

POLI 160 – Comparative Politics - Fall 2009
Tues., Thurs. & Fri. 10:00-10:50, CCC 321

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Office Hours: W & F, 2:00-3:00PM
and by appointment

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the sub-field of Political Science known as Comparative Politics. We will do this through a comparative study of political development and politics in five countries: Germany, Great Britain, South Africa, Iran, and Brazil. A central thematic focus of the course is democracy: What is it? How and why did it develop where it did? What prompted democratic transitions in countries like Germany, South Africa, and Brazil? What are the obstacles to democratization in Iran today? What are the differences between democratic and authoritarian regimes? In addition to political development and democratization, we will also study how political institutions actually work in each country and how variations in constitutional and electoral arrangements impact political outcomes. Finally, we will consider current challenges being faced in each country in terms of democratic consolidation and/or deepening. We will contrast our study of democratic systems with examinations of two former authoritarian regimes -- Nazi Germany and South African Apartheid --, as well as with the current Islamic Republic of Iran.

By the end of the course you will have developed a more complex understanding of democracy, the many forms it has taken historically and around the world, and the tensions inherent in it. You will have reflected on the intrinsic relationship between politics and economics and will have learned something about the political economies of other countries. You will have a clearer understanding of parliamentary systems and how they differ from presidential systems, as well as the tradeoffs inherent in the choice of electoral systems. You will have considered some of the major factors that help account for why democracy took root earlier in Great Britain and why countries like Germany, South Africa, and Brazil took more circuitous paths. Finally, you will have a better understanding and appreciation for the formidable challenges faced by citizens and leaders in Third World countries in establishing and consolidating democracy, and making it meaningful for all.

“Toto, I don’t think we are in Kansas anymore.” Welcome to the wide world of comparative politics!

Course Objectives:

- 1) Students will gain an appreciation for the variety of forms democracy takes around the world and the qualitative differences between democracy and authoritarian regimes.
- 2) Students will come away with a strong foundation in the politics and political development of Germany, Great Britain, South Africa, Iran, and Brazil.
- 3) Students will hone critical thinking & analysis skills through reading, lectures, discussions, & written work.
- 4) Students’ interest in current events and international affairs will increase as they gain knowledge about and frameworks for understanding political developments in countries around the world.

Required Texts:

- Michael Sodaro. 2008. *Comparative Politics: A Global Introduction, 3rd Edition*. McGraw-Hill. (Available through Text Rental)
- Robert A. Dahl. 1998. *On Democracy*. Yale University Press. (Available for purchase)
- In addition there are a number of E-reserve readings; some are located in the “Content” section of this class’s D2L page and others on the Library “E-reserves” for this class. Look in the parentheses at the end of each citation for its location. Library “E-reserves” can be accessed by going to our class’s D2L homepage and clicking on the “E-reserve” link on the very top banner.

Course Format

Given the fact that this is a large introductory class, the majority of class time will be devoted to lecture. However, I make an effort to create opportunities for student discussion and participation on a regular basis. I also welcome your questions at any time. I can assure you that you will learn more if you ask questions and take an active part in class discussions. You should complete the assigned readings before coming to class. I design my lectures to build on and complement the reading, so your retention and comprehension of lectures will be increased if you come to class having done the reading. **If you feel like you are having trouble in the class, please come and see me.**

Course Requirements and Grading

Your grade in this course will be based on your performance in the following areas:

Short Essay on German Elections	10%
Quizzes & In-class writing assignments	20%
Midterm Exam #1	20%
Midterm Exam #2	20%
Final Exam	<u>30%</u>
	100%

Short Essay: Students will write a short essay (2-4 pages) on the German elections, which are scheduled for September 27 of this year. I will hand out an assignment sheet with specific instructions on what I expect you to do in the paper. The assignment will involve some outside reading of online news articles in both the German and U.S. presses.

Quizzes: I will give 6-8 quizzes and in-class writing assignments over the course of the semester that together will count for 20% of your grade. If you complete all of these your lowest score will be dropped, or, alternately you may miss one of the quizzes or in-class writing assignments. The dates for the in-class writing assignments are noted in the syllabus. I will announce quizzes in the preceding class. For example, if I plan to give a quiz on Thursday, I will announce the quiz in class on Tuesday of that same week. In-class writing assignments will be based on the readings assigned for that day. Quizzes may contain questions both from the assigned reading as well as recent lectures and will consist of multiple choice questions. Questions that appear on quizzes may also appear on exams.

Exams: There will be three exams. Midterms #1 and #2 will be multiple choice exams. The final exam will consist of a multiple choice section and one or two essays. Exams will cover material from the readings, lecture, class discussions, and movies. I will provide you with study guides, as well as a list of possible essay questions for the final exam.

Academic Integrity: All students are expected to abide by the guidelines for academic integrity contained in the UW System Administrative Code. As a student it behooves you to be well acquainted with these guidelines and to understand what constitutes plagiarism, as violations can result in severe consequences. For the purposes of this class, the basic rule is to do your own work on exams and on the short paper. I take cheating very seriously and will take action if an incident comes to my attention. Please let me know if you are aware of cheating taking place during the exams.

For the short paper, students will be required to upload their papers to Turnitin.com. I will hand out instructions on how to do this. **If you fail to upload your paper, you will not receive credit for the assignment.**

Attendance

I keep track of attendance through sign-up sheets. While no part of your grade is specifically dependent on attendance, good attendance is essential for the following reasons:

1. Quizzes and in-class writing assignments will be given throughout the semester and will figure into your grade. There will be no make-ups for missed quizzes.
2. There will be material covered in lecture and class discussions that is not covered in the readings; you are responsible for both.
3. Your attendance record over the course of the semester *may* be taken into consideration as a factor when I calculate your final grade.

Classroom Etiquette

- Turn off your cell phones before coming to class and refrain from eating; drinks are permissible.
- Arriving late or leaving during class is disruptive. Please make every effort to be on time. I take particular offense at students leaving when class is in session. If you come to class, plan to stay for the whole session!!! If you leave in the middle I reserve the right to deduct points from your grade. If you know in advance that you have to leave early, let me know before class begins.

Movies: I will show a couple of movies in class. They are an important part of the curriculum and there will be exam questions based on them.

Technology:

- I will use e-mail to communicate with you, so please check your UWSP account on a daily basis.
- Some readings are posted on E-reserves and others on D2L as noted in the syllabus.
- Lecture power-points will be posted on D2L, but usually not before class.

Current Events: The things we will be studying are directly relevant to much that is taking place in the news. I strongly encourage you (if you do not already do so) to read a major newspaper with good coverage of international affairs on a daily basis. I recommend the *New York Times* or *The Guardian* (London) for a non-US perspective; both can be accessed for free on the web. The *Economist*, a weekly news magazine, also has excellent coverage of international politics and is available at the library.

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

Week 1 – Introduction to the Course & Democracy

9/3 – Introduction to the course

9/4 – Dahl’s criteria for a democratic process: How does the U.S. measure up?

**Reading & in-class writing assignment: On Democracy, Ch. 4, 6 & 8*

Week 2 – Models of Democracy: Liberalism & Social Democracy

9/8 – Liberalism & Liberal Democracy

Reading: Sodaro, Ch. 7, pp. 177-184; & Ch. 13, pp. 312-315 (end at start of section on “Socialism”)

9/10 – Socialism and Social Democracy – Principles & Theory

Readings:

1. Sodaro, Ch. 7, pp. 184-186; & Ch. 13, pp. 315-321
2. *On Democracy*, Chs. 13 & 14

9/11 – Social Democracy in Sweden

Readings:

1. Carol Ann Drogus and Stephen Orvis. *Introducing Comparative Politics: Concepts and Cases in Context*. CQ Press, 2009: 440-441. (D2L)
2. M. Donald Hancock and John Logue. 1984. "Sweden: The Quest for Economic Democracy." *Polity*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Winter). (E-reserves) **NOTE:** While the whole article is available, **ONLY** the following pages are required reading: pp. 248-259 & the "Conclusion" pp. 267-270.

Week 3 – Contrasting Political Development in Europe: Britain and Germany

9/15 – How the King Lost His Head: From Monarchs to Democracy in England

Readings:

1. *On Democracy*, Ch. 2, "Where and How Did Democracy Develop?"
2. Sodaro, Ch. 16, pp. 399-407

9/17 – Germany's Late Political Development

Reading: Sodaro, Ch. 18, pp. 499-509

9/18 – Germany's Fascist Interlude

Reading: Sodaro, Ch. 13, pp. 322-325 (section on "Fascism"); and Ch. 18, pp. 509-513

Week 4 – German Democracy & Political Institutions

9/22 - Building Democracy in Post-War Germany

Reading: Sodaro, Ch. 18, pp. 514-516 & 527-533 (ending at start of "SPD-Green Coalition")

9/24 – Political Institutions & Electoral Systems

Reading: Sodaro, Ch. 8, pp. 194-203; & 207-214 (ending at start of section titled: "Variants of PR")

9/25 – Germany's Electoral System

Reading: Sodaro, Ch. 8, pp. 214-216; & Ch. 18, pp. 516-525

Sunday 9/27 – Federal Elections in Germany – follow developments in German and U.S. online newspapers

Week 5 – Coalition Government and Elections in Germany Today

9/29 - Germany's Moderate Party System

Reading: Sodaro, Ch. 18, pp. 533-543 (ending at "Hypothesis-Testing Exercise")

10/1 – German 2009 Elections Debriefing & Exam Review

No assigned readings

10/2 – MIDTERM EXAM #1

Week 6 – Political Economy & The British Westminster System

10/6 – Political Economy: Overview of Models

Reading: Sodaro, Ch. 14, pp. 349-361

10/8 – British Political Economy: From Laissez-Faire to Mixed Economy and Back

Reading: Sodaro, Ch. 16, pp. 407-415 (ending at "2001 Elections")

10/9 – The British Westminster System: Parties and Elections

Reading: Sodaro, Ch. 16, pp. 420-431 (ending at "Parliament")

DUE IN CLASS: Short paper on German elections

Week 7 – Current Politics in Britain and Female Representation

10/13 – Parliament and Power in the Westminster System: An Elected Dictatorship?

Readings: Sodaro, Ch. 16, pp. 431-436 (ending at “The Government”)

10/15 – Current Issues in British Politics: The Future of the Labour Party?

Reading: Sodaro, Ch. 16, pp. 396-399; 415-420; & 438-440 (“Gordon Brown’s Britain” to end of chapter)

10/16 – Electoral Systems and Female Representation in Government

**Readings & in-class writing assignment:*

1. Anne Phillips. “The Representation of Women.” In *Democracy Sourcebook*. (E-reserves)
2. Gwladys Fouché and Jill Treanor. “In Norway, A Woman’s Place is in the Boardroom.” *The Guardian*. January 9, 2006. (D2L)

Week 8 – South Africa – From Apartheid to Democracy

10/20 – Colonialism as a Concept and in South Africa

Reading: Sodaro, Ch. 23, pp. 763-768

10/22 – Apartheid and Resistance

Reading: Sodaro, Ch. 23, pp. 783-786

10/23 – South Africa’s Negotiated Transition

Reading: Sodaro, Ch. 23, pp. 786-789 (ending at “The New South Africa”)

Week 9 – South Africa: Truth, Reconciliation, and Nation Building

10/27 - Building a Nation out of a Divided Society & Addressing Apartheid’s Legacies

Reading: Sodaro, Ch. 23, pp. 792-796

10/29 – Truth and Reconciliation

MOVIE: “Long Night’s Journey into Day”

Reading: Sodaro, Ch. 23, pp. 789-792

10/30 – Truth and Reconciliation

MOVIE: “Long Night’s Journey into Day” & Discussion

No assigned readings

Week 10 – Politics in the New South Africa

11/3 – South African Political Institutions: From Powersharing to ANC Dominance

Reading: James Hamill. “The Elephant and the Mice: Election 2004 and the Future of Opposition Politics in South Africa.” *The Round Table*, Vol. 93, No. 377 (October 2004): 691-708. (E-reserves)

11/5 – Politics in the New South Africa and Exam Review

No assigned readings

11/6 – **MIDTERM EXAM #2**

Week 11- Iran: Political Development & Islam

11/10 – Iran: Historical background

Reading: Sodaro, Ch. 4, pp. 112-114 (read to end of 114 and first 3 lines of 115)

11/12 – Political Islam

Reading: Sodaro, Ch. 13, pp. 325-333 (ending at “Islam in Indonesia”)

11/13 – Iran: Political Institutions & Power

Reading: Sodaro, Ch. 4, pp. 115-121

Week 12 – Iran: Women & the 2009 Elections

11/17 – Iran: Women and the Islamic State

**Readings & in-class writing assignment:*

1. Carol Ann Drogus and Stephen Orvis. “Case Study: Iran: Social Gains, Political and Cultural Restrictions, and Islamic Feminism.” In *Introducing Comparative Politics: Concepts and Cases in Context*. CQ Press, 2009: 514-517. (D2L)
2. Azar Nafisi. *Reading Lolita in Tehran*. Random House, 2003: 3-34. (E-reserves)

11/19 – Iran: 2009 Elections and Aftermath

Reading: Recent newspaper articles TBA

11/20 - Brazil: Colonialism’s Long Shadow

Reading: Sodaro, Ch. 22, pp. 733-741

Week 13 – Brazilian Political Development

11/24 – Modernization without Inclusion: Brazilian Economic Development in the 20th Century

Reading: Sodaro, Ch. 22, pp. 741-748

11/26 & 27 – THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 14 – Brazilian Democracy: Opportunities and Constraints in the Struggle for Social Justice

12/1 – Lula and the Worker’s Party: Participation and Inclusion

MOVIE SCREENING: “Lula’s Brazil”

Reading: Sodaro, Ch. 22, pp. 752-758 (starting at “Profile: Lula da Silva” to end of chapter)

12/3 – Lula’s Brazil: Domestic Constraints on Political Change

MOVIE SCREENING: “Lula’s Brazil”

Reading: Thomas Maack. “The Workers’ Party Self-Destructs.” *NACLA: Report on the Americas*. Vol. 39, No. 3 (Nov/Dec. 2005). (D2L)

12/4 – Brazil’s Political Institutions

Reading: Sodaro, Ch. 22, pp. 748-752

Week 15 – Conclusions

12/8 – International Constraints on Political Change in Brazil

Readings: Jeffrey Rubin. 2005. “Can Democracy Challenge Empire in Lula’s Brazil?” *NACLA: Report on the Americas*. Vol. 39, No. 2 (September/October 2005): 32-40. (E-reserves)

12/10 – Brazilian Politics Today

Readings:

1. Alexei Barrionuevo. “Brazil Seeks More Control of Oil Beneath its Seas.” *New York Times*, August 18, 2009. (D2L)
2. Other articles TBA

12/11 – Final Exam Review

FINAL EXAM – WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 12:30-2:30PM