

POSCI 125: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Fall 2009

Office: Comenius 104

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Office Hours: W 4-5:30 pm; F 9:30-11am; and other times by appointment.

Professor Lisa

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Class: W 6:30-9:30 pm

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; as soon as an absence is counted as excused, making up assignments (except for pop quizzes which cannot be made up) needs to be discussed with the instructor.

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.**

Poster Session- 20% of your grade. Each of you will present a poster in class that analyzes the ways in which your life is like a prison or includes modes of confinement, and compares your life to one of the authors in either *Gathering Seaweed* (on reserve) or *Imprisoned Intellectuals*. Your posters should be clearly structured and clearly stated in your own sentences. Guidelines on poster presentations will be handed out in class. You also are required to interact with fellow students in a short question and answer session that follows your presentation and to write a one-page report on the thinking behind and merits of your poster. You need to hand in your poster and report during class on the day of the poster session. Your grade will be based on your understanding and exposition of the concepts of "imprisonment" and

“confinement” as discussed in class, the clarity of your poster and your report, as well as your interaction with your fellow classmates.

eExchange Paper-20% of your grade. The goal of this 3-4 page paper is for you to creatively pull together the ideas about “prisons” or “modes of confinement,” with which you both agree and disagree, that we have discussed over the semester. The paper will take the form of an electronic (online) exchange, wherein you will describe either a) your ideal prison community, including structures, functions, inner workings, and politics; or b) an ideal prison resistance movement, including its organization, functions, inner workings, and politics. You will be asked, through the vehicle of this online exchange, to reveal your community in great detail: how you define that “community,” how it works, how its politics operate, the power relations that shape it, the reasons for its existence, the political actors who organize, run, or are its inhabitants, and the ways in which it reflects the greater society that has built it. The dimensions of a modern online exchange will be discussed in class. Part I of the paper will be a two paragraph, thematic summary (maximum one page) of the authors and the ideas you used to construct your prison or prison resistance movement. Part II of the paper will be the electronic (online) exchange. See the syllabus for due date.

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, two from *Gathering Seaweed* (Jack Mapanje, ed., on reserve in Reeves Library) and one from *Imprisoned Intellectuals*. 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. See syllabus for due date.

Comparative Analytical Paper-20%-a 5-6 page paper in which you will be asked to compare the analysis of one of the authors from *Cultures of Confinement* (Frank Dikotter, ed.) to the analysis of one of the authors in *Violence: A Reader* (Besteman, ed.). 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 writings of the two authors chosen. 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.

B. Grade Components

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

Poster Session	20%
Analytical Dialogue Paper	20%
Class Participation	20%
Critical Memo Paper	20%
Comparative Analytical Paper	<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 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: W 9/2/09	Introduction	Dikotter, Ch.1 (in class) V. Havel "An Anatomy of Hate" (in class)
2: W 9/9/09	Africa as Country and Nation	*Gordon & Gordon, "African Politics" Understanding Contemporary Africa (1-26) James, pp. 279-291
3: W 9/16/09	Institutions of Power in Africa	Dikotter, Ch. 3 James, pp. 227-237
4: W 9/23/09	Politics, Prisons, and Power	Gottschalk, Ch. 1 Besteman, pp. 13-35
5: W 9/30/09	States, War, and Organized Crime	Besteman, pp. 35-61 James, pp. 3-14; 31-47 Analytical Dialogue Paper due
6: W 10/7/09	India as Country and Nation	*Charlton, "India" Comparing Asian Politics (110-133) James, pp. 114-120
Oct. 10-13, 2009	Fall Break	No classes
7: W 10/14/09	Institutions of Power in India	Dikotter, Ch. 5 James, pp. 303-309
8: W 10/21/09	China as Country and Nation	*Charlton, "China" Comparing Asian Politics (134-154) Comparative Analytical Paper
9: W 10/28/09	Institutions of Power in China	Dikotter, Ch. 8 James, pp. 48-61
10: W 11/4/09	Terrorism and Resistance in State-Society Relations	Gottschalk, Ch. 2 Besteman, pp. 99-114

11: W 11/11/09	Martyrs, Victims, and Liberation	Besteman, pp. 118-134 Gottschalk, Ch. 4 Poster Sessions due in class
12: W 11/18/09	Capital Punishment and Civil Rights	Gottschalk, Ch. 3 Besteman, Ch. 9
11/25/09-11/29/09	Thanksgiving Break	No classes
14: W 12/2/09	Institutions of Power in Latin America	Dikotter, Ch. 2 eExchange Paper due
15: W 4/23/08	Women, Prisoners and Violence	Besteman, pp. 193-205 Gottschalk, Ch. 5