

**Introduction to Comparative Politics**  
**POLS 2200-002**  
**University of Utah – Fall 2007**

Instructor: Carrie Humphreys  
Time: M & W 1:25-2:45 p.m.  
Room: OSH 111

Office Hours: M 12-1 p.m., W 3-4 p.m., and by appointment  
Office: OSH 307  
Telephone: 801.585.6047  
Email: [c\\_humphreys@hotmail.com](mailto:c_humphreys@hotmail.com)

**Course Overview & Objectives**

This is an introductory course on comparative politics. As one of the subfields within the discipline of political science, comparative politics systematically compares, contrasts, and analyzes the political systems and institutions of different countries, as well as the political action of individuals and groups. Even if you do not intend to major in political science, knowledge of other political systems will give you a more comprehensive perspective for understanding the political system of the United States or your home country.

The course is formatted, with a mixture of lectures and discussions, to allow students the opportunity to be actively involved in the comparative process. More specifically, the course is divided into two major sections. The first half of the course is designed to provide a broad understanding of the central concepts, approaches, and methods. This part of the course will allow the class to consider important questions: What kinds of things are compared? What is a political system? What institutions comprise these systems? Why does democracy develop in some systems but not others? What are the differences between democratic and authoritarian regimes? In what ways do people participate politically in authoritarian regimes? The second half of the course will apply the information from the first half of the course within the context of case studies. These countries reflect geographical, political, economic, cultural, and historical diversity. The characteristics of major political institutions as well as the current socio-economic and political issues will be examined in each country individually as well compared to other cases.

By the end of the course, students should have a solid understanding of the core ideas and concepts of comparative politics. Also, students should be able to apply these core ideas and concepts to the case studies while also being able to compare and contrast across the set of countries. The general approach to political analysis learned by students in this course can be extended to country cases beyond those covered in this class. Finally, students should further develop their skills to critically analyze and actively discuss relevant political topics.

**Readings**

Most of the required reading assignments for this course are found in the following two required texts, available through the University Bookstore:

O'Neil, Patrick. 2006. *Essentials of Comparative Politics*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

O'Neil, Patrick, Karl Fields, and Don Share. 2006. *Cases in Comparative Politics*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

In addition, some supplemental (but also required) journal articles and book chapters have been placed on regular or electronic reserve at the Marriott Library. It is the students' responsibility to get a copy of these articles. They are indicated with an asterisk (\*\*) in the course schedule.

### Course Grades & Requirements

Final course grades will be determined based upon fulfilling the following requirements:

Participation: 10%

Mid-term exam: 35%

Final exam: 25%

Comparative project

(Proposal & Paper): 30%

**100% = Total**

Participation: The participation grade is based on: 1) Providing thoughtful comments, answering questions posed by the instructor, and raising critical questions in class. To do so, you are expected to keep up with the weekly readings and attend class. 2) Coming to class prepared to engage in class discussions. Throughout the semester, we will be having small group and class discussions. This is an opportunity for students to become actively engaged in the material and share their ideas, opinions, and insight. You are expected to participate actively and intelligently in class discussions. 3) Participate in any exercises and activities, which includes pop quizzes. Because participation is 10% of the grade, attendance to all class sessions is strongly encouraged.

Exams: There are two in-class exams in this course: a mid-term (10/31) and a final (12/14). Both exams will consist of multiple-choice questions, short-answer identifications, and essay questions drawn from the class readings, lectures and discussions. The mid-term exam will focus on the basic concepts and ideas of comparative politics, and the final exam will focus the case studies. There are review days scheduled prior to the exams. Students are required to bring a blue book for the essay portion of the exams.

Comparative Project: Students will select a theme or topic (an institution, an aspect of political culture or political economy, etc.) and compare/contrast two countries. This project involves two steps: 1) Students must submit a one page paper proposal (due 10/3) that provides an overview of the countries and the topic to be studied. 2) Students must explore their topic by conducting research and writing a 6-8 page paper (due 12/5), which must include a minimum of five academic sources. While you can use web sources (although not exclusively and not Wikipedia), most information should be gathered from academic journals, books, or weekly political magazines (like *The Economist*). In addition, standard size 12 font, 1-inch margins, double-spacing required, and a consistent citation style are required. More detailed paper guidelines will be handed out during the beginning of the semester.

### Policies & Miscellaneous

Make-up & Late Policies: Extensions and early/make-up exams are not allowed except in the case of extenuating circumstances. Determining whether a circumstance is 'extenuating' will be left to the discretion of the instructor, but definitely excludes sleeping late, forgetfulness, missing the bus, etc. In order for you to take an exam on a date other than that indicated in the syllabus, you must

make arrangements with the instructor prior (i.e., at least a week) to the exam date. Late papers will be accepted but they will be subject to deductions. For each day late, 10% will be taken off of the final grade.

Academic Honesty: Academic honesty is expected in every aspect of this course. Cheating and presenting somebody else's work or ideas as your own (i.e., plagiarism) are serious offenses. It is always important to give credit where credit is due so be sure to include citations whenever you draw on others' work. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action. Please refer to the University's Student Code for additional information. It can be found online at <http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html>.

University Writing Center: This is a useful resource to help you become a better writer. Tutors can assist in multiple aspects of the writing process from developing ideas to revising paragraphs. Go early and go often to make the best use of this service. It is located on the 2nd floor of the Marriott Library and can be contacted at 687-9122 or [www.writingcenter.utah.edu](http://www.writingcenter.utah.edu).

Equal Access: The University of Utah and the Department of Political Science seek to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, please provide reasonable notice to the instructor and contact the Center for Disability Services: 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020, [www.disability.utah.edu](http://www.disability.utah.edu). This information is available in alternative format with prior notification.

Schedule Changes: The course schedule is approximate and may be subject to modification during the semester. Announcements regarding any necessary changes to the syllabus will be made in class, and study guides and other material will also be handed out in class. This information will not be posted on a web site, making it only available in class. You are responsible for getting this information.

### **Course Schedule & Reading Assignments**

#### Week 1 - Introduction

8/20: Syllabus & Overview

8/22: What is comparative politics?  
*No readings, lecture only – due to textbook delay*

#### Week 2 – The State

8/27-29: The State  
*Read: O'Neil, Essentials of Comparative Politics - Chapter 2*  
*Read: Rotberg, Robert I. 2002. "Failed states in a world of terror." Foreign Affairs 81 (4): 127-140. \*\**

#### Week 3 – Nations & Society

9/3: Labor Day – No Class

9/5: Nations & Political Culture  
*Read: O'Neil, Essentials of Comparative Politics - Chapter 3*  
*Read: Putnam, Robert D. 1995. "Bowling alone: America's declining social capital." Journal of Democracy 6 (1): 65-78. \*\**

#### Week 4 – Political Economy

9/10-12: Components of Political Economy & Economic Systems

*Read: O’Neil, Essentials of Comparative Politics - Chapter 4*

*Read: Przeworski, Adam and Fernando Limongi. 1993. “Political regimes and economic growth.” Journal of Economic Perspective 7 (3): 51-70. \*\**

#### Week 5 – Regime Types: Authoritarian

9/17-19: Introduction to regimes & Authoritarian regimes

*Read: O’Neil, Essentials of Comparative Politics - Chapter 5*

*Read: Linz, Juan J. and Alfred Stepan. “Modern nondemocratic regimes.”\*\**

#### Week 6 – Regime Types: Democratic

9/24-26: The History of Democracies & Advanced Democracies

*Read: O’Neil, Essentials of Comparative Politics - Chapters 6 (skim) & 7*

*Read: Pharr, Susan J., Robert D. Putnam, and Russell Dalton. 2000. “Trouble in the advanced democracies? A quarter-century of declining confidence.” Journal of Democracy 11 (2): 5-25. \*\**

#### Week 7 – Regime Types: Communist

10/1-3: Communist regimes & transitions

*Read: O’Neil, Essentials of Comparative Politics - Chapter 8*

*Read: Huntington, Samuel. 1991. The third wave: Democratization in the late twentieth century. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press – pp. 3-31. \*\**

10/3: **Paper proposals due at beginning of class**

#### Week 8 – Fall Break (10/8-10/13) – No Class

#### Week 9 – Less Developed and Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs)

10/15-17: Less Developed and NICs

*Read: O’Neil, Essentials of Comparative Politics - Chapter 9*

#### Week 10 – Globalization and Political Violence

10/22: Globalization

*Read: O’Neil, Essentials of Comparative Politics - Chapter 10*

*Read: Barber, Benjamin. 1992. “Jihad vs. McWorld.” Atlantic 269 (3): 53-62. \*\**

*Read: Barber, Benjamin. 2002. “Beyond Jihad vs. McWorld.” Nation 274 (2): 11-18. \*\**

10/24: Political Violence

*Read: O’Neil, Essentials of Comparative Politics - Chapter 11*

#### Week 11 – Wrap up, Review & Midterm

10/29: Wrap up Political Violence, and review for midterm

10/31: **Midterm Exam**

Week 12 – Case Study #1: France

11/5-7: France

*Read: O’Neil, Fields & Share, Cases in Comparative Politics – Chapter 4*

Week 13 – Case Study #2: China

11/12-14: China

*Read: O’Neil, Fields & Share, Cases in Comparative Politics – Chapter 7*

Week 14 – Case Study #3: Iran

11/19-21: Iran

*Read: O’Neil, Fields & Share, Cases in Comparative Politics – Chapter 9*

Week 15 – Case Study #4: Brazil

11/26-28: Brazil

*Read: O’Neil, Fields & Share, Cases in Comparative Politics – Chapter 11*

Week 16 – Case Study #5: South Africa & Review

12/3: South Africa

*Read: O’Neil, Fields & Share, Cases in Comparative Politics – Chapter 12*

12/5: Wrap up and review for final exam

**Comparative papers due at beginning of class**

**Final Exam: Friday, December 14, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m., OSH 111**