two questions:

- How do big ideas relate to particular cases? That is, how can we use the various theoretical tools available to us to explain political behavior in particular countries and regions, and how can we use the study of individual cases to test our grand theories of political interaction?
• How do individual cases relate to the goal of creating broad theories of political behavior? In other words, how can we compare a number of different cases and extract their common elements in order to create general theories?

Throughout the lectures and in your own reading and writing, you should keep both these questions in mind.

**Course Requirements**

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<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Two in-class exams (25% each)</td>
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<td>One short paper (4 pages)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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**Course Readings**

The readings for this course contain conflicting interpretations of both theory and history. It is important that you read actively and critically. There is no single accepted “truth” in most of the topics we explore. Your job is to learn to identify, and then to compare and evaluate competing arguments.

The readings for this course complement classroom discussion; neither can substitute for the other. You will learn the most from this class if you do the reading on each topic before coming to class.

The following books are available for purchase:
Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*
Roy, Arundhati. *The Cost of Living*

The other readings are available through on-line reserve. The only exceptions are the reading by Tony Blair, *The Third Way* and one of the selections on colonialism from Wright. These readings will be distributed in class. All readings, including the books, are also available on reserve at Olin.

**Exams**

The exams will cover readings and class materials. There will be a variety of types of questions on the exams, including, but not limited to identification questions, short answer questions, and essay questions. Each exam will cover the sections of the course immediately preceding it. Thus, the first exam (February 17th) will cover the sections on comparison and Great Britain. The second exam (April 2nd) will cover the sections on the former Soviet Union and Germany (though it may also include material from earlier in the course). The final exam will be cumulative.

**Simulation / Paper**

The last week of the course will be a simulation of a constitutional convention for the country Somewhereland. You will be assigned an identity as a delegate to the convention. The paper assignment involves assessing and analyzing the process of writing Somewhereland’s new constitution.
Participation
Attendance and active participation count for 10% of your final grade. You should come to class having done the readings and prepared to talk about the material. Because discussion is critical to the course, attendance is required. Students are allowed two absences. Absences exceeding two will result in a deduction of your participation grade. Attendance alone, however, does not guarantee a good participation grade. You must also engage in class discussion. Furthermore, there will be a variety of short assignments throughout the semester that count towards the participation grade.

Office Hours
I will have office hours on Thursday from 2:00 to 4:00 in my office in PAC 409. If you have a class conflict at that time, we can arrange a different time to meet. If you find you are struggling with the readings or having difficulty speaking up in class, please come to office hours. Feel free also to stop by just to introduce yourself!

Course Policies
Students are required to complete all readings and attend each class period prepared to talk about the readings. All participation assignments are due at the beginning of class. No late participation assignments will be accepted. Extensions and incompletes will not be granted under any circumstances other than significant and verifiable personal emergencies (e.g., serious illness, death in family).

All work that you submit must be your own. You must cite all sources used in completing the assignments using a standard form of citation. If you are unsure how to use proper citation form, please ask me. Failure to use proper citation is plagiarism. Taking materials off the internet without citing them is plagiarism. You must adhere to all aspects of the honor code. Please write on each assignment: “No aid. No violation.” Please sign your name next to that statement.
Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

**HOW WE COMPARE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 29</td>
<td>Different Paths Toward Modernity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 12</td>
<td>The Third Way: Liberalism in Action (or not)?</td>
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Feb 17  \hspace{1cm} \textbf{FIRST EXAM}

\textbf{THE FORMER SOVIET UNION / RUSSIA}

Feb 19  \hspace{1cm} Marxism


Feb 24  \hspace{1cm} Lenin and the Russian Revolution


Feb 26  \hspace{1cm} Stalin and Stalinism


March 3  Post-Soviet Politics


GERMANY

March 5  Fascism I: The Concept


SPRING BREAK!!!

March 24  Fascism II: The Causes


March 26  The German Model: Post-war Success


March 31  Today’s Germany


April 2  **SECOND EXAM**

**JAPAN**

April 7  **Late Development: The East Asian Model—Japan**


April 9  **Late Development: Success or Failure?**


April 14  **Japanese Political Institutions**


April 16  **Japanese Democracy**


INDIA

April 21    Colonialism

April 23    Theories of Colonialism

April 28    Decolonization

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

April 30    Constitutional Convention

May 5      Constitutional Convention and Conclusion