

Syllabus

COURSE: POLS 2430

Title: Comparative Government

Credit: 3

Faculty Information: Vasabjit Banerjee; Fletcher Hall 417-I; Tel. 312-340-4505; Tues. and Thurs. 10:00AM to 12:30PM; vasabjit-banerjee@utc.edu; response time is 9:00AM to 5:00PM.

Prerequisites and Corequisites: Not Applicable

Course Description:

An examination of how different societies can be compared and contrasted. Specific focus on the distinct political systems that exist in different countries, such as democracies, dictatorships and mixed regimes, and the factors that have shaped how these institutions developed over periods of time, such as economic influences like availability of natural resources and inequality of wealth and cultural factors such as religious and racial identities. Explores how political institutions function in different societies and their effects on social and economic factors, specifically, how different types of electoral systems, as well as parliamentary and presidential systems affect the economies and societies of different countries.

Course Learning Outcomes: This course aims to introduce students to theories of Comparative Politics. The course also prepares students to use such theories to understand the interests of state institutions and social groups, as well as how the international arena affects them.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

Ishiyama, John T.. *Comparative Politics: Principles of Democracy and Democratization*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

1. Discussions

Due to the moderate size of the class, you shall be graded on your participation in class, especially on topics and group exercises that may be provided by me. Be-aware that I am judging you regarding your knowledge of the assigned readings for that particular class, how well you connect it with prior readings, and your ability to construct new insights.

2. Attendance

You must endeavor to attend all classes. I do not take attendance, although I reserve the right to do so. **However, there will be four surprise quizzes worth 1/3 of the total points, to reward both preparedness and attendance.** Furthermore, at the end of a thematic set of readings, I shall mention their order of importance for the final exam and the surprise quizzes.

Sickness and family emergencies must be reported prior to a class or within 24 hours of the missed class; proof of cause will be required.

3. Classroom Conduct

Ask yourself, “is my behavior acceptable in a business meeting?” If it is unacceptable there, then it is unacceptable in our class. Unacceptable behavior includes: sleeping in a class or putting one’s head down on the desk, reading newspapers or magazines, doing homework for other classes, using telephones, being on social media, and conducting conversations that interfere with class activities.

4. Assignments

You must do your assigned readings for the classes.

You must appear for the Final Exam.

You must make the two assigned presentations.

You must submit the three assigned papers.

The assigned papers must be: typed; in 12-point font size; Times New Roman in font style; double spaced; Page Numbered; with 1-1.25 inch margins; proofread for spelling and grammatical errors; and, stapled. They must also include, at the top right hand corner of the first page: the student’s name; my name; the course number; assignment title; and the date the assignment is turned in.

Written by: Charles Chaplin

Written for: Vasabjit Banerjee

Course: Introduction to International Relations, POLS 2420

Assignment: Paper 1 – “Insert your Title Here”

Date: Month/Day/Year

5. Academic Integrity

“To plagiarize means to take someone else’s words and/or ideas (or patterns of ideas) and to present them to the reader as if they are yours. Plagiarism, then, is an act of stealing.” (From *Plagiarism* in the UTC Students Handbook, Pg. 4-6). This offence will result in an automatic F (or 0 Points) on the particular project, and the docking of a full letter grade at the end of the semester (from A to B, B to C, and so on). It may also result in you failing the course and being reported to the administration. Please consult the online Students Handbook: <<http://www.utc.edu/dean-students/pdfs/academics.pdf>> .

6. Students with Disabilities

Students with visual, hearing, physical, and/or learning disabilities that may require modification of the curriculum, instruction, or assessment should contact me. Modifications and accommodations will be made after the student has presented documentation indicating qualification for services from the Disability Resource Center (Tel.: 425-4006; Room 102, Frist Hall). For more information on students with disabilities, go to their website at: <http://www.utc.edu/Administration/DisabilityResourceCenter>.

EVALUATION:

Class Participation	20 Points
Participation and Preparedness	
Surprise Quizzes: 4 x 20 Points	80 Points
Presentations: 2 x 15 Points	30 Points
Scenario Days: 2 x 10 Points	20 Points
Papers	
Paper 1	25 Points
Paper 2	25 Points
Paper 3	50 Points
Final Exams	50 Points
Total	300 Points

The course follows the University grading rubric

REQUIRED SCENARIO DAYS

You are required to submit a 1 – 1.5 Page write-up on the given topic and prepare to talk in class on the scenarios. I shall lead the discussion. Fifty percent of the grade will be based on the write-up and fifty percent on class participation.

Scenario I:

We are all members of a new country, West Phalia. We just declared ourselves independent and now must figure out what a new state should do. What domestic concerns should we prioritize: democracy, economic development, or something else?

Secondly, what sort of political institutions – executive, legislative, and judicial – should we choose to enshrine our preferred policies? Should West Phalia have a parliamentary or presidential democracy, or a military or civilian dictatorship, or something else?

Scenario II:

While dealing with important matters of a new state (like designing a flag and picking a national anthem), we notice the growing inequality between the majority community of Westerners and the minority of Easterners originally from East Phalia, which we were once part of as a united Phalia. How should we respond to the Easterners? Should we create political and economic policies that create equity between the two groups, appeal to the Westerner majority to elect leaders who can impose the Westerners' will, or something else? Would your suggestions differ based on our geography (if we were bordering East Phalia vs. being an island)? Similarly, what historical data or intelligence would potentially influence your decision?

Secondly, what sort of economic policies should West Phalia adopt? One that stresses rapid economic growth, but which can cause deep inequalities between different groups, or a social welfare oriented path that provides

slower but more equitable growth. How do the different types of economic paths affect West Phalian political parties' agendas, how they interact with citizens, and how they compete with each other?

REQUIRED INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS

The topics of the first and second presentation are that of your first and second assigned papers. The presentation must demonstrate Clear Ideas, Supporting Evidence, and Organization.

The use of technology, such as PowerPoint, and charts and graphs is encouraged. You shall present for 3-4 Minutes. I shall not hesitate to stop you if you go over the allotted time.

REQUIRED PAPERS

During the first four weeks of classes, I shall have 15-minute modules on paper writing. Prior results indicate that following my instructions and understanding the concepts leads to significant increases in students' grades for papers.

Paper 1: Interests and Threats **Minimum Length: 4 Pages**

First choose a country. Second, select the top three domestic problems (such as economic development, democratization, and peace between warring groups) of that society and the top three domestic threats to these interests.

Subsequently, explain the importance of the selected interests, that is, why they matter more than others. Do empirical research outside of assigned readings and cite at least four different articles/chapters/books in your paper.

Paper 2: Institutional and Economic Solutions to the Top Threat and the Top Interest **Minimum Length: 4 Pages**

First, choose the topmost (out of the three you presented in Paper 1) interest of the society you selected and the topmost threat (out of the three you presented in Paper 1).

Second, explain how you would resolve this threat: by using one or more state institutions (for example, making changes in the judiciary, the executive, or the bureaucracy) and/or representation of interests (for example, by new election procedures or affirmative action laws). Do empirical research outside of assigned readings and cite at least four different articles/chapters/books in your paper.

Paper 3: Effects on Other Interests and Threats; and Complete Paper Submission **Minimum Length: 12 Pages**

First explain whether and how your chosen solution to the topmost threat to the topmost interest that you chose in Paper 2 affects the two other interests and threats that you selected in Paper 1. Second, explain whether and how you would resolve these issues.

The Final Paper must integrate Papers 1, 2, and 3 into a coherent article. Hint: after your summary Introduction, your first section should be based on Paper 1, the second section on Paper 2, and the third section on the new query for Paper 3, which will be followed by the Conclusion.

CLASSES:

First Week: Introduction to Comparative Politics – Between Representation and Conflict

Second Week: Institutions – Parliamentary and Presidential Systems

Third Week: Common Law Systems and Civil Law Systems

Fourth Week: Democracy and Democratization in Historical Perspective

Scenario I: Due

Fifth Week: Economics and Political Developments I – Modernization

Sixth Week: Economics and Political Developments II – Institutional Legacies

Seventh Week: Political Culture and Ethno-politics

Seventh Week: Social Structure and Politics I – Class Relations and Conflict

Paper I Presentations

Eighth Week: Social Structure and Politics II – After Modernization

Paper I Presentations

Ninth Week: Democratization I – Domestic Pressures

PAPER I, DUE

Tenth Week: Democratization II – International Pressures

Eleventh Week: Electoral Institutions I – Majoritarian Systems

Twelfth Week: Electoral Institutions II – Proportional System

Paper II Presentations

Thirteenth Week: Political Instability and Foreign Wars

Paper II Presentations

Fourteenth Week: Causes of Civil Wars

PAPER II, DUE

Fifteenth Week: Building Post-Conflict Institutions

Scenario II

Sixteenth Week: The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations and International Organizations

PAPER III, DUE

FINAL EXAMINATION: TBA