

POSCI 125: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Fall 2008
Office: Comenius 104
Office Ph.: 610-861-1418

Professor Lisa Fischler
Email: fischler@moravian.edu
Class: MW 6b

Office Hours: Tu 10:30 am-12 pm; F 9:30-11am; 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 politics, violence and confinement in state-society relations 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 political histories, including colonialism and imperialism; political institutions, such as the prison; and 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. For comparative purposes, parallel institutions and trends in North America also will be covered. 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
- Besteman, Catherine, ed. *Violence: A Reader*. NY: New York University Press, 2002.
- Gottschalk, Marie. *The Prison and the Gallows: The Politics of Mass Incarceration in America*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- James, Joy, ed. *Imprisoned Intellectuals*. NY: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002.

Course Requirements

A. Graded Requirements

Class Participation-20% 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 and supporting it 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 and offer thoughtful comments; d) demonstrate you understand the material by your full involvement during in-class activities; e) engage effectively in peer-review sessions in class. 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.**

Exams-There will be two in-class exams (one midterm, one final) in this course. Each exam is worth 20% (total 40%) of your final grade. These essay exams will strongly emphasize critical reflection on course readings and discussions, rather than memorization of names, dates, and places. The exams are closed book exams. A list of possible exam questions will be passed out one week prior to each exam. The questions on the exam will be drawn from that list of questions. The list functions as a study guide. **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. The exams will be in week five and during finals week. Check the syllabus and published exam schedule for exact dates.

Critical Reasoning Paper-15% of your grade. See the syllabus for the due date. The paper will be based on material chosen from one chapter selected from one of the following books: a) *Violence: A Reader* or b) *The Prison and the Gallows: The Politics of Mass Incarceration in America*. Chapter choice must be approved by the instructor in week three; once a chapter choice is approved, no changes can be made. The paper is to be 2-3 pages, typed, single-spaced, size 12 font. The paper must be at least two full pages and no more than three full pages, single-spaced typed. The paper will consist of seven paragraphs and is designed to answer a set of critically analytical questions about the book chapter in relation to the topic of the course: politics, violence, and confinement in state-society relations. Critical reasoning papers will be graded according to the rubric for written assignments provided below. Detailed instructions for the paper format and content will be passed out and discussed in class during the first several weeks of the term. On this paper, I encourage you to seek help from the Writing Center. Although short, the assignment asks you to think clearly and to write concisely about a given subject. Writing Center tutors can be very helpful in this process. You will also be expected to proofread the paper and use correct citations according to either MLA or *Chicago Manual of Style* formats. Points will be deducted for grammar errors, spelling mistakes, incorrect citations, and failure to cite material. While the topic of

plagiarism and examples of correct quotation and citation format, paraphrasing, and summarizing will be covered in some class sessions, seeking help from the Writing Center can only improve your work.

Comparative Analytical Paper-15%-a 5-6 page paper in which you will be asked to compare the experiences of one of the authors from *Gathering Seaweed* (Jack Mapanje, ed.) to the experiences of one of the authors in *Imprisoned Intellectuals* (Joy James, ed.). Several copies of *Gathering Seaweed* are on reserve in Reeves Library. Depending on your choice of authors, 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. Check the syllabus for due date. On this paper, I also encourage you to seek help from the Writing Center.

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 questions on 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:

Exam I	20%	
Exam II	20%	
Class Participation	20%	
Critical Reasoning Paper	15%	
Comparative Analytical Paper		15%
Pop quizzes	<u>10%</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 on reserve in the library.

**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: Mon. 8/25/08	Introduction	V. Havel "An Anatomy of Hate" (in class)
1: Wed. 8/27/08	Politics and Prisons	Dikotter, Ch.1; Gottschalk, Ch. 1
2: Mon. 9/1/08	Labor Day	No classes
2: Wed. 9/3/08	Africa as Country and Nation	*Gordon & Gordon, "African Politics" <i>Understanding Contemporary Africa</i> (1-26)
3: Mon. 9/8/08	Power and Violence	Besteman, pp. 13-35; James, pp. 303-309
3: Wed. 9/10/08	Institutions of Power in Africa	Dikotter, Ch. 3; James, pp. 227-237
4: Mon. 9/15/08	States, War, and Organized Crime	Besteman, pp. 35-61; *Mapanje, pp. 50-57
4: Wed. 9/17/08	Literature as Politics in Africa	*Mapanje, pp. 2-5; 8-13; 31-41
5: Mon. 9/22/08	Political Prisoners	James, pp. 3-14; 31-47; *Mapanje, pp. 66-77
5: Wed. 9/24/08	Summing Up	Exam (in class)
6: Mon. 9/29/08	Use of Terror in State-Society Relations	Besteman, pp. 61-67; Gottschalk, Ch. 2
6: Wed. 10/1/08	India as Country and Nation	*Charlton, "India" <i>Comparing Asian Politics</i> (110-133)
7: Mon. 10/6/08	Fall Recess	No classes
7: Wed. 10/8/08	Institutions of Power in India	Dikotter, Ch. 5; *Mapanje, pp. 58-65
8: Mon. 10/13/08	Terrorism and Resistance	Besteman, pp. 99-114; *Nasrin, "The Past Is Not

Class Session Date	Topic	Assigned Readings and Assignment(s) Due
		Another Country” (180-203)
8: Wed. 10/15/08	Passion and Martyrdom	Besteman, pp. 118-134; *Mapanje, pp. 121-126; 157-167
9: Mon. 10/20/08	Criminal Justice and Capital Punishment	Gottschalk, Ch. 3; *Mapanje, pp. 194-202
9: Wed. 10/22/08	China as Country and Nation	*Charlton, “China” <i>Comparing Asian Politics</i> (134-154) Critical Reasoning Paper due (in class)
10: Mon. 10/27/08	Institutions of Power in China	Dikotter, Ch. 8; *Mapanje, pp. 313-316
10: Wed. 10/29/08	Genocide and Civil Rights	Besteman, Ch. 9; James, pp. 48-61
11: Mon. 11/3/08	Literature as Politics in Asia	*Wei, “The Fifth Modernization” (204-210) *Aung San, “All We Want Is Our Freedom,” “Transcript...,” & “Daw Aung...” (211-219)
11: Wed. 11/5/08	Victimology and Liberation	Gottschalk, Ch. 4; James, pp. 104-113
12: Mon. 11/10/08	Women, Prisons and Violence	Besteman, pp. 193-205; Gottschalk, Ch. 5
12: Wed. 11/12/08	Puerto Rico as Nation, not Country	*Morris, <i>Puerto Rico: Culture, Politics, and Identity</i> (220-251)
13: Mon. 11/17/08	Institutions of Power in Latin America	Dikotter, Ch. 2; James, pp. 279-291
13: Wed. 11/19/08	Normalizing Violence	Besteman, Ch. 12 Critical Reasoning Paper due (in class)
14: Mon. 11/24/08	Rights to Revolution	Gottschalk, Ch. 7;

Class Session Date	Topic	Assigned Readings and Assignment(s) Due
		James, pp. 114-120
14: 11/25/08-11/30/08	Thanksgiving Break	No classes
15: Mon. 12/1/08	Ethnic Violence	Besteman, Ch. 10;
15: Wed. 12/3/08	Liberation Struggles	James, pp. 135-161;
16: Mon. 12/8/08	Capital Punishment (1920-1960)	Gottschalk, Ch. 8
16: Wed. 12/10/08	Capital Punishment (1972-present)	Gottschalk, Ch. 9; James, pp. 176-184
Dec. 12, 15-19, 2008	Finals Week	Final exam date: TBA