

Comparative Government and Politics

Political Science 150-002

Summer 2009

T, TH 4:00 – 6:30 pm

Rm #B099 JFSB

Professor: Dr. Rebecca Larsen

Office Hours: By appointment and after class

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Course Description

This course is a general introduction to the field of comparative politics. We will read about the political systems of eight countries as a way of learning the concepts and terminology for comparative politics as a political science field. We will also read about *doing* comparative politics. Some of the topics to be covered are (1) political institutions, (2) democratization, and (3) political development. The case studies will include Great Britain (the UK), France, Russia, China, Mexico, Nigeria, and Iran.

The goals of the course are to introduce you, the student, through lectures, reading, and discussion, to the many different types of political systems that exist in the world today. With each country study you should be able to better assess how history, culture, economics, and geography have shaped that country's political system and how all these factors affect the ability of the system to meet the needs of the people.

Text and Course Materials

The following texts are **Required** reading and are available for purchase at the bookstore:

Michael G. Roskin. 2009. *Countries and Concepts: Politics, Geography and Culture* (10th Ed). New York: Prentice Hall.

Franklin Foer. 2004. *How Soccer Explains the World: an {unlikely} Theory of Globalization*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Recommended Reading: The *Economist*. A subscription can be ordered at www.economistacademic.com. The website for the *Economist* is www.economist.com if you want to preview a trial copy or simply read it online.

Grade Calculations

(1) Midterm I:	20%
(2) Midterm II:	20%
(3) Final:	25%
(4) Writing exercises:	25%
(5) Quizzes:	10%

Grades are not curved. The normal distribution is used such that any score between a 90 and a 93 is an A-. The score of 94 or above is an A. The score of 80 to 82 is a B-, 83-86 is a B, and 87 and above is a B+. The same system is used for C's and D's.

Requirements

(1) Midterms: 20% for first one, 20% for the second one (total 40% of course grade). The midterms will contain multiple choice, fill-in the blank and one essay question.

Midterm I is scheduled for July 9, 2009.

Midterm II is scheduled for July 28, 2009.

(2) Final: 25 points/25% of your grade

The final will be in the same format as the midterms except there will be more multiple choice questions which may be comprehensive. The final is scheduled for Wednesday, August 12, 2009 from 5:00 pm to 6:50 pm in the classroom. Please do not ask to take the exam early.

(3) Writing Assignments: 12.5 pts each/12.5% of your grade (total of 25% of grade for two essays)

You will have two essay assignments. **The essay questions are included at the end of this syllabus.** These writing exercises are to be four to six pages, typed, and double-spaced with one-inch margins. Please include a cover page that includes your name, date, and course number. The cover page is not counted in the six pages. Your name is to be **only** on the cover page.

Grading criteria for the essays is attached at the end of this syllabus and posted on blackboard at "Course Materials".

(4) Quizzes: 10 pts/10% of your grade

There will be eight (8) surprise quizzes given throughout the semester, each worth 5 points. They will be on the day's reading or the previous lecture. Only five (5) will count toward your final grade.

Expectations

All students are expected to attend class regularly and participate in discussions when relevant. PLEASE DO THE READING BEFORE COMING TO CLASS. You are required to know the schedule and hand in assignments at the beginning of class based on their due dates as written in the syllabus.

Honor Code

While all students sign the honor code, there are still specific skills most students need to master over time in order to correctly cite sources, especially in this new age of the internet, as well as deal with the stress and strain of college life without resorting to cheating. Please know that as your professor I will notice instances of cheating on exams or plagiarizing on papers. See <http://www.byu.edu/honorcode> for specific examples of intentional and inadvertent plagiarism, fabrication, and falsification.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU's policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please talk to your professor, contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895 or 367-5689 (24 hours), or contact the Honor Code Office at 422-2847.

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere which reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (422-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified, documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the SSD office. If you need assistance, or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895, D-282 ASB.

Schedule

Day	Date	Topic/Reading Assignment
T	Jun 23	Introduction to course and field of comparative politics/terminology Hand out syllabus
TH	6/25	What is Comparative Politics? The Importance of Being Comparative Reading: Roskin, Chapter 1 On blackboard: "Comparing and Miscomparing" by Giovanni Sartori, from <i>Journal of Theoretical Politics</i> 3(3): 243-257 (1991).
T	6/30	Britain: Tradition & Parliamentary Systems Video: Prime Minister's question time Reading: Roskin, Chapters 2, 3 & 5
TH	Jul 2	Britain: Political Culture & Current Events Reading: Roskin, Ch. 4 & 6 Foer: Prologue, Ch. 2, "How Soccer Explains the Pornography of Sects" and Ch. 4, "How Soccer Explains the Sentimental Hooligan"
T	7/7	France: Absolutism/Revolution Video: "France" Reading: Roskin, Chapters 7-11
TH	7/9	

Day	Date	Topic/Reading Assignment
		*MIDTERM I *
T	7/14	Russia Video: “ <i>Russian Revolutions. Heavy Hand of Corruption</i> ” Reading: Roskin Chapters 19 – 21 On blackboard: Huntington, “Clash of Civilizations”
TH	7/16	Russia (Post communism, Authoritarian transition) Reading: Roskin Chapters 22 –23 Foer, Ch.1, “How Soccer Explains the Gangster’s Paradise” & Ch. 6, “How Soccer Explains the Black Carpathians.”
T	7/21	China Reading: Roskin Part II, Chapters 24 – 26
TH	7/23	China Video: “ <i>To Have and To Have Not</i> ” Reading: Roskin, Chapters 27 – 28 *First Essay Due*
T	7/28	* MIDTERM II *
TH	7/30	Mexico Reading: Roskin Chapter 30 Foer, Ch. 5, “How Soccer Explains the Survival of the Top Hats”
T	Aug 4	Nigeria (corruption, development issues) Reading: Roskin, Chapter 31 Foer: Ch. 7, “How Soccer Explains the New Oligarchs” On blackboard: “No Condition is Permanent” by Martin Meredith, from <i>The Fate of Africa: from the Hopes of Freedom to the Heart of Despair</i> .
TH	Aug 6	Iran Reading: Roskin, Chapter 32 Foer, Ch. 9 “How Soccer Explains Islam’s Hope.” Recommended: Foer, Ch. 10, “How Soccer Explains America’s Culture Wars * Second Essay due *
Wed.	Aug 12	FINAL [5:00 pm – 6:50 pm] in classroom

Essay Assignments

a. First essay. Due Thursday, July 23, 2009. The first essay is to address one of the following questions:

- (1) “What is Huntington’s theory of the chief dividing lines in the post-Cold War world? Does it help explain Russia today? Why or why not?”
- (2) Does a formal, written constitution guarantee political stability, or a smoother, more predictable policy-making process? What other institutional factors tend to promote or undermine political stability? Drawing upon your knowledge of France and Great Britain, give at least one example from each country of how norms or precedents may tell us as much or more about policy-making across the countries than the constitutional specifications.

Note that every state has a constitution—a system of fundamental principles according to which it is governed—irrespective of whether these principles are encoded in a single document. However, the specific powers of the institutions are determined to a large extent by “informal” precedents and norms established over time by political leaders.

b. Second essay. Due Thursday, August 6, 2009. The second essay is to address one of the following questions:

- (1) How does Nigeria illustrate the “curse of oil”? What is it and what can be done about it? Please research Nigeria and oil in order to better understand the affects of oil production on Nigerian society.
- (2) You are talking with one of your fellow students who states that “the countries that colonized the world, (those imperialists!!), should take much of the blame for the poverty in the third world today.” Another student in the group argues that some countries that had colonies were fairly enlightened and helped modernize and educate the “natives” so that they could better integrate into the 21st century. Which student do you agree with? Explain your answer. Please use the Nigerian and/or Mexican case as an example. You may use other countries as examples also.
- (3) Discuss three strands of political thought that have influenced Mexican political culture. Do you think one of them has been more pronounced than another? Explain your answer.

c. Late policy: Five (5) points (out of a 100) will be deducted for each day that an essay is late (without a good excuse).

d. Remember to have a cover page with your name on it. **Your name is to be only on the cover page.**

Basic Outline for Grading Essays

(Using a 100 point scale to grade the essays that are worth 12.5% of grade)

- 1) Introduction/Thesis statement:
 - thesis statement presents an argument rather than stating what the author will discuss in general or vague terms.
 - Interesting, concise argument
 - introduction describes basics of the topic
 - introduction lays out the format of the paper

- 2) Body of the essay/evidence to support thesis statement:
 - substance is factually correct
 - evidence supports thesis statement rather than off topic or adding information to support new arguments
 - provide examples that support the thesis statement
 - depth of the evidence provided

- 3) Conclusion:
 - restates argument
 - summarizes main points of the essay
 - may explore larger implications of the argument presented in intro.
 - Does not bring up new points/evidence/arguments which have not been discussed in the paper

- 4) Style/grammar
 - writing is clear and concise
 - avoids jargon and repetition
 - minimum of grammatical mistakes (less than three)
 - does not use profane or colloquial language
 - transition between paragraphs is smooth

- 5) Points distribution
 - * 75 points based on thesis statement, body, and conclusion (pts #1, 2, 3 above)
 - 30 points on introduction/thesis statement
 - 30 points on body of paper
 - 15 points on the conclusion
 - * 25 points on style/grammar