

POL212F
INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

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Class meets: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 1:25-2:15,
MM110

Class Web Site:
Blackboard

Office Hours: Monday 9:30-11, Room 327 in Ferré
Building

I. Course Objectives

Some of the most fundamental struggles that take place in any country are over the boundaries between politics and economics and between state and society. What role should the state play in the economy? Who should be able to decide this and other issues? What effects do the political and economic systems of a given country have on people's everyday lives? This course introduces students to the study of comparative politics through a survey of key concepts and different political systems, by contrasting and comparing aspects of them, and by seeking generalizations about them.

In our analysis of the political and economic systems of Britain, the United States, Germany, Russia, Mexico, Iran and China, we will see various combinations of authoritarian and democratic governance, as well as widely divergent types of government involvement in the economy. From these cases we will try to develop an understanding of what factors cause (or prevent) democratization and economic development. We will also apply ideas from class to current events.

In short, our objectives are:

1. Learn about various forms of democratic and non-democratic government.
2. Learn about factors that cause (or hinder) democratization and democratic consolidation.
3. Recognize and differentiate the major constitutional patterns that distinguish parliamentary from presidential democracies.
4. Learn about the way different nation-states are confronting the phenomenon of globalization.
5. Learn about various routes to economic development.
6. Learn about current events.
7. Learn about geography.
8. Practice analytical skills.
9. Practice public speaking skills.

II. Required Readings

Most of the readings for the course are in the following textbooks, which are available at the University bookstore. You are expected to complete all reading assignments *before* the class period assigned so that you may contribute to class discussion and ask for clarification of issues you did not understand. We will supplement the textbook with different newspaper articles so we can observe how the issues discussed in class play out in the world today. These newspaper articles will be posted for you on blackboard.

Textbook

- ❖ Kesselman, Mark; Krieger, Joel; Joseph, William A. 2010. *Introduction to Comparative Politics*. Fifth Edition. Houghton Mifflin Company. (K.K.J.)
- ❖ Kesselman, Mark and Krieger, Joel. 2010. *Readings in Comparative Politics Political Challenges and Changing Agendas*. Second Edition. Houghton Mifflin Company (K.K.)

III. Course Requirements

Your final grade will be based on the following criteria:

- ❖ An in-class mid-term exam (30%): This exam will take place in our regular classroom on the day indicated in the syllabus.
- ❖ A second mid-term exam (30%): This exam will be cumulative, although it will be weighted toward the material after the mid-term.
- ❖ Group project (20%): This group project will require you to use your political comparative skills acquired during this course in order to compare and contrast two countries of your choosing (excluding the ones studied during this course). The comparison should be structured in order to address: the making of the modern state; political economy and development; governance and policy-making; representation and participation. You will need to present your group project in the second part of the semester. Instructions on completing the group project will be handed in separately.
- ❖ Group project presentation(5%): a thirty minutes power-point presentation of your group project. You will be expected to answer various questions regarding your project at the end of your presentation.
- ❖ Class participation and class projects (15%): Come to class on time each day with the readings completed. Get involved when you are in class by contributing to discussions. Participation grades will be based on routine *constructive* contributions to class discussions and participation in class activities (group work, debates, film project discussion). The instructions for the class activities will be handed to you separately.

IV. Office Hours

Office hours are important. They provide you with an opportunity to meet one-on-one or in a small group with your instructor. I encourage you to drop-by or make an appointment to meet and discuss the course. As this is an introductory course, the concepts and issues may be entirely new to you. Figuring them out is a challenge. The office hours should serve as an

additional opportunity to discuss and clarify questions regarding the material studied in this course.

NOTE: It is the Political Science Departmental policy that cheating on any exam or plagiarism on any paper will lead to a failing grade for the entire class. Ignorance of academic conventions is not an excuse. Furthermore, the University of Miami has an Honor Code and violations of it will be sent to the Honor Council.

V. Schedule of Class Meetings, Readings, and Assignments

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
01/20	Introductions & syllabus presentation	
01/22	Introduction to Comparative Politics	K.K.J. pp.1-31
01/25	The world today, where Comparative Politics fits in	K.K. pp.18-28; 37-51
01/27	The Nature of the State and Basis of Authority	K.K. pp.81-94; Charles Tilly <i>War Making and State Making as Organized Crime</i>
01/29	Form Groups for Project/ Discuss Project	
02/01	Britain	K.K.J.pp.48-60
02/03	The United States of America	K.K.J.pp.314-325
02/05	What is democracy?	K.K. pp. 201-221
02/08	Germany	K.K.J.pp.158-170
02/10	Democratic institutions I	Alfred Stepan and Cindy Skach <i>Constitutional Frameworks and Democratic Consolidation: Parliamentarism versus Presidentialism</i> ; K.K.J.pp.335-344; K.K.J. pp.70-79; K.K.J. pp. 180-189; KK. pp. 316-328
02/12	Democratic Institutions II	K.K.pp.357-363; K.K.J.pp.79-91;344-354; 189-203
02/15	Political Culture	K.K.pp.257-276
02/17	No class/ Instructor at Conference	
02/19	No class/ Instructor at Conference	
02/22	Germany/Britain/ the U.S. Comparison I	K.K. pp. 300-310; K.K.J. pp. 87-91; 199-203; 350-354
02/24	International Political Economy I	K.K.pp.121-137

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
02/26	Germany/Britain/ the U.S. Comparison II	K.K.J. pp. 61-70; 171-180; 326-335
03/01	International Political Economy II	K.K. pp. 164-181
03/03	Germany/Britain/ the U.S. Comparison III	K.K.J. pp. 91-97; 203-209; 354-360

03/05	Midterm I Review	
03/08	Midterm I	
03/10	Transitional Democracies I	K.K.pp194-200; 222-231
03/12	Transitional Democracies II	K.K. pp. 329-337; 212-221; 247-255
03/15	Spring Recess	
03/22	Mexico	K.K.J pp. 472-493
03/24	Mexico	K.K.J. pp. 493-514
03/26	Russia	K.K.J. pp. 518-542
03/29	Russia	K.K.J. pp. 542-572
03/31	Challenges to democracy	K.K. pp. 89-94; 105-112
04/02	Authoritarian States	K.K. pp. 95-104
04/05	Iran	K.K.J. pp. 579-605
04/07	Iran	K.K.J. pp. 605-621
04/09	Group Presentation	
04/12	Documentary Film Showing	
04/14	China	K.K.J. pp. 625-649
04/16	Group Presentation	
04/19	China	K.K.J. pp. 649- 680
04/21	Civil Society	K.K. pp. 364-370; Mary Fainsod Katzenstein <i>Stepsisters: Feminist Movement Activism in Different Institutional Spaces</i>
04/23	Group Presentation/ Discuss Film Project	
04/26	Review for Midterm II	
04/28	Midterm II	