

POSCI 125: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Spring 20078
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Class: W (6:30-9:30 pm)

Office Hours: Th 1:00-4:00 pm and other times by appointment.

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to comparative politics through an exploration of politics and society in the nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Using the theme of literature as politics, the course will offer the theoretical tools and empirical information to critically evaluate politics in non-European and non-North American contexts. The course examines the political histories, including colonialism and imperialism; the political institutions, such as the prison; and the diverse identities, such as race, ethnicity, class, religion, language, and gender, that have shaped different literary genres in a number of the countries within Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This class fulfills the **M5 LinC** requirement.

Goals and Objectives

- a) Broaden knowledge about the possible range of political institutions, political behavior, political groups, and political problems in the world regions of Latin America, Asia, and Africa.
- b) Comprehend enough about literature as politics in a number of countries to offer intelligent, critical, and well-informed explanations for similarities and differences in the political life of countries in these regions and to better understand the significance of these similarities and differences.
- c) Develop understanding of comparative questions and criticism as concerns the relationship between developed and developing nations.
- d) Improve critical reasoning about politics in non-European and non-North American contexts
- e) Enhance research abilities and oral and written communication skills.

Course Guidelines

1. I do not accept late assignments. All assignments are due at the beginning of class on due dates marked in the syllabus (unless otherwise noted on the syllabus). You cannot pass this class without completing all assignments and requirements. For the sake of equity do not ask for special treatment.
2. All assignments must be typed, double-spaced, printed, clipped or stapled, use complete sentences, correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. All assignments must be personally handed to the instructor. No handwritten assignments will be accepted. No emailed assignments will be accepted **except in case of emergencies and not without prior permission of the instructor.**

3. Undocumented absences after the first will be penalized at 5% per absence off your final grade. Three late arrivals to class will be counted as an absence. Appropriate documentation for absences will be accepted in the following cases: verifiable illness, family emergency, extended leave, and school-sponsored events. Documentation for excusing an absence is due within a week of the beginning date of the absence. If you are absent, it is fully your responsibility to determine what was covered in class.

4. In case of any crisis or emergency, or an extended absence from class, you must inform your professor through Learning Services or the Academic Dean's Office.

5. Learning disability accommodations: students who wish to request accommodations in this class for support of learning disabilities should contact Learning Services (x1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the appropriate disability support provider on campus.

6. These guidelines are intended for the benefit of the students as far as clarification of the instructor's expectations for the course; however, in exceptional circumstances the instructor reserves the right to exercise discretion in the application of these guidelines to individual cases or to refer a particular case to the Academic Dean if necessary.

Classroom Expectations

- 1) Respect for others' answers and views.
- 2) Equal time for opposing opinions.
- 3) Disruptive behavior during class will result in your dismissal from the class the first time, after that, disciplinary action will be taken.
- 4) Cell phones need to be turned to OFF and put away in a purse or bookbag during class. Use of cell phones in any way during class will result in dismissal from class and be counted as an absence.
- 5) Non-alcoholic drinks are allowed in class, other food is not.
- 6) Attention to course related material only.
- 7) Necessary breaks at the discretion of the instructor.
- 8) If you arrive late, be respectful by not disrupting a class already in progress.

Required Texts: Available at the college bookstore-

- Dikotter, Frank, et al., eds., *Cultures of Confinement*. NY: Cornell University Press, 2007
- Course packet

Course Requirements

A. Graded Requirements

Class Participation-15% of your final grade. Class participation includes coming to class on a very consistent basis, keeping up with assigned readings by thoroughly reading and thinking about the readings before coming to class, active involvement in interactive lectures, substantive contributions to discussions, and engagement with in-class

activities. For class participation, **effort counts heavily. Attempting to answer a question, asking a question, or voicing an opinion are all part of participation.** I will evaluate your participation highly if you: a)attend class regularly; b)discuss the videos and readings I make available; c)raise relevant questions/offer thoughtful comments; d)demonstrate you understand the material by your full involvement during in-class activities. Every class session is counted toward your final participation grade. **If you do not participate actively in each class, you will reduce your participation grade by 50% for each given day..**

Analytical Literary Essay:-15%-a 3-4 page paper in which you will be asked to analyze the ways in which your life is a prison or includes modes of confinement utilizing a format or style (**except for poetry**) that one of the authors in the readings from *Gathering Seaweed* uses to discuss their own confinement or prison time. This assignment asks you to imitate the essay or narrative styles of an author, but to analyze your own experience in the process. You will need to get the instructor's approval for the author and style you wish to use by 1/30/08. The paper is due in class on 2/13/08. Since the readings in *Gathering Seaweed* are assigned for discussion in class on 2/13/08, this paper will require that you read the author you will use for this paper in advance, in order to complete and hand in the paper on the date it is due.

Analytical Dialogue Paper-20%-a 5-6 page paper in which you will be asked to construct a critical discussion or dialogue between three authors of readings assigned between 1/16/08 and 3/19/08, except those from the *Gathering Seaweed* selection. Write the discussion that might take place among them, or have any one address the other two (with their appropriately critical comments) on the subject of the impact the incidents they describe in their writing had on their lives or the lives of those they write about; how the topic they write about is political; and their feelings about the impact language, power, betrayal, faith, humiliation, ethnic or race relations, class divisions, gender inequalities, body politics, violence, confinement; or other markers of identity and difference have had in the country or region about which they are writing. This paper will be due on 3/19/08.

Comparative Analytical Paper-20%-a 5-6 page paper in which you will be asked to compare the experiences of one of the authors from the readings assigned on 3/26/08, 4/2/08, or 4/23/08 to a selection by a U.S. author of prison writing from one of two books: *Prison Writing in 20th-century America* (M. Bruce Franklin, ed.) or *Imprisoned Intellectuals* (Joy James, ed.). These books are on reserve in Reeves Library under a 3 hour check out period. Be prepared to photocopy the selection you will use from one of these books so that all of the students in class can have equal access to these resources. Depending on your choice of author from the assigned readings, you will most likely have to read them before the date the reading on them is assigned. We will be discussing different criteria by which to compare writers over the course of the term, so you will be asked to apply those comparative criteria in this paper as you analyze the experiences of the two authors you choose. Keep in mind that most of the relevant criteria will be political in nature. Your paper is to be divided into marked sections that indicate clearly the criteria by which you are comparing the two authors. This paper will

be due on 4/9/08.

Final Exam-There will be one final exam in this course. The exam will take place as scheduled during finals week and will be worth 20% of your final grade. This exam will strongly emphasize critical reflection on course readings and discussions, rather than memorization of names, dates, and places. Because this exam will be an open book and open note format exam questions will not be passed out in advance. **Rules governing academic honesty apply.** I expect that you will study with other students for the exam, and I encourage such study groups. Discussing answers to questions with fellow students can help you to think through class topics. However, make sure not to write answers that resemble those of the classmates with whom you have studied and expect to get credit. Writing up answers to the questions independently will help you succeed in keeping your work your own and not borrowing someone else's. **Exam format:** the exam will consist of identification questions, short essay questions, and one reflection essay question.

Pop quizzes-(10%)-There will be 6 unannounced ("pop") quizzes throughout the semester. These quizzes will be worth 20 points each. Quizzes will consist of content from the daily readings. You will be able to drop your lowest scored quiz, but **there will be no make-up quizzes.**

B. Grade Components

Your final grade in this course will be determined as follows:

Class Participation	15%
Pop Quizzes	10%
Analytical Essay	15%
Paper II	20%
Paper III	20%
Final exam	<u>20%</u>
	100%

Guidelines (Rubric) for Written Assignments (Written by Ben Slote and modified slightly by Ann Bomberger)

1) Written work in the A range is based on an original, logical and coherently organized set of ideas; it makes a clear and persuasive argument (even if the reader disagrees with its argument); it brings in specific, relevant examples to back up its assertions; its points, at each turn, are clearly articulated: the words carry precise meaning, they don't obscure it; its sentences use only the words their ideas require, not any more; its paragraphs have distinct though related roles in the essay's cohesion as a whole, each holding one thoroughly asserted idea (not two competing ideas, not one idea half-asserted); if appropriate it accurately and thoughtfully uses other sources; and its sentences are without the grammatical, spelling, or typographical mistakes that exacting proof-reading would catch. (All of this takes a lot of work. If it is all very nearly accomplished, the essay usually earns an A-.)

2) Written work in the B range: a very good paper, the writing of which is clearly, thoughtfully, and effectively executed. What sometimes prevents an "A" is a lack of originality, thorough thinking or careful proofreading. If two of these virtues are absent and the other areas of the paper are strong, the essay will usually earn a B-.

3) Written work in the C range: some conspicuous flaw usually earns an essay a C; its argument is really underdeveloped, it contains only minimal textual support, it has problems with organization and/or sentence clarity, it is in dire need of proofreading.

4) Written D work either contains more than one of the large problems cited in the "C" description or finds another way to convince its reader that the author has not spent nearly enough time on the thinking or writing in the essay.

5) Written work that earns an F misses on all criteria (originality, articulateness, persuasiveness, organization, the absence of mechanical mistakes).

Final Grade Scale (in percentage, not points)

93-100	A
90-92.9	A-
87-89.9	B+
83-86.9	B
80-82.9	B-
77-79.9	C+
73-76.9	C
70-72.9	C-
67-69.9	D+
63-66.9	D
60-62.9	D-
less than 60	F

Note: It is within the instructor's purview to apply qualitative judgment in determining grades for any assignment and for the course final grade.

Academic Honesty Policy

All students are expected to follow the principles of academic honesty as set out in the policies of Moravian College. See the Student Handbook for details. Any and all written work must be done in your own words (with the exception of direct quotations which are clearly indicated as such), and written work must include proper citations indicating the sources for any ideas, concepts, facts, or other information derived from others, whether or not you have restated it in your own words. Any cases of suspected cheating or plagiarism will be referred to the Academic Affairs Office. Academic dishonesty may result in a failing grade in the course.

Schedule and Assignments (Schedule may be changed at the discretion of the instructor; advance notice will be given)

*Readings marked with an asterisk are in the course packet

**You will be expected to spend 2 1/2-3 hours on work outside of class for every hour in class.

**Be sure to bring assigned readings to class each day. We will use them for in-class assignments, some of which will be graded. Your grade for the day may depend on your remembering to bring your book to class.

Class Session Date	Topic	Assigned Readings and Assignment(s) Due
1: W 1/16/08	Introduction	Dikotter, Ch.1 (in class) V. Havel "An Anatomy of Hate" (in class)
2: W 1/23/08	Africa as Country and Nation	*Gordon & Gordon, "African Politics" <i>Understanding Contemporary Africa</i> (1-26)
3: W 1/30/08	Institutions of Power in Africa	Dikotter, Ch. 3 submit author to be used for analytical essay for instructor's approval
4: W 2/6/08	What is Power?	*Coles, "From War and Peace" <i>Political Leadership</i> (27-46)
5: W 2/13/08	Literature as Politics in Africa	*Mapanje, <i>Gathering Seaweed</i> (47-109) Analytical Literary Essay due
6: W 2/20/08	India as Country and Nation	*Charlton, "India" <i>Comparing Asian Politics</i> (110-133)
7: W 2/27/08	Institutions of Power in India	Dikotter, Ch. 5
March 1-9, 2008	Spring Break	No classes
8: W 3/12/08	China as Country and Nation	*Charlton, "China" <i>Comparing Asian Politics</i> (134-154)
9: W 3/19/08	Institutions of Power in China	Dikotter, Ch. 8 Analytical Dialogue Paper due
March 21-24, 2008	Easter Break	No classes
10: W 3/26/08	Questioning Power?	*Paul, et al. "What's Wrong

Class Session Date	Topic	Assigned Readings and Assignment(s) Due
		With Imperialism?" <i>Justice and Global Politics</i> (155-170) *Downs, "Our Silence Will Hurt Us" <i>Why We Write</i> (171-179)
11: W 4/2/08	Literature as Politics in Asia	*Nasrin, "The Past Is Not Another Country" (180-203) *Wei, "The Fifth Modernization" (204-210) *Aung San, "All We Want Is Our Freedom," "Transcript..." & "Daw Aung..." (211-219)
12: W 4/9/08	Puerto Rico as Nation, not Country	*Morris, <i>Puerto Rico: Culture, Politics, and Identity</i> (220-251) Comparative Analytical Paper due
13: W 4/16/08	Institutions of Power in Latin America	Dikotter, Ch. 2 *O'Donnell, et al. "Confronting Difference" <i>Social Justice In These Times</i> (252-265)
14: W 4/23/08	Literature as Politics in the Puerto Rican Diaspora	* <i>Telling To Live</i> (266-308)
April 28-May 3, 2008	Final Week	Final Exam