POL SCI 335
Comparative Political Systems

Spring 2020
Online Course

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Office hours: Mondays 9:00AM-10:30AM

Course Description

This course is an introduction to political systems around the world. Even though we will sometimes deal with facts and figures, the main focus is to critically examine and compare the workings of political systems in a scientific way. The topics that we will discuss include: 1) party systems; 2) electoral systems; 3) cabinets; 4) parliaments and congresses; 5) executive-legislative relations; 6) central banks; 7) constitutions and judicial review; and 8) federalism.

Prerequisites

There is no official pre-requisite course except for junior standing. However, it would help significantly if students are familiar with materials that are normally covered in either POL SCI 103 (Introduction to Political Science) or POL SCI 104 (Introduction to American Government and Politics).

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to

1) Describe how various institutions work in different countries;
2) Understand the logic of the Westminster Model of Democracy;
3) Understand the logic of the Consensus Model of Democracy;
4) Critically analyze political systems in multiple perspectives; and
5) Write an essay that examines one particular political system in depth.

This is a 3-credit online course over the one-semester period. In order to achieve the learning goals of the course, students are expected to set aside a minimum of 8 hours each week reading and studying the materials, and another 4 hours each week working on assignments. Assignments include taking quizzes, writing essays, and completing a final paper, among others.
Required Texts

The following textbook is required and available at the UWM bookstore:


The following list of books are recommended for the final project:

- Clark, Golder, & Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*.

In addition, it is strongly recommended that students regularly read national as well as local newspapers. The New York Times (www.nytimes.com) and the Washington Post (www.washingtonpost.com) are two excellent sources of news on politics and government. If needed, CQ Weekly, Roll Call, and the Hill would be nice supplements.

Course Requirements and Grading

This course will have a site on the Canvas system (https://uwm.edu/canvas/). Every Tuesday morning at 9AM central, one document will be uploaded to Canvas. This “study guide” document includes:

- What students are expected to do until the next upload of study guide;
- Reading assignment;
  - It is based on substantive topics rather than number of textbook pages. So, it is possible that students read somewhat longer reading one week but shorter reading another week.
  - While the tentative schedule below gives you rough idea about reading schedule, it is extremely important that we follow the “actual” study guide that will be distributed via Canvas.
- Quiz;
  - In order to check the reading assignment, we will have quizzes.
  - Each quiz will be uploaded at 9AM every Tuesday. As soon as students finish the reading assignment, they can “start” the quiz. However, the quiz will be closed automatically in one week (i.e., 9AM next Tuesday).
  - Once the quiz is “open,” it must be completed within 30 minutes. It is very important to recognize that Canvas does NOT allow students to “pause and re-start” the quiz.
• Writing essays;
  o Throughout the semester, students are required to write 3 short essays.
  o The essay does NOT have so-called “correct” answer. Instead, students will need to effectively demonstrate their reasoning.
  o It is very important to recognize that better-evaluated essays tend to have the following characteristics:
    ▪ The first paragraph states the main argument. It could start with an interesting example, or it could simply summarize the entire essay.
    ▪ The following (several) paragraphs discuss why(!) your main argument is better than the counter-argument(s).
    ▪ Each paragraph contains one and only one idea, while it normally includes multiple sentences within one paragraph. And, the system of paragraphs helps a flow of thoughts/arguments.
    ▪ Try to be as concise as possible.

• Final project;
  o At the end of the semester, students are required to complete a final project by writing either “report” or “essay” within the 5-page maximum.
  o Throughout the semester, there will be two opportunities of submitting in-progress work and receiving feedbacks.
  o A more specific instruction will be provided later in the semester.

The final course grading will be based upon three parts:

1) **Quiz** (40%): In total, we will have 9 short quizzes. You can choose to discard 1 worst-performed quiz. As such, each quiz is worth 5% of the final course grade.

2) **Essay** (30%): In total, we will have 3 short essays. Each essay is worth 10% of the final course grade. In general, it should be typed and double-spaced with 1-2 pages of length.

3) **Final Project** (30%): By the end of semester, we will complete one research project by analyzing one country in depth. It should be typed and double-spaced with the 5-page maximum.

Students who take this course under the Pass/Fail option must receive a grade of C or better in order to obtain a Pass on their final grade. A final grade of “incomplete” will only be given under exceptional circumstances and is solely at the discretion of Professor Park.

As a general rule, make-ups for any course requirements will not be given. Students who miss requirements because of scheduled activities of an official University student organization, a religious holiday, or a verifiable illness should contact Professor Park **in advance** so that alternative arrangements can be made.

If there is a dispute regarding a grade, re-grading is possible under two conditions:
• We will have a “cooling” period of at least TWO business days. Any complaints or disputes will NOT be considered in this period.
• Then, all complaints must be typed and must clearly express specific concerns. These written statements must be accompanied by citations of support from course materials, i.e. readings, textbooks, and/or lecture notes, in order to ensure accuracy.

Instructor Availability

If students would like to meet with Professor Park in person, feel free to stop by the office (Bolton 666) during regularly scheduled office hours (Mondays 9:00AM–10:30AM). If students are unable to attend office hours, but would like to meet with Professor Park, make an appointment via email.

Email is a convenient way to continue contact between professor and student. Students should take advantage of this opportunity but should also do so in a professional manner. Please refer to the document, Email Etiquette, (uploaded to Canvas) to understand how to write a professional email.

Classroom Policies

All students are expected to behave professionally in this online class. Class discussions are expected to be civil, rational, and respectful of others’ opinions. Please do not intimidate, patronize, or ridicule anyone else during the course of class activities.

No form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. UWM has detailed its policies on academic integrity (https://uwm.edu/deanofstudents/conduct/academic-misconduct/). You should acquaint yourself with policies concerning cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and academic interference. Any submission of work in this course constitutes a certificate that the work complies with university policies on academic integrity.

Any student with disabilities of any kind (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, systemic, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations should contact Professor Park and the Accessibility Resource Center (https://uwm.edu/arc/, Mitchell 112, archelp@uwm.edu, 414-229-6287) at the beginning of the semester.

In addition, students can refer to https://uwm.edu/secu/syllabus-links/ for more detailed information on university-wide policies.

Tentative Schedule

Below is a tentative schedule, and Professor Park reserves the rights to alter the reading/writing assignments and test dates in a timely fashion according to the progress of the class. Chapters below are from the Lijhart book.
1. Introduction – 1/21 Tuesday
   - Login to the Canvas system—read the study guide there.
   - Ch. 1

2. Models of Democracy – 1/28 Tuesday
   - Ch. 2 & 3
   - (Recommended) Joseph Schumpeter. “Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy.” In *The Democracy Sourcebook*.

3. Party Systems – 2/4 Tuesday
   - Ch. 4 & 5

4. Essay 1 – 2/11 Tuesday

5. Cabinets & Executive-Legislative Relations – 2/18 Tuesday
   - Ch. 6 & 7
   - (Recommended) Matthew Soberg Shugart and John Carey. “Presidents and Assemblies.” In *The Democracy Sourcebook*.

   - Ch. 8 & 9

7. Essay 2 – 3/3 Tuesday

8. Project, Part 1 – 3/10 Tuesday

*Spring Break (3/17 Tuesday)*

   - Ch. 10 & 11

    - Ch. 12 & 13

11. Essay 3 – 4/7 Tuesday
12. Conceptual Map of Democracy – 4/14 Tuesday
   • Ch. 14

13. Project, Part 2 – 4/21 Tuesday

14. Effective Government – 4/28 Tuesday
   • Ch. 15, 16 & 17
   • (Recommended) Ronald Wintrobe. “Rent Seeking and Redistribution under Democracy versus Dictatorship.” In *The Democracy Sourcebook*.

15. Project, Part 3 – 5/5 Tuesday & 5/12 Tuesday