

POL 210-40: Comparative Politics

Updated 8/22/2011

Fall 2011 TR 1-2:20pm SSB 2407



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<http://www.stchas.edu/faculty/proesler/>

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| Tuesdays & Thursdays : 9-10am; 11:30 - 1 | Also available by appointment |

Without comparisons to make, the mind does not know how to proceed.

–Alexis de Tocqueville

The purpose of this course is to provide an overview of comparative politics. The study of the political and social experiences of other countries heightens our understanding of politics in general as well as here in the United States. Upon completion of the course, students should be able to demonstrate knowledge of the fundamental structure of the governments of several key countries (focusing mainly on the US, the UK, Japan, Russia and China). Students will also demonstrate understanding of the institutional workings within these countries and how various personalities and forces interact with these countries' political institutions and processes to shape policies. Students should be able to compare systemic and policy differences between countries in the hopes of learning some fundamental truths about politics.

To help you illustrate the similarities and differences around the globe, you will write a paper comparing some aspect of public policy. This would be similar to a 'traditional' research paper, but would be in the form of a policy proposal. The goal of the paper (and of the class) is for you to learn about an aspect of comparative politics as well as improve your understanding the relevance of comparative politics.

Upon Completion of this course you should be able to:

- describe the workings of the various political, social and economic institutions;
- explain how social, economic and political forces interact to shape policies;
- describe and discuss the relationship between citizens and government.

Required Texts & Materials

Hauss, Charles. *Comparative Politics: Domestic Responses to Global Challenges*. 7th Edition (2011)

Palast, Greg. The Best Democracy Money Can Buy (pp 311-315; 176-182; 192-204). (on reserve)

Other readings (handouts or internet assignments) may be assigned throughout the semester

**The syllabus may change, so be aware for potential updates*

GRADING

A. Exams

There will be one mid-term worth 120 points and a comprehensive final worth 160 points. The exams will be made up of multiple choice and short and long essays. I allow make-up exams if you arrange it within a week of the exam date; however, the format is subject to my discretion. If you miss the exam, let me know when you plan to take it (call the Assessment Center (x8249) to determine their hours), and I will send the test to them.

B. Quizzes

There will be 3 “major” quizzes during the course of the semester (covering several chapters), made up of multiple choice and short essay questions. Each quiz will be worth about 40-50 points each.

There will be NO make-up quizzes. Missing a quiz will result in losing all the points of that quiz. For **ONE quiz only**, I will replace the zero with your grade you received on the final exam. Your final exam score will be weighted appropriately to make up the extra points. In other words, if you get a 85% on the multiple choice section of the final exam, that will be your score for that quiz.

C. Participation

As I said earlier, this is not a straight lecture course. I encourage and expect participation. There are no 'bad' ideas as long as they are **relevant** to the material. However, class disruption will not be tolerated: show **respect** to your fellow students and to your instructor. Classroom discussion not only allows you to learn from each other, but gives me the opportunity to get insights from you. Furthermore, **50 participation points** can have a significant impact on your grade. **DO NOT fall behind in the reading.** In order to effectively participate, you must have read the material.

D. Electoral Variations – 30 points; 3 pages (**typed**) – about 600 words

Listen to the clip on Moodle & explain how the Electoral College works today (specifically, the number and selection of electors and how they vote). Type a brief synopsis of at least 2 OTHER plans discussed in the audio clip (besides ours) and **how and why** the election results would be the same or different under each plan. In the 2008 election, Obama & McCain campaigned mostly in a handful of states and ignored the rest of the country. Look at [this map of battleground states](#). How does our “winner-take-all” system affect campaigning? How does this assignment explain the importance of “how” in Lasswell’s definition of politics? Contrast our approach to selecting our executive with the approaches in another DEMOCRACY we discuss in this class. Which method of selecting a leader is the most democratic? Explain. Which would you prefer?

E. Paper Proposal

You will turn in a typed **thesis statement** (*one sentence only*) and six sources (three of which must be scholarly) in proper *bibliographic format*. For the proper bibliographic format, use the citing guidelines found at <http://www.stchas.edu/academics/student-resources/library/citing/>. You may use MLA or Turabian style, but I do want some listing of page numbers even when you use the library’s online sources (“page 14 of 19” for example), though I know it is not normally required. You will be graded on the number of **scholarly** sources and the strength/viability of the topic for a 7-10 page Political Science paper. **You are welcome to use the internet as a starting point, but internet sources are almost never scholarly** (though EBSCOHost sources are **sometimes** scholarly). **Your thesis statement should read like a working hypothesis.** This proposal will be your starting point and **you will resubmit this proposal** (*with my comments*) with the final draft of your paper.

F. Research Paper

As mentioned earlier, you will write a paper on some aspect of public policy. This need not be a ‘traditional’ research paper. My goal is for you to analyze some aspect of public policy and make **your conclusion in the form of a policy proposal**. The goal of the paper (and of the class) is for you to learn about an aspect of comparative politics as well as improve your understanding the relevance of comparative politics in general.

For example, you might compare different approaches to restructuring economic systems from communism to capitalism. However, you would write a paper as if you were a policy analyst exploring the best approach to take for ‘your’ government. For example, you might be an analyst for Cuba, in which you’d explore the best option for turning the communist regime into a capitalist one (you could explore the reforms in China, Russia and Central Europe). Or, you might explore the best approach to resolving the social security or health insurance problems of the US by exploring how other countries are dealing with similar problems. Many other issues would be suitable to explore, including the privatization of electricity or water, approaches to education reform, or drug policy. As you can see, this paper can cover a huge array of topics, so you can pick one that interests you. This class and this project will improve your understanding of comparative politics and demonstrate its relevance.

The paper should have proper citations and bibliography. Each paper will be based on at least four (4) scholarly sources, as well as other sources. **You are welcome to use the internet as a starting point, but internet sources are almost never scholarly.**

All written assignments (including essays) will be graded on punctuation, spelling and grammar. Being able to communicate your ideas is as important as the ideas themselves. Before you turn in your final draft, I suggest you have someone review a draft of your paper. *Always keep a copy of anything you turn in!* I haven't lost a paper yet, but it's always possible. Finally, if you wish to get a copy of your paper returned to you with comments, then you must turn in **two copies** of your final paper (**along with your original thesis statement with my grade and comments**). The papers must be 7 to 10 typed, double-spaced pages *stapled together*. **I will give feedback on rough drafts turned in at least 10 days before the due date.**

Note: Scholarly sources are found in PEER REVIEWED journals (you must specify that during the search) and are more than five pages in length (be sure to include the number of pages of the article in your bibliography). You may have as many sources as you wish, but you **MUST** use the EbscoHOST **Academic Search Elite** program **in our library** (available on its webpage) for these five scholarly sources. Ask any reference librarian for assistance in using this program.

Rubric for Comparative Paper

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Strength of Thesis Paragraph | /10 |
| Quality of Research (& ideas) | /30 |
| Organization | /10 |
| Grammar & transitions | /10 |
| Bibliography | /10 |
| Citations | /10 |

Note: the thesis statement and class presentation are worth an additional 10 points each

G. Paper Presentation & 1 page handout – 10 points

As part of the learning process, every student will present his/her paper to the rest of the class. You will have 5 minutes to present your hypothesis and your conclusion. The presentation should be well organized and professional, and will be followed by 5 minutes of questions. Doing a presentation will give your classmates the benefit of your research. I will not grade you on your presentation style (this is not a speech class), but you need to be prepared and present your paper in a clear manner and **summarize your conclusions on a single sheet of paper to be handed out to all students in the class.**

Extra Credit: go to my webpage for opportunities: <http://www.stchas.edu/faculty/proesler/210/compar.html>
Extra Credit opportunities will be available throughout the class. The first assignments will be posted on my webpage, and others will follow throughout the semester. You may **earn up to 10 points total; each assignment is worth 5 points** unless otherwise noted.

Grading Scale: A = 90%+ B = 80%+ C = 70%+ D = 60%+

| Assignment | Total maximum points* | Your Score |
|----------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Midterm | 110 points* | |
| Final | 140 points* | |
| Quizzes | 120 points* | |
| Electoral Variations | 30 points | |
| Paper Proposal | 10 points | |
| Paper | 80 points | |
| Presentation | 10 points | |
| Participation | 50 points | |
| Extra credit | (up to 10 points) | |
| TOTAL | 550 points* | /550 |

*These point totals are approximate and may change

Help!!!

Students needing extra help with *ANY* aspect of the course material are encouraged to seek help. I am available during my office hours and by appointment. The ACE center on campus is also a valuable resource, providing services such as *Research Paper Consultants*. Practice quizzes will be available on WebCT to test your understanding of the material in the textbook. **Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns about the class.**

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty will NOT be tolerated in this class. Any person cheating or aiding others to cheat will receive an '0' on the assignment in question and possibly fail the entire course, at my discretion. **Plagiarism is a form of cheating and will not be tolerated** (*cite properly*). All students will adhere to a personal honor code whereby they promise to do their own work.

Syllabus Addendum

Business, Computer & Social Sciences Moodle

Fall 2011

Last day to drop and receive a “W”:*October 28*

Last day to change from credit to audit or audit to credit: *September 16*

Attendance: You should attend all class meetings for classes in which you are enrolled.

The college has no plan of recognized class ‘cuts’ or absences. You should attend all class meetings in which you are enrolled. Excessive absence may be sufficient cause to fail the course. For distance classes, “attendance” will be defined as active participation in the course as described in the individual course syllabus. The final decision as to what constitutes excessive absence from a class is left to the instructor and will be outlined in the course syllabus. Students should discuss any absences with their instructor. Attendance is required. The class will not be strictly lecture format. Hence, each absence after the first three will result in a 10-point loss from your grade.

Campus Closings: For up-to-date information on closings due to inclement weather or other emergencies, call 636-922-8000 or log on to www.stchas.edu or *Twitter* or <http://www.facebook.com/stchas>

GRADED PAPERS, QUIZZES AND EXAMS:

Graded papers and exams will be returned to students as soon as is reasonably practical. Normally this will be within one week, but could be longer in unusual circumstances. All out-of-class assignments **MUST** be typed!

Instructional Goals: This class will provide an environment where the College’s goals for students in the areas of Critical Thinking, Writing Across the Curriculum, and Computer Literacy are practiced. These will be utilized in a variety of ways throughout the course.

Students with special needs: We all have various channels through which we learn best. The College has an Office of Accessibility Services that guides, counsels, and assists students with disabilities. It is located in Room 133 of the StudentCenter. It is your responsibility to discuss with the instructor during the first week of class anything needed to help you succeed. If you have special needs, please call Pam Bova (636-922-8247) in the Office of Accessibility Services so that your eligibility for services can be determined.

Mental Health/Counseling Service for Students: SCC/Bridgeway offers free counseling service to SCC students. Ms. Mary Hall is the on-campus counselor. Students may call (636)288-6533 to set up an appointment on campus, or at the St. Charles location of Bridgeway Counseling Services, whichever they prefer. If you have a crisis after business hours, call the same number and Mary’s voice mail will give you a phone number to call for a counselor who will assess the situation and make appropriate referrals. Students can self refer, or anyone on campus can direct you to these services. Mary’s campus address is in 1204 ADM. The St. Charles location of Bridgeway is at 1570 South Main Street.

Safety Consideration after Night Classes: It is highly recommended that students park in the same designated lot, to be agreed upon the first night class, and walk out together as a group when class is over. Although any students who wish to contact campus security to walk them to their car may do so.

| Week of... | POL 210 Topics | Reading Assignment (<i>chapters are from the Hauss text</i>) |
|----------------|--|--|
| 8/23 | Introduction: Why Compare? | Ch. 1; Video: 60 Minutes: Where Have All the Addicts Gone? ; Bowling for Columbine: Why violence? ; Colbert compares religions ; |
| 8/30 | <i>Comparing Healthcare</i> | Chapter 2; Palast pp311-320; T.R. Reid film & Sicko clips West Wing: Parliament v Presidential systems ; |
| 9/6 | No School | |
| 9/8 | Industrialized Democracies Who's #1? | Ch. 3; Film clips: <i>Full Monty</i> & <i>Monty Python/Holy Grail clips</i> |
| 9/13 | The UK | Ch. 4; video: Question Time ; Question time on Iraq ; Question Time on Education ; NBC: Fox Hunting ; Queen's Speech: weakening Civil Liberties |
| 9/20 | Quiz 1 | DS: Prince Charles Scandal |
| | Germany <i>Economic Policies in the US, Germany & Japan</i> | Chapter 6; Video: <i>Culture of Commerce</i> |
| 9/27 | Comparing the EU & the US Electoral Variations due | Ch. 7; go here for Electoral Variations link: Electoral Variations clip (also here for alternative link) |
| 9/29 | Thesis Statements DUE | |
| 10/4 | Quiz 2 | |
| 10/6 | <i>Comparing Education: The US, Japan & Singapore</i> | Video: <i>Schools of Thought</i> ; Daily Show clip: US Geography Test Scores |
| 10/13 | Midterm |  |
| 10/18 | Crisis of Communism | Ch. 8; Video: <i>Return of the Czar</i> |
| 10/25 | Russia: From Empire to Collapse | Ch. 9: |
| 11/1 | China | Ch. 10; Videos: <i>Path of Chinese Privatization</i> ; <i>Democracy in China Listen to</i> http://discover.npr.org/features/feature.jhtml?wfId=1183359 |
| | Quiz 3 | Film: <i>Not One Less</i> ; <i>China--The Dragon Ascends</i> |
| 11/8 | Development | Ch. 11; Palast—(pp176 – 182 (Cochabamba) & pp192-204 (Venezuela & Chile) ; DS: Grameen Bank |
| 11/15 & 11/22 | Approaches to Reconciliation: Iraq & South Africa | Ch. 14; Video: <i>Search for Justice: Road to Reconciliation</i> ; Ugandans Welcome Terrorists... ; Healing in Mozambique (EXTRA CREDIT DUE) |
| 11/23-27 | Thanksgiving break! |   |
| 11/29 | Presentations Begin | |
| 12/6 | Finish presentations | |
| 12/13 or 12/15 | Final Exam date t.b.d. by student vote |  |

These dates are approximate and may be changed.