

Political Science 125A: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Fall 2015

MW 10:20 am-11:30 am
Comenius 309

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Office hours: Mondays 2:30pm-3:30pm, Tuesdays 10:30am-11:30am, and by appointment

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Course goals:

This course provides an introductory survey of major approaches, theories, and concepts of the comparative politics subfield. We begin with a brief overview of the field and move to discuss one of the key concepts in comparative politics, the state. What is the state? What are the functions of the state? What would happen if the state ceases to function and cannot maintain political order? For the first several weeks, we examine the state's relationship to its citizens, market, and development, as well as globalization.

In the second part, we examine different types of regimes—democracies and non-democracies. We discuss major political institutions and how people are represented and participate in political processes in democratic and nondemocratic countries. In the final part, we examine regime changes. What conditions are conducive to democratization, military coups, and revolutions? Why do some authoritarian countries successfully move to democracy while others fall in civil wars or are toppled by coups, as we witnessed in the Arab Spring? Why some authoritarian governments, like Chinese communist party, successfully “resist” to move to democracy and stay in power? Do the differences in the outcomes derive from the differences in political institutions? Or do cultural, economic, or international factors account for the differences in outcomes? Through comparisons and case studies, we try to find common patterns in political phenomena and behavior across the world.

In this course, we also learn the basics of comparative research and engage in small research projects. We will devote some of our class time to addressing common difficulties and problems we encounter in research. By the end of the semester, we will be able to investigate real world problems—from the ISIS to Ukraine to Cuba to North Korea—by ourselves!

Course requirements and grading:

Class attendance and participation

Class participation grade (20% of your total grade) includes attendance, positive contributions to class discussions, and short quizzes/homework/presentations assigned in class. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class. Missing class and quizzes will affect your grade. I encourage your active participations in class discussions. Discussions are important because through discourse we could: 1) reach a shared understanding of important terms and concepts, 2) foster

our tolerance for divergent views, and 3) develop critical thinking and the skills to formulate and present one's own arguments in response to others'.

Short essay assignments

There are three short essay assignments that you are required to complete. Detailed guidelines for each assignment will be provided and discussed in class.

1. Short essay (3-4 pages) on the comparison of strong/fragile states due on Sept. 23.
2. Research design (1 page) due on Oct. 21.
3. Case study paper (4-5 pages) due on Dec. 7.

Exams

There will be two exams: midterm and final. *Lite* midterm exam (15% of your total grade) consists only of identifications (short explanations) of important terms and concepts. Final exam consists of identifications and short essay questions that focus on general and broad topics in comparative politics.

Final course grade will be calculated as follows:

Class attendance and participation	20%
Short essay (essay 1)	15%
Research design (essay 2)	10%
Case study paper (essay 3)	15%
Lite midterm exam	15%
Final exam	25%

Required texts:

1. Stephen Orvis, Carol Ann Drogus eds., *Introducing Comparative Politics; Concepts and Cases in Context*. Third edition. CQ Press. 2014. ISBN-13: 978-1452241524.
2. Paul Collier, *Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done about It*. 2007. *****Don't purchase this book: PDF version is uploaded in Blackboard. The book is also available as an ebook through the Reeves Library.**

The first book is available for purchase in the bookstore. Additional readings are posted in Blackboard or available on line (through the links on the syllabus).

Class rules:

1. Please turn off your cell phones when you enter the classroom.
2. Please don't be late for class. If you are late for attendance call at the beginning of class, you do not get a credit for the attendance of that class.
3. Leaving classroom during class sessions is discouraged except for medical and other emergencies. Please stay in classroom for 70 minutes.
4. You are expected to read all assigned readings before each class and to submit assignments on time.

Academic honesty:

All Students should be aware of their obligations under the Academic Honesty Policy published in the Moravian College Student Handbook. Please see:

<http://www.moravian.edu/studentlife/handbook/academic/academic2.html>.

Students with disabilities:

Students who wish to request academic accommodations based on a disability is required to contact Ms. Elaine Mara, Academic & Disability Support. The office is located at the lower level of Monocacy Hall. The phone number for the office is 610-861-1401. Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNED READINGS*

*Subject to revision and update during the semester.

Week 1**8/31 – Introduction**

No reading.

9/2 – What is Comparative Politics?

Read *Introducing Comparative Politics* (hereafter CP), Ch.1.

Week 2**9/7 – Different Regimes**

Read CP, Ch. 3.

9/9 – What are States?: Origin and Functions

Read CP, Ch. 2.

Week 3**9/14 – Strong States and Failed States**

Read Collier, *Bottom Billion* (in Blackboard), Chs. 1 and 5.

9/16 – Research Practice 1: Fragile State Index

****Short essay on state comparison assigned****

Week 4

9/21 – Nation, Nationalism and Separatism

- Read CP, Ch.4.
- Skim “Separatist Movement,” by CQ Global Researcher, pp. 3-22 (in Blackboard).

9/23 – Ethnic Conflicts and Civil Wars

*****State comparison essay due in class*****

Read:

- *Bottom Billion*, Ch. 2.
- “ISIS Fast Facts,” CNN Library, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/08/08/world/isis-fast-facts/>

Week 5

9/28 – Political Violence: Genocide

Read:

- “Past Genocides and Mass Atrocities,” endgenocide.org, <http://endgenocide.org/learn/past-genocides/>
- (Recommended) Scott Straus (2012): “Destroy Them to Save Us”: Theories of Genocide and the Logics of Political Violence, in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 24:4, 544-560 (in Blackboard).

9/30 – Political Violence: Terrorism

Read “Terrorism Past and Present,” by Rand Corporation (in Blackboard).

Week 6

10/5 – Review for midterm

10/7 – Lite midterm exam (Identifications only, in class, closed book)

Week 7

10/12 No class (Fall recess)

10/14 – Research Practice 2: Research Design

****Research design assigned****

Week 8

10/19 – Political Economy: States and Market

Read CP, Ch. 5, pp. 196-208.

10/21 – Political Economy: States and Development

Read CP, Ch. 5 (“Economic Development Debate,” pp. 208-215, and case studies, pp. 225-255).

*****Research design due in class*****

Week 9

10/26 – States and Globalization

Read CP, Ch. 10, pp. 512-532.

10/28—Globalization and Development: The “Bottom Billion”

Read

- CP, the rest of Ch. 10.

- *Bottom Billion*, Ch. 6.

Week 10

11/2 – Democratic Institutions

Read CP, Ch. 6.

****Case Study paper assigned****

11/4 – What Makes Democracy?: State Society Relations

Read CP, Ch. 7.

Week 11

11/9 – Authoritarian Institutions

Read CP, Ch. 8.

11/11 – Authoritarian Resilience: Case Study of China

Read the following two brief articles:

-“The Chinese Puzzle: Democratic Transition, Authoritarian Resilience, or Chaotic Breakdown?”

Shiftingwealth.blogspot, <http://shiftingwealth.blogspot.com/2013/10/the-chinese-puzzle-democratic.html>

-“China's Modern Authoritarianism: The Communist Party's ultimate goal is to stay in power, not to liberalize,” *The Wall Street Journal*, May 25, 2009, available at:

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124319304482150525.html>

Week 12

11/16, and 11/18 – Regime Change 1: Democratization

Read:

- CP, Ch.9 (Democratization section)

- Samuel Huntington, “Democracy’s Third Wave,” *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Spring 1991 (in Blackboard)

Week 13

11/23 – Case study consultations

11/25 No class (Thanksgiving recess)

Week 14

11/30, 12/2 – Regime Change 2: Coups and Revolutions

Read:

-Ch.9 (coups and revolution sections)

-“Three Years after Arab Spring, Democracy's Future In Middle East Still Uncertain.” *The World Post*, 10/05/2013. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/05/arab-spring-democracy_n_4049414.html

Week 15

12/7 – Case study presentations

*****Case study due in class****

12/9 – Review for final exam

FINAL EXAM: Thursday, Dec. 17, 8:30AM