PISc 150: Introduction to Comparative Politics
Fall Semester 2010
12-12:50 MWF – B037 JFSB

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**The TA office is in 173 SWKT**

Learning Outcomes

• Become political scientists through practical opportunities to apply what you learn
• Learn the basic concepts and theories of comparative politics
• Develop significant expertise in the politics of at least one country
• Improve your ability to read, reason, research, and write

This course briefly covers the major theories, concepts, and methods of comparative politics, one of the principal subfields of political science. It is designed for students who are thinking of continuing on in political science or who have already chosen it as a major, and for students seeking to fulfill the university’s Global and Cultural Awareness requirement.

Format

The course is primarily a lecture course, but you’ll have many opportunities for discussion in class, both in groups and as a whole. You will also be asked to do research and assignments outside of class to help you master the material.

Assignments and grading

Your grade will be based on the following assignments. Details are below. All assignments will be curved up (never down), so that the class average is set at a B-.

• daily/weekly quizzes (25%)
• lab assignments (25%)
• midterm and final exam (15 and 30%)
• attendance at Kennedy Center/Wheatley Institution lectures (5%)

My commitment to you

Please take the time to come by and meet me sometime during the semester, and let me know if certain assignments or the class format could be improved. I promise to listen. Your learning is important to me, and I will make every effort to ensure that it happens.

Required texts

• Subscription to New York Times or read it online (nytimes.com)
• Readings available on Blackboard.
Grades and assignments

**TA office hours (383 SWKT)** This isn’t a formal assignment, but I hope you will take advantage of the hours that the TAs are available each week and occasionally visit them to get help on outside assignments, readings, and lectures. In a class this size, it can be hard for you to see the professor for individual help, but the TAs can be a great resource. While I encourage you to visit me this semester, make a habit of seeing the TAs.

**Partners** In class we will frequently have you work in teams of two on quiz questions or other challenges to help you learn the material better. You will need to pick one or two partners (I recommend you have just one) and be prepared to work with them the rest of the semester. We will make the choice final after a couple of weeks, so choose thoughtfully. But bear in mind that only a small fraction of your grade will depend on this interaction. I am more concerned that you work with a partner consistently and less concerned that you always get the right answer.

**Daily readings** A schedule of readings and assignments follows this section. Do the assigned readings before each class, and keep up on current events every day. Come prepared to participate in discussions or to ask questions about anything you don’t understand. You will be quizzed daily on your readings and current events, and I will email study questions each day to help you prepare for the quizzes.

**Quizzes** 25% To help you avoid cramming and to stimulate class discussion, there will be daily quizzes based on your most recent readings, lectures, and major current events. These will be 5-10 minute quizzes (usually 5 minutes) and include objective questions such as true/false, multiple choice, and definitions, with an occasional short-answer question. Quizzes primarily cover readings for that day and the lecture from the previous day, but the course gradually builds your knowledge, and some quizzes will necessarily draw from previous material. Current events are fair game on any day. Not all quizzes are graded. Quizzes are administered promptly at the beginning of the hour, so don’t be late! Please note that if you fill out the on-line course evaluation at the end of the semester, I will drop your three lowest quiz grades.

**Labs** 25% You must complete ten different lab assignments. These require research outside of class and are designed to give you a little more practical experience with political science and expose you to real data and sources. The labs are not random chores but carefully integrated components of class discussions. Take a little time and follow the instructions carefully. I encourage you to work with other students on these assignments, but you must write up your own results. All labs are due at the beginning of class on the day listed in the syllabus. Late labs should be turned in to the dropbox outside 745 SWKT and will lose a half grade before 5 p.m. and another full grade for every 24 hours after that. If you complete the online course evaluation at the end of the semester, I will drop your lowest lab grade.

**Midterm and final exam** 15+30% The midterm and final have nearly identical formats. They include objective and short-answer questions and are comprehensive. The quizzes and study questions provide a study guide for both exams, so keep your copy.

**Kennedy Center/Wheatley Institution lectures** 5% To enrich your learning and help you participate in the larger BYU community, we required you to attend at least five of the lectures sponsored by the Kennedy Center or the Wheatley Institution this semester. Schedules of these lectures are available online at http://kennedy.byu.edu/ and http://wheatley.byu.edu/; these are updated daily. For each lecture you attend, you must submit a one-paragraph summary that will be graded pass/fail. These must be turned in within one week of the lecture. If you have any questions about whether a particular lecture counts towards this requirement, please contact one of the TAs. Please note that you must attend live lectures; the Kennedy Center podcasts are not appropriate substitutes.

**Online course evaluation** The university asks you to fill out the online course evaluation at the end of the semester. The results of this evaluation are very important to me and my department, and I use your written comments to improve the class. If you do the evaluation on time, I will reward you by letting you drop your three lowest quiz grades and one lab.

**Making up assignments** Because of the size of our class, and because you can drop three quizzes and one lab in exchange for completing the online course evaluation, there are no makeup assignments except for BYU-sponsored activities and events, in which case you should see me directly. This essentially allows you to miss a week of class without penalty. If you do miss a few classes, you should try to learn the missed material for the midterm and final exams. Study questions, quiz questions, and my Powerpoint slides will all be placed on Blackboard.
**University Policies**

**Honor Code Standards**
In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honor Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own must in fact be your own work and not that of another. Always provide references to the sources of your ideas and data, and never reprint large pieces of published material without using appropriate punctuation marks (quotation marks or, for more than a few lines of cited text, indentation). This applies to material you find on the Web as well as traditional published material. Violations of this principle may result in a failing grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university.

Students are also expected to adhere to the Dress and Grooming Standards. Adherence demonstrates respect for yourself and others and ensures an effective learning and working environment. It is the university’s expectation, and my own expectation in class, that each student will abide by all Honor Code standards. Please call the Honor Code Office at 422-2847 if you have questions about those standards.

**Preventing Sexual Discrimination or Harassment**
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.

**Students with Disabilities**
If you have a disability that may affect your performance in this course, you should get in touch with the University Accessibility Center (2170 WSC, 422-2767). This office can evaluate your disability and assist the professor in arranging for reasonable accommodations.
**Reading and Assignment Schedule**  
(P&C is the textbook; all other readings are on Blackboard)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION AND BASIC THEORIES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 30</td>
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| Sept. 2  | Politics, political science, and comparative politics; method  
*Reading for today*—Syllabus; P&C Chapter 1, “Politics: Setting the Stage”  
*Lab 0 due* |
| 4        | *Initial assessment—in class* |
| 7        | *Labor Day—no class* |
| 8        | Modern ideologies  
*Reading for today*—P&C Chapter 2 |
| 10       | Theories and Science  
*Readings*—P&C Appendix  
*Lab 1 due* |
| 13       | Theory I: Rational Choice  
| 15       | Theory I: The Collective Action problem; institutions  
—Olson, “The Rise and Decline of Nations” (Chapter 2), pp. 17-35 |
| 17       | Theory II: Culture and Meaning  
—Little, “Varieties of Social Explanation: Chapter 4 Interpretation Theory,” pp. 68-87 |

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<tr>
<th>UNIT 2: BASIC PROBLEM AREAS</th>
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| 20  | The state  
—P&C Chapter 3 |
| 22  | The state, cont.  
*Lab 2 due* |
| 24  | Policies of the state  
—P&C Chapter 4 |
| 27  | Policies of the state, cont. (Your policy)  
*Lab 3 due* |
| 29  | Economic development  
—P&C Chapter 5 |
| Oct. 1 | Economic development, cont.  
*Lab 4 due* |
| 4   | Economic development, cont.  
*Lab 4 due* |
| 6   | Democracy and autocracy  
—P&C Chapter 7, pp. 149-51, 159-78 ; Mosiah 29 |
| 8   | Democracy and autocracy, cont.  
—P&C Chapter 7, pp. 151-59 |
| 11  | Political culture  
—P&C Chapter 8 |
| 13  | Political culture, cont.: Populism and pluralism |
| 15  | Political culture, cont.  
*Lab 5 due* |
| 18  | *Midterm exam—in class* |

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<tr>
<th>UNIT 3: KEY POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS</th>
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| 20  | Constitutions and federalism  
—P&C Chapter 9 |
| 22  | Constitutions and federalism, cont.  
*Lab 6 due* |
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Parliamentary government (definitions; legislatures; committees)</td>
<td>—P&amp;C Chapter 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Parliamentary government (consensual vs. majoritarian)</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Presidentialism (definitions; pres. vs. parl)</td>
<td>—P&amp;C Chapter 15</td>
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<td>Nov. 1</td>
<td>Presidentialism, cont.</td>
<td>Lab 7 due</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Bureaucracy and civil service (Weberian concept, merit vs. patronage)</td>
<td>—P&amp;C Chapter 16</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Bureaucracy, cont. (dilettante vs. expert)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Law and the courts</td>
<td>—P&amp;C Chapter 17</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Elections (purposes, electoral rules)</td>
<td>—P&amp;C Chapter 10</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td><strong>Prof. Hawkins at conference—no class</strong></td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Elections, cont. (participation, vote choice)</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Elections, cont.</td>
<td>Lab 8 due</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Political parties</td>
<td>—P&amp;C Chapter 11</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Political parties, cont. (party systems)</td>
<td>--Gallagher, Laver, and Mair, “Party Systems”</td>
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<td>23 (Tue)</td>
<td>Political parties, cont.</td>
<td>Lab 9 due</td>
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<td>24 Wed</td>
<td><strong>Thanksgiving holiday—no class</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Interest groups</td>
<td>—P&amp;C Chapter 12</td>
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<td>Dec. 1</td>
<td>Interest groups, cont.</td>
<td>Lab 10 due</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Social movements and contentious politics</td>
<td>—P&amp;C Chapter 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Social movements, cont.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Conclusion and review for final exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Reading Day</td>
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<td>Dec 14 (Tue)</td>
<td>Social movements and contentious politics</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-2pm</td>
<td><strong>Final Exam—in class</strong></td>
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Lab 0: Definitions (5 points)

Purpose
To help you begin to improve your research skills and to begin thinking about some fundamental concepts in Political Science.

The assignment
Consulting a dictionary or other authoritative source, define the following terms and type the definitions on a single page. Then, compare these definitions with those found in (or implied by) the textbook. Tell me for each word which definition you think is better and why. Only include and discuss definitions that you think might be relevant to this class.

politics
state
theory
normative (you’ll probably need to look up the word “norm”)
empirical

Please type this assignment and—although it is relatively short—use good spelling and grammar. You can work together in groups, but you must do the final write-up on your own. Include appropriate bibliographic references at the bottom of the page or on a separate sheet of paper.

Sources
Although you can use a hard-bound dictionary, there are also a number of good on-line ones such as m-w.com. Look around and find one you like and might use for the rest of the semester.
Lab 1: Measuring Democracy and Economic Development (10 points)

Purpose
To familiarize you with quantitative data on two important concepts, democracy and development, and to give you an initial feel for what political scientists do.

The Assignment
1. Look up a numerical indicator for democracy and one for economic development using the sources listed below (or an alternate source that you feel is appropriate). In less than one typed, single-spaced page of text, use this data to describe the level of democracy and development in two countries during the past year for which data are available (you will have two data points per country, so four data points total). You must give the four numerical data points for each indicator and describe in words what each of these numbers reveal about conditions in that country. NOTE: For the economic development indicator, you need to use a measure that accounts for population, such as per capita GDP. Do not use growth trends since you are only considering one year.
2. Political scientists claim that there is a correlation between democracy and economic development. Do you see such a correlation in your data? If you find a correlation, provide a possible causal argument that explains it. No outside sources are needed for this answer.

For this task, assume you are writing to an audience of upper-classmen in political science, and include appropriate information and explanations. You can work together in groups, but you must do the final write-up on your own. Use good spelling, grammar, punctuation, and style. Also, provide documentation for your sources. You may add an additional page for works cited.

Sources
There are many nice web sources on economic data, but basically only one readily accessible one with democracy data. Most of these are also available in print in the library:

Economic development:
- UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL/ECLAC). www.cepal.org
- UN Development Programme. www.undp.org
- International Monetary Fund (IMF). www.imf.org
Also, the HBLL library has a very nice source of economic data called the World Development Indicators database, a service of the World Bank. You can find it on the library’s home page by searching for databases alphabetically.

Democracy:
- Freedom House. www.freedomhouse.org Look for their Freedom in the World index, a 7- or 14-point scale depending on which component (political rights and civil liberties) you include.
Lab 2: The State (10 points)

Purpose
To help you choose a country to work on, to familiarize you with the concept of the state, to help you learn theories of state formation, and to help you apply rational choice and cultural theories.

The Assignment
Please do the following in less than one typed, single-spaced page:

1. Read up on a country that interests you—one that you would like to focus on for the rest of the semester—then describe it as a state and say whether its state is relatively strong or weak. Although you should make a clear, broad claim about the strength of the state, you will also need to describe most or all of the following:
   - When and how the country became independent
   - The current regime type (try Freedom House again)
   - What person or party is currently the head of state and when they came to power
   - How stable the government appears to be and how stable it has been in the past (you should probably emphasize such things as how many different constitutions and how many irregular transfers of power or regime transitions it has had; rough data will do)
   - The size and effectiveness of the civil service and military (hint: for the effectiveness of the civil service, try looking at corruption data)
   - Whether there currently is or has been any ethnic conflict or civil war

2. In one good paragraph, draw on the readings in the textbook (pp. 51-53) and the information you have about your country to provide a possible historical explanation for why your country has a weak or strong state. Make certain to identify which kind of theory yours is, rational choice or cultural, and to explain this classification. The book’s explanation can be your theory (it is a roughly rational choice one), but if you use it you should explain how your country exemplifies it. Your explanation does not have to draw on any other readings than the textbook, although you are free to do so (include appropriate citations).

For this assignment, assume you are writing to an audience of upper-classmen in political science, and include appropriate information and explanations. You can work together in groups, but you must do the final write-up on your own. Use good spelling, grammar, punctuation, and style. Also, provide documentation for your sources. You may add an additional page for bibliographic information.

Sources
Some good general sources are the CIA Factbook (look at www.cia.gov under “Library: Publications”), the country reports at the website of the Library of Congress, and the Country Profiles on the website of the BBC. Additional data sources include Freedom House (see their individual country reports—these give lots of information) and Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index (www.transparency.org).
Lab 3: A Policy (5 points)

Purpose
To familiarize you better with your country, to help you apply rational choice and cultural theories, and to help you see the relevance of political science for policy analysis.

The Assignment
Please do the following in just one typed paragraph:

1. Read up on the country you are studying—by looking in the news, websites, books, journal articles, or other reliable sources—and describe a specific, doable policy or reform that should clearly be implemented in this country and has not already been implemented. Make certain to explain why this policy would be beneficial and how it would work.

2. Speculate a bit and give both a rational choice explanation and a cultural explanation for why the policy hasn’t been implemented yet. You need not have any external references for this discussion, but you should give thoughtful answers and make clear which explanation is rational-choice and which one is cultural.

Again, assume you are writing to an audience of upper-classmen in political science, and include appropriate information and explanations. You can work together in groups, but you must do the final write-up on your own. Use good spelling, grammar, punctuation, and style. Also, provide documentation for your sources. You may add an additional page for bibliographic information.

Sources
Consider talking with people who have lived in the country to get their opinions on what would make a good, doable policy change. A good source for English-language newspapers in other countries (or major local-language newspapers) is abyznewslinks.com.
Lab 4: Economic Development and Governance (10 points)

Purpose
To learn more about the concept of economic development and its political causes, and to sharpen your quantitative skills.

The Assignment
Using Excel or a similar computer program, create a graph that compares the level of economic development and the level of corruption across all countries of the globe (or as many for which you can find data) for just one year. The graph should probably be a scatterplot. Turn in the graph with this lab.

Then, in no more than typed, single-spaced page

- describe your choice of indicators. Explain what each indicator means (provide the scale used, etc.) and why it is a good indicator of economic development or corruption. Because you know a bit more about appropriate indicators now, you will be judged on your choice of data.
- describe the relationship between corruption and economic development that the graph conveys. Is there some type of correlation?
- explain (in the sense of providing a causal theory) the association you find between corruption and economic development. Provide both a rational-choice explanation and a cultural one. Your explanations may not be perfect or rely on a literature review, but do your best to either provide your own, plausible explanations or to draw on ones you may have heard or read about in other classes. Make certain to include appropriate citations if you refer to any published research.

As usual, assume you are writing to an audience of upper-classmen in political science and include appropriate information and explanations. You can work together in groups, but you must do the final write-up on your own. Use good spelling, grammar, punctuation, and style. Also, provide documentation for your sources of data and (if you have any) outside theory. You may add an additional page for bibliographic information.

Sources
Creating a graph like this (not to mention downloading the data) may be challenging for new students. Remember that you don’t have any more readings this week, and plan on setting aside a few hours to figure out this task. The TAs are an especially good source of helpful advice, including how to make the graph or download data.

Many of the sources you have already used will be helpful here. You can find annual data on most economic development indicators on the World Development Indicators database, available through the HBLL’s electronic database. Annual corruption data for most countries can be found either at the Transparency International website (look for their Corruption Perceptions Index) or the World Bank’s Governance Matters website (which measures corruption and a few other related aspects of government). The Governance Matters data is in a nice spreadsheet but is
harder to understand.
Lab 5: Political Culture (10 points)

Purpose
To improve your research skills, to familiarize you with basic survey data, and to help you think
more about the politics of implementing a policy in your country.

The assignment
In no more than 1 typed single-space page, use survey data or other, more qualitative evidence to
describe where your country stands with respect to ONE of the attitudes associated in your
readings with support for democracy: tolerance, political information, or support for democracy
(in the abstract or in terms of its current performance). Then, in at least one paragraph, explain
whether the data from your country supports the view that these attitudes matter for democracy.
Your answer should take into account (a) the quality of the survey data, (b) the validity of the
measure, and (c) the basic theory linking this attitude to democracy.

Make certain to explain the source(s) (size of the survey, when it was done, sample, and who
performed it), the survey question(s) (including the wording and the scale used to represent the
results), and of course the actual numbers and what they mean; comparison here with data from
other countries (including that mentioned in the book) may be of great help. You may also find it
helpful to summarize some data in a table, but this is not required, and you should be judicious in
how many numbers you present.

Assume you are writing to an audience of upper-classmen in political science, and include
appropriate information and explanations. Use good spelling, grammar, punctuation, and style.
Also, provide documentation for your sources—newspaper, textbook, or otherwise. You may add
an additional page for bibliographic information.

Sources
A variety of online sources will have survey data for your country. The World Values Survey
website is a good place to start, although they may not cover your country. Their website is
www.worldvaluessurvey.org. Most regions now have some kind of “Barometer” (Eurobarometer,
AmericasBarometer, etc.) with a website that includes written reports of the most recent survey.
Local surveys by newspapers or results published in older studies of the country are also useful,
but may not be as valid.
Lab 6: Constitutions OR Federalism (5 points)

Purpose
To improve your research skills, to familiarize you with basic political institutions in general, and to help you learn more about your country.

The assignment – Option 1
In no more than one, typed single-space page, identify the following information about the current, written constitution in your country. **Note:** If your country does not have a written constitution, you must do Option 2 for this assignment.
- how long the constitution is
- when it was created
- how stable its constitutions have generally been
- how many amendments this one has
- how it is amended.

The assignment – Option 2
In no more than one, typed single-space page (and probably less), explain whether your country is **federal.** Specifically, explain whether local levels of government have:
- Directly elected mayors and governors (or their equivalent in your country), or whether these officials are appointed
- Significant powers to raise their own revenues (for example, though a locally administered sales tax), or at least a firmly guaranteed source of funding from the national government
- Some kind of guaranteed or reserved constitutional powers (that is, the national government can’t veto everything the local legislatures or councils enact)

For either option, assume you are writing to an audience of upper-classmen in political science, and include appropriate information and explanations. Use good spelling, grammar, punctuation, and style. Also, provide documentation for your sources--newspaper, textbook, or otherwise. You may add an additional page for bibliographic information.

Sources
**Option 1:** A variety of online sources will almost certainly have the constitution of your country in English. Try [http://confinder.richmond.edu/confinder.html](http://confinder.richmond.edu/confinder.html) to start.

**Option 2:** An excellent online source for many of you is the *Handbook of Federal Countries*, available as an e-book on the HBLL website. Use the most recent edition. Bear in mind that it only includes federal countries; if your country is not federal, it won’t be in the book. You may also find the constitution of the country to be some help, although this usually only covers the first and possibly the third points mentioned above. For sources of constitutions, see [http://confinder.richmond.edu/confinder.html](http://confinder.richmond.edu/confinder.html)
Lab 7: Executive and Legislative Institutions (10 points)

Purpose
To improve your research skills, to familiarize you with basic political institutions in general and the relationship between executive and legislative institutions in particular, and especially to help you learn about institutions in your country.

The assignment
In no more than one typed single-space page, answer the following:

1. For a country that interests you, categorize the executive institution using the typology from the class or from some other published source (for example, “semi-presidential” or “parliamentary”). In addition to labeling the types of executive institution, list or describe the traits that make it fit this category.

2. For that same country, describe its legislative and executive branches to determine whether the system is “majoritarian” or “consensual.” Make certain to consider at least five of the following: the number of chambers in the legislature and the powers of the upper one, the effective number of parties, party discipline, federalism, strength of committees, and legislative initiative.

For both of these tasks, assume you are writing to an audience of upper-classmen in political science, and include appropriate information and explanations. Use good spelling, grammar, punctuation, and style. Also, provide documentation for your sources—newspaper, textbook, or otherwise. You may add an additional page for bibliographic information.

Sources
A variety of sources will have most of this information on the executive branch, including standard references like Wikipedia or the CIA World Factbook. The nature of the legislature may be more difficult to find. Arend Lijphart’s books on the subject of political institutions may have your country listed in the data appendices. You can also consider the database of the Interparliamentary Union, http://www.ipu.org/parline/parlinesearch.asp, as well as Electionworld.
Lab 8: Electoral Rules (10 points)

Purpose
To improve your research skills, to familiarize you with basic concepts regarding electoral rules and the effective number of parties, and to help you analyze one of the most basic laws of political science.

The assignment
In no more than 1½ typed, single-space pages, explain the following:

1. For the country you are studying, identify the electoral rules for national legislative elections, including district magnitude, formula, whether the system is a hybrid one, list structure (closed/nonpreferential or open/preferential), and thresholds

2. For this same country, use the formula from class to calculate the effective number of parties.

3. In one good paragraph, answer the following: Would the electoral rules described in part 1 lead you to expect a single effective party, two effective parties, or more than two effective parties? Have they in fact had this effect? Why or why not? As you try to explain the outcome you see, make certain to reflect on the explanations you read in the textbook.

For both of these tasks, assume you are writing to an audience of upper-classmen in political science, and include appropriate information and explanations. Use good spelling, grammar, punctuation, and style. Also, provide documentation for your sources—newspaper, textbook, or otherwise. You may add an additional page for bibliographic information.

Sources
http://www.ipu.org/parline/parlinesearch.asp will be a good place to start your research, although it may not include all of the information you need. Electionworld should have results of the latest election, which you need to calculate the effective number of parties.
Lab 9: Parties and Party Systems (10 points)

Purpose
To improve your research skills, to better familiarize you with basic concepts regarding political parties, and to help you learn about the political parties and party system in your country.

The Assignment
In no more than 1 ½ single-spaced pages, and in the order you choose, do the following.

1. Using the effective number of parties in your country as a rough guide (see Lab 8), list the actual key parties and describe their electoral strength, including their role in past or present governments; stance on issues (especially the party “family” to which each party belongs); and when they were founded and if this history colors their current behavior.

2. Explain whether particular parties or the party system create a problem for democracy in your country or seem to facilitate it.

3. Categorize the resulting party system using the categories from the readings and class, and justify this categorization.

Assume you are writing to an audience of upper-classmen in political science, and include appropriate information and explanations. Use good spelling, grammar, punctuation, and style. Also, provide documentation for your sources—newspaper, textbook, or otherwise. You may add an additional page for bibliographic information.

Sources
You may want to start your research by looking at the latest results and party descriptions on Electionworld in Wikipedia, which will provide information on the effective number of parties in the most recent election, as well as some very brief descriptions of party stances and some possible links to other websites; however, most of you will have to look up additional sources in the library (books, articles, or online resources) to learn more about the parties and the issues in these countries.
Lab 10: Interest groups (10 points)

Purpose
To improve your research skills, to familiarize you with basic concepts regarding political organization, and to help you think more specifically about groups in the civil society of your country.

The assignment
In no more than one typed, single-spaced page, for the country you have chosen
1. Compare a very old, traditional interest group (say, something over 100 years old) and a relatively new interest group. Discuss:
   • the size and nature of their constituencies (how many members, who they appeal to or draw from)
   • how long they have been active
   • what kind of role they generally play in politics (including typical tactics and how much impact they have)
   • their stances on key policy issues for the country
2. Tell me whether or not the country seems to have a pluralist or a corporatist form of interest group intermediation. Many countries will be “in between” cases, and a few countries with highly totalitarian forms of government may arguably not have enough civil society to talk about a type of interest intermediation, but you should at least thoughtfully address this question and bring some data to bear.

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Sources
The CIA World Factbook usually lists some of the prominent interest groups in most countries. This will help you get started by helping you identify them. However, the World Factbook usually doesn’t contain all of the additional information you will need, and so you will probably need to do additional research online or in the library. Basic descriptive books about the country’s politics will be especially helpful (including, say, a chapter from a regional politics textbook), as is your general knowledge of the country. Remember that many different kinds of organizations count as interest groups, as long as they play some intentional role in politics.
PlSc 150 - Fall Semester 2010

I give permission for Professor Hawkins and his Teaching Assistants to return my assignments in class in a stack of papers that will be passed around the room, with my grade hidden on the back.

_________________________________ ________________________________
Signature     Date

_________________________________
Your name, spelled out

I do NOT give permission for my assignments to be returned in class. I understand that they will instead be placed in a folder with the secretaries in 745 SWKT, that I must go get them, and that they may not always be available on the same time that they are handed back in class.

_________________________________ ________________________________
Signature     Date

_________________________________
Your name, spelled out