

Political Science 106: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Tu-Th 11:00-12:15pm
1351 Chemistry

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Course Description

Why are some countries democratic and others not? Why are some countries rich and others poor? Under what conditions do democracies slide into authoritarianism? When do authoritarian regimes democratize? These are some of the questions that we will address in this course. We will do this by learning a few “tools” for analyzing politics. We will introduce fundamental concepts such as nationalism, democracy, and liberalism, and learn how to critically evaluate evidence in support of particular arguments. You are also expected to keep abreast of what is currently happening in global politics by regularly reading a newspaper with international coverage.

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation: Required for both lecture and discussion sections. This means doing the assigned reading, completing all exams and other assignments, and taking part in discussions during section. The final exam is scheduled for December 14 at 12:25pm. Please mark this on your calendars now.

Grades: Yes, I am required to give them.

1. Five page paper due the Tuesday before Thanksgiving--- 15%
2. Mid-term examination--- 25%
3. Section participation--- 20%
4. Final examination--- 40%

More information about the exam and the paper will be provided during the semester. I do not grade on a curve, so you are not competing with your classmates for A's. Everyone who does A-level work will receive an A.

Make-ups: No make-ups or extensions will be granted without a bona fide medical excuse. This means a signed letter from your doctor stating that you were physically incapable of completing the work. Otherwise, late assignments will be docked one entire grade for each day that it is late.

Cheating: Bad. It infuriates me, and is unfair to those who put in genuine work. At a minimum cheaters will fail the course. At a maximum they will face UW disciplinary action. This course is not that hard, so please don't cheat. For information on what constitutes academic misconduct please see: <http://www.wisc.edu/students/amsum.htm>

I have set of an email list for this course. The address is: polisci-106@lists.students.wisc.edu If you use a "students.wisc.edu" account and are registered for this course, then you are already on the list. For those of you who use another address you will need to join the list manually. See <https://www.ps1.doit.wisc.edu/EASI/> for details. Other than in class, this list will be the primary means by which I communicate last minute corrections, so please be sure to register.

IMPORTANT NOTE: I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus during the semester. This may involve extra reading.

Course Readings

Required

Michael J. Sodaro, *Comparative Politics: A Global Introduction*. McGraw Hill, 2001.

Annual Editions (AE): *Comparative Politics*. 21st Edition, 03/04. Christian Soe, Editor. McGraw Hill/Dushkin, 2004.

Both publications are available at Underground Textbook Exchange 664 State Street (across from Starbucks).

NOTE: It is not necessary to purchase the Annual Editions hard copy book from the bookstore, as these readings are also available on-line. The instructions for registering with PowerWeb and getting access to these articles is available on the CD in back of the Sodaro book.

All books will also be put on reserve at the College Library.

For current events I recommend glancing at a newspaper with good foreign coverage, such as *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*. *The Economist* will also work.

Schedule of Lectures/Reading:

Sept. 2-4: **Introduction**

Sodaro, "Comparative Politics: What is it? Why Study it?", pp. 3-25; "Major Topics of Comparative Politics", pp. 27-50.

Sept. 9-11: **Comparing Polities**

Sodaro, "Critical Thinking About Politics: (I) Analytical Techniques of Political Science" and "Critical Thinking About Politics: (II) The Logic of Hypothesis Testing", pp. 51-94.

Sept. 16-18: **States, Nations, and Nation-States**

Sodaro, "The State and Its Institutions" and "Nation-States, Nationalism, and Supranationalism" pp. 117-164.

Sept. 23-25: **Power and Ideology**

- Sodaro, "Power", pp. 95-116; "Ideology", pp. 287-313.
- Sodaro, "Germany", pp. 486-505.

Sept 30-Oct. 2: **Democracy I: Definitions**

- Sodaro, "Democracy: What is It?", pp. 165-192.
- AE article 16: Women in National Parliaments
- AE article 19: What Democracy Is.....and Is Not.

Oct. 7-9, 14-16: **Democracy II: How it Works**

- Sodaro, "Democracy: How Does it Work? State Institutions and Electoral Systems", pp. 193-214.
- AE article 1: A Constitutional Revolution in Britain?
- AE article 14: Political Parties: Empty Vessels?
- AE article 18: Campaign and Party Finance
- AE article 20: Congress and the House of Commons

Oct. 21: **Review for Midterm**

Paper assignment handed out.

Oct. 23: **Midterm Exam**

Oct. 28-30, Nov. 4-6: **Democracy III: Conditions and Preconditions**

- Sodaro, “Conditions for Democracy and Democratization”, pp. 215-241.
- AE article 33: South Africa: Democracy Without the People?
- AE article 34: Africa’s Contradiction: Nigeria on the Path to Democracy
- AE article 39: New Dimensions of Indian Democracy
- AE article 43: The Global State of Democracy

Nov. 11-13, Nov. 18-20: **Political Economy, Development, and Democracy**

- Sodaro, “Political Economy”, pp. 315-340; “The Politics of Development”, pp. 341-367.
- AE article 30: Globalization’s Double Edge
- AE article 44: Serial Utopia
- AE article 45: Capitalism and Democracy

Nov. 25: **Papers Due**

Nov. 27: **Happy Thanksgiving**

Dec. 2-4: **Country Studies: China and Russia**

- Sodaro, “Russia”, and “China”, pp. 633-745.
- AE article 28: Ten Myths About Russia
- AE article 35: Intimations of Mortality
- AE article 38: In March Toward Capitalism, China has Avoided Russia’s Path

Dec. 9: **What Comes Next?**

NO READING!

Dec. 11: **Review for Final Exam**

Dec 14, 12:25pm: **Final Exam**