

Political Science 150
Introduction to Comparative Politics
Fall 2008
T-Th 4:00 – 5:15 PM

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Office: 742 SWKT
Classroom: 2107 JKB
Office hours: W 2:00-4:00 pm

Class Page: Log onto blackboard through [Route Y](#) or at <https://blackboard.byu.edu>. If you cannot log in, it is your responsibility to let your TA know, and they will try to help!

Welcome to 150. I love teaching this course, which introduces comparative politics – one of the four “subfields” of political science (the others are American politics, international relations, and political philosophy). I want the class to be enjoyable for you as well as stimulating and challenging. The outline of the class is as follows: We get started by looking at three essential concepts in comparative politics. Next, we do a mock constitutional convention. We then look at eight countries and also look at post-communist Eastern Europe and the EU. Although this course will expose you to a lot of information about the world of politics, it’s a conceptual class, not a current events or theory class.

Many of you are likely to wonder what “comparative politics” even is (one student suggested I call it “around the world in 80 days”). At times, comparative politics has been just a euphemism for “countries that aren’t America.” But talking about “the rest of the world” as one category is actually pretty silly. I’ll try to illustrate what comparative politics is about by introducing three concepts central to comparative politics today, namely, *political culture*, *interests*, and *institutions*. We will apply these to country cases from all over the world. Throughout the rest of the semester, we will continually add more concepts to our class vocabulary, and you will learn to apply many of them in written and oral assignments. My objective is to teach you to use well these fundamental conceptual tools of comparative politics. We’ll build these skills in a step-by-step fashion. For this reason, over half of your grade will be determined by assignments done later in the semester. Meetings with me and the TAs, along with good performance on regular quizzes, are the best way to ensure that you stay on track.

The course will mix lecture and discussion. The reading assignments generally remain well under 100 pages per week. The main textbook is easy to read, but my book is significantly more complicated. We will go over it carefully.

Quizzes

Most classes will begin with a five minute quiz, the main purpose of which is to ensure that you are focused on the concepts needed to understand the lecture and/or prepare for the final. The question for each day’s quiz is drawn randomly from a list provided on Blackboard in advance. As you read, therefore, it would help to have a **hard copy** of potential quiz questions in front of you so you can draft answers (be sure to save your quiz preps so you can study for the final from them later). You may drop the three lowest quizzes, but there are **no make-up quizzes (even for excused absences)**. Quiz questions are typically posted by 6 pm on the day of class, so that the next Thursday’s quiz questions are up by Tuesday at 6 and the next Tuesday questions are up by Thursday at 6.

Because the quizzes often use open-ended questions, there is inevitably a degree of subjectivity in grading. **Students who discuss their quizzes with their TA or with me generally soon get the hang of what is expected.** As a broad outline, I encourage students to try to recapitulate essential points of the reading in their quiz answer (usually one paragraph long) and also to “put things in their own words.” This second step is important because students should demonstrate a mastery of a concept that includes but also goes beyond merely paraphrasing the textbook. Quizzes are graded from 0-5 points with points assigned with the following rubric as a guide:

5 Points: Answer clearly demonstrates firm understanding of concepts and ideas referred to in question and ability to use them in comparative politics. Main points concerning concepts are defined/summarized as taught in readings AND amplified/demonstrated using own words.

4 Points: Concepts/ideas are correctly defined/summarized as taught in readings and are amplified/demonstrated using own words, though perhaps in a way that does not clearly demonstrate a firm understanding of how concept is used in comparative politics.

3 Points: Main points concerning concepts/ideas referred to in question are correctly defined/summarized as taught in readings but not amplified or demonstrated correctly using own words.

2 Points: Demonstrates limited understanding of concepts/ideas through partially correct description or summary of readings.

1 Point: Demonstrates some constructive engagement with the question.

Papers

The class requires three short papers, the due dates for which are indicated on the syllabus. As the assignments near, I will provide detailed instructions as well as a grading rubric. Though these assigned papers are quite short (given the large size of the class), you should take them very seriously. In preparing your papers, be sure to consult the rich set of materials from the BYU Writing Center (<http://english2.byu.edu/WritingCenter/>). Please remember also the critical importance of personal integrity in writing papers. Information on plagiarism is at: http://honorcode.byu.edu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5302&Itemid=5698

In Class (and Before)

I design lectures around one major point each class period. If you have prepared well by reading and *thinking* about the text, the lectures can be quite beneficial. But lectures can only do so much, in part because they're a pretty passive form of learning. Thus, I will also ask you in this course to use your knowledge of comparative politics in other forms – short quiz answers, exam answers, discussion comments, three relatively short formal

essays, and a final exam. Packaging what you know in these alternative forms helps you become more familiar with your own knowledge and helps me better evaluate your abilities (though some exercises will be ungraded, especially early in the semester).

Most students who excel in this class will spend **roughly equal amounts of time both reading the assignments and thinking about them**. Read carefully and come to class ready to make connections to other readings or contemporary events, to synthesize points, and to ask questions. Should your course grade be on the cusp at the end of the semester, the fact that you have actively, appropriately, and consistently joined class discussions and interacted productively with your TA will generally push your grade toward the higher mark. Discussion is also a great way to clarify your understandings and try out your ideas with your classmates.

Like many instructors, I find cell phones distracting in class. I can understand expecting fathers or parents with young children monitoring a cell phone in order to meet spur-of-the-moment responsibilities. But other uses? I have two teenage daughters who assure me that fast-breaking social developments can make 75 minutes seem like an eternity (I am working with Fox News to get a screen crawl along the bottom of my lectern...). Please switch phones all the way off. The same goes for **web surfing or game playing during class**. I find this is an enormous distraction to students sitting nearby. My goal is to make class engaging enough so that you will focus on comparative politics for the whole 75 minutes, but if I should fail, please do not disrupt others by launching a quick game of Tetris, looking at Facebook, instant messaging, putting titles on vacation snapshots, etc.

Outside Lectures

Department policy requires all students to report on five outside lectures. I keep a list on Blackboard and also allow you to propose lectures not on the site to your TA (in advance). Each lecture should deal with some aspect of comparative politics. Response papers should be **two paragraphs** long and **focus on the speaker's argument**, whether explicit or implicit. The first paragraph should describe and expand on an idea from the lecture that you find correct or at least plausible. The second paragraph should discuss an idea from the lecture that you find incorrect or implausible. Explain each idea briefly and then give your reasons for agreement or disagreement. Occasionally, you will encounter a lecturer who seems to have no apparent point of view with which you can agree or disagree. Closer inspection usually reveals that the speaker is dwelling on certain facts over others because s/he is convinced that these are the *most important* factors. Then you can write about whether the speaker's priorities strike you as the right ones for that topic. Each two-paragraph paper must include the name of the speaker, his or her lecture title and affiliation, as well as the date of the talk. These must be turned in to your TA **within seven days of the talk or by Dec. 4, whichever is earlier**. TAs give 1 point for solid responses in both paragraphs. Students can rewrite responses, but all rewrites also must be in by Dec. 11.

Final Exam

We will have a comprehensive final exam, which must be taken on Friday, Dec. 19th from 7:00 to 10:00 a.m. As you know, BYU does not allow students to take exams early, so please don't ask. We will have a full class period dedicated to review for the final.

Grades Are Calculated as Follows:

Daily quizzes (after three drops)	20%
Constitutional Convention (including paper)	10%
Three brief take-home essays	30%
Final exam	30%
Participation/discussions with TA	5%
Responses to approved lectures	5%
Having done well in high school	0%

Extra Credit

Because this class is so large, I am setting up two optional days in which smaller groups can meet to discuss important political issues. Each student can attend as many of these as s/he wants and, by writing a short paper, can receive up to 5 extra credit points for **one** of the sessions. **Each optional session meets on a Thursday at 11 am** in a location to be announced at a later date. The first session is September 27 and deals with the domestic roots of British foreign policy. The second is November 1 and deals with the question of what to do about Iran's apparent ambition to develop nuclear weapons. You must actually attend the session on which you write your paper, and the paper (two pages, double-spaced) must draw upon the short readings for the optional sessions. All papers are due by November 11. There is also one extra credit point for filling out the online evaluations at the end of the semester.

Teaching Assistants

<i>TA Name</i>	<i>Email Address</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Office Hours</i>	<i>Responsible for Names:</i>
Michael Bean	greenjell_o@hotmail.com	208-360-3075	M 12-12:50 W 10-10:50	A-Du
Andrew Dougherty	Dougherty86@gmail.com	714-656-5704	T 9-10 TH 8-9	Ed-Lop
Darren Jackson	dajraiseup@gmail.com	703-678-6617	T 2:30-3:30 F 9-9:50	Low-Shi
Tiffany Stanley	tiffany_stanley12@hotmail.com	735-9001	M 3:15-4:15 F 2-2:50	Sho-Yu

I have selected four of the finest TAs in all the land. They will grade quizzes and papers and help you with many things. The TA offices are now in 954 and 956 SWKT. TAs will be there to help you during the review session times listed above. Take advantage of the various times to get help because unlike most classes, there will be no large, cram-style review sessions before exams. Instead, the TAs will conduct smaller review sessions throughout the semester with anyone who comes during the blocks listed above;

they can answer specific questions or review course subjects covered during the previous week. With lead time, they are also open to making appointments outside these times.

Course Materials

You will need to buy two paperbacks and a small course packet. The main text, Michael Roskin's *Countries and Concepts* (10th edition, 2008), is available in the bookstore. I will also give you a password that allows access to the website for the textbook, which has some pretty good review material that you might be interested in using. There are practice quizzes (multiple choice, T/F, fill in blank), flash cards for important concepts, and links to outside resources for each chapter of the text. Also required for the course is a paperback edition of my book called *The Enlargement of the European Union and Nato: Ordering from the Menu in Central Europe*. The readings from the course pack are denoted below with a *. The syllabus is subject to change as I see fit.

Reading Assignments

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| T | 9/2 | Introduction to the course. |
| TH | 9/4 | The Comparative Politics of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee at the Time of Jesus. Reading: Matthew, chapters 4-9. |
| T | 9/9 | Political Culture. Reading: *Gabriel Almond and Bingham Powell, "Political Culture and Political Socialization," in Almond and Powell, <i>Comparative Politics Today: A World View</i> , 9 th edition, (New York: HarperCollins), 2006, pp. 46-61; and Roskin, pp. 1-8. |
| TH | 9/11 | Interests in Politics. Reading: *Gregory Mahler, "Interest Groups and Political Parties," in Mahler, <i>Comparative Politics: An Institutional and Cross-National Approach</i> , 2 nd edition, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall), 2000, pp. 141-155; and Roskin, pp. 9-16. |
| T | 9/16 | Political Institutions I. Reading: *Arend Lijphart, "Introduction," "Electoral Systems: Majority and Plurality Methods Versus Proportional Representation," in Lijphart, <i>Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries</i> , (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press), 1999, pp. 1-9, 143-170. |
| TH | 9/18 | Political Institutions II. Reading: *Arend Lijphart, "Division of Power: The Federal-Unitary and Centralized-Decentralized Contrasts," in Lijphart, <i>Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries</i> , (New Haven: Yale University Press), 1999, pp. 185-199. |
| T | 9/23 | British Politics. Reading: Roskin, pp. 18-59. First paper assigned. |
| TH | 9/25 | 11 am. Extra credit session 1: Screening and discussion of "A Victory for Democracy" from the British TV Series, "Yes, Prime Minister." Reading for extra credit session is *Mark Leonard, "How Gordon sees the World," pp. 1-5. |

- TH 9/25 British Politics. Reading: Roskin, pp. 61-84.
- T 9/30 French Politics. Reading: Roskin, pp. 87-130. **First paper due to TAs at the starts of class.**
- TH 10/2 French Politics. Reading: Roskin, pp. 132-158.
- T 10/7 German Politics. Reading: Roskin, pp. 161-206.
- TH 10/9 German Politics. Reading: Roskin, pp. 209-236. **Identities assigned for Convention.**
- T 10/14 Constitutional Convention, Stage 1. Ethnicities will meet together to plan strategy for subcommittee sessions that will occur on the coming Thursday. Your ethnicity may arrange to meet somewhere other than our classroom if you wish to maximize privacy.
- TH 10/16 Constitutional Convention, Stage 2 (subcommittee sessions). Students will act out the roles of founding fathers/mothers in the drafting of a new constitution for a mythical country. You will each be assigned to categories of regions, interest groups and ethnicities, and you will work on various committees charged with drafting aspects of the constitution, such as electoral rules, basic institutions, federal and local jurisdictions, etc. You will be evaluated based on participation in committees, blackboard discussions, and in the plenary sessions. The final institutions will be voted on during the plenary sessions. Reading: Reread Lijphart (carefully!).
- T 10/21 Constitutional Convention, Stage 3 (plenary session, day one). Reading: None.
- TH 10/23 Constitutional Convention, Stage 3 (plenary session, day two). Reading: None.
- T 10/28 Convention fallout. **Convention papers due at start of class.** The Iraqi Constitution. Reading: *Steve Hadley, "Iraq's Democratic Determination," in *Washington Post*, October 15, 2005, p. A.19 **and also** Zaid Al-Ali, "Iraq: A Constitution to Nowhere," from OpenDemocracy.net, October 14, 2005 **and also** Herbert Docena, "Iraq's Neoliberal Constitution," in *Foreign Policy in Focus*, September 2, 2005, pp. 1-8 and also Joshua Muravcik and Charlie Szrom, "In Search of Moderate Muslims," in *Commentary*, February 1, 2008, pp.1-8.
- TH 10/30 **11 am. Extra credit session 2:** What should the US do about Iran's nuclear ambitions? Reading for extra credit session is *Editors of the National Review, "Stopping the Bomb," pp. 1-2 **and also** Karim Sadjadpour, "Guidelines for Approaching Iran," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 2007, pp. 1-6 **and also** Barry Posen, "We can Live with a Nuclear Iran," *New York Times*, February 27, 2006, pp. 1-3.

- TH 10/30 Iranian Politics. Reading: Roskin, pp. 540-569.
- T 11/4 Eastern and Central European Politics. Wade Jacoby, *The Enlargement of the European Union and Nato: Ordering from the Menu in Central Europe*, (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press), 2006, pp. xi-40.
- TH 11/6 Eastern and Central European Politics. Jacoby, *The Enlargement of the European Union and Nato*, chapter 2, 3, 4, **or** 5 (your choice based on policy areas that most interest you) **and also** chapter 8 (pp. 216-242).
- T 11/11 Europe since the 1990s. Reading: Roskin, pp. 238-257.
Last day to submit extra credit papers. Second paper assigned.
- TH 11/13 No Class
- T 11/18 Russian Politics. Reading: Roskin, pp. 295-324.
- TH 11/20 Russian Politics. Reading: Roskin, pp. 327-366. Guest lecture, Professor Scott Cooper. **Second paper due to TAs at the start of class.**
- T 11/25 No Class – Friday Schedule
- TH 11/27 No Class – Thanksgiving Break.
- T 12/2 Chinese Politics. Reading: Roskin, pp. 370-442. **Last day to turn in lecture papers. Third paper assigned.**
- TH 12/4 Japanese Politics. Reading: Roskin, pp. 258-292.
- T 12/9 Iraqi Politics. Reading: *Peter Galbraith, “The Way to Go,” *New York Review of Books*, August 16, 2007 **and also** George W. Bush, “The New Way Forward in Iraq,” White House Press Office, January 10, 2007 **and also** Frederick Kagan, “Timelines and Defeat,” *The National Review*, August 28, 2007 and also MEMRI, “Reaction in the Iraqi Pres to the US-Iraq Strategic Agreement,” August 18, 2008 and also Nimrod Raphaeli, “The Iraqi Economy: From Shocks to Take-Off?” MEMRI Inquiry Brief 423, February 26, 2008. **Third paper due to TAs at the start of class.**
- TH 12/11 In-class review for final exam. **Last day to submit lecture rewrites (from submissions on December 2 that were returned by TAs).**

Note: Our final exam is scheduled for **Friday, December 19th from 7:00 to 10:00 a.m.** This is the last day of finals, but I cannot change it. I am not thrilled either. It our lot; we must bear it nobly, without whining. The university is very clear that it will not allow exams at other times. Do not allow your best friend or sister to get married at this time. Do not allow your mother to find a cheap internet airfare leaving before this time.