

Mount Saint Mary's University
Spring 2009

PS 200

Comparative Politics

MW 2-3:15

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This is an introduction to comparative politics, a subfield of political science that borrows from other social sciences. Rather than focus on a series of country case studies, we will: 1) discuss key concepts such as the state, civil society, regime types, and globalization; 2) learn to apply the defining feature of this subfield, the comparative method, to a research project of your own design; and 3) understand the differences between three common theoretical approaches to the study of comparative politics (rational choice, structuralism, and the cultural approach).

In addition to our textbook (*Essentials of Comparative Politics*), we will read a number of articles and excerpts from important figures in comparative politics, economic, history, and sociology found in a reader (*Essential Readings in Comparative Politics*). Some are seminal works from figures like Alexis de Tocqueville, Karl Marx, and Max Weber. Others are more recent works by top scholars. The purpose of the reader is to let you see what “comparative” scholarship looks like, and to see some from a variety of different perspectives. These will help serve as important models as you work on your own comparative study.

Later in the semester, we will read an insightful and smartly written, book on globalization: *How Soccer Explains the World*. In addition to serving as an enjoyable read during the last weeks of the semester (when you are hard at work on your research papers), this book allows us to see how comparative politics is relevant to the “real” world around us. *How Soccer Explains the World* will (hopefully) be the kind of book you read for years to come, as you continue your lifelong intellectual journey. That, after all, is a key goal of any liberal arts education.

University Curriculum Goals Met By This Course

This course fulfills the following university curriculum goals and objectives, to promote:

1. An understanding of the Western humanist tradition, including its American expression, particularly as that tradition has been interpreted in Catholic thought and practice.
 - g. To achieve perspective on the Western humanist tradition by investigating at least one culture that has developed outside or beyond the dominant traditions of the West.
2. The skills of analysis, communication, and problem solving that enable students to appreciate, critique, and contribute to that tradition.
 - a. To become skilled readers, writers, and speakers.

- d. To skillfully employ contemporary research methods, including the resources of information technology.
- e. Recognize and evaluate claims of intellectual authority.
3. An understanding of the purposes, methods, and substance of a particular intellectual discipline.
 - a. To complete an undergraduate major.
 - b. To connect study in that major with learning in the core curriculum and electives.
4. An understanding of the nature of the good and a commitment to its practice, particularly in regard to justice, dignity, and freedom and responsibility in human communities.
 - b. To honor the dignity and worth of persons of different racial and cultural heritages.
 - d. To address the pressing questions of social justice and human need.
5. The personal synthesis of learning and the capacity for life-long inquiry that constitute the ultimate goal of a liberal education.
 - a. To seek to integrate learning across courses and disciplines within the core curriculum.
 - b. To connect core learning with learning in the major.

Department of Political Science Goals Met By This Course

This course also helps meet the following objectives of the political science major:

- To understand the nature and evolution of political science as one of the social science disciplines.
- To understand the similarities and differences of political systems and cultures.
- To analyze political questions using philosophical, legal, qualitative, and quantitative methods.
- To understand the nature and evolution of the international political system, including state and non-state actors.
- To understand the salient features of political systems in other regions of the world such as Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East.

REQUIRED TEXTS

O'Neil, Patrick. 2007. *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, 2nd ed. New York: W. W. Norton.

O'Neil, Patrick and Ronald Rogowski, eds. 2007. *Essential Readings in Comparative Politics*, 2nd ed. New York: W. W. Norton.

Foer, Franklin. 2004. *How Soccer Explains the World: An Unlikely Theory of Globalization*. New York: Harper.

Additional Readings (on Blackboard)

Landman, Todd. 2003. "How to Compare Countries." In *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics: An Introduction*, 2nd ed., 23-37. London: Routledge.

Macridis, Roy C. 1955. "A Survey of the Field of Comparative Government." In *The Study of Comparative Government*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Recommended (useful for your research paper)

Baglione, Lisa A. 2007. *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science: A Practical Guide to Inquiry, Structures, and Methods*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The semester grade is based on the following components:

Participation	7%
In-class reading quizzes	10%
In-class exams (x2)	40% (20% each)
Short essays (x2)	14% (7% each)
Research paper	15%
Final exam	14%

Participation. Read the assigned readings *before* class and come ready to discuss them. Note that *attendance* is not the same as *participation*; if you come to class every day but never offer any questions, comments, or otherwise become actively engaged in class you will earn a zero for participation. The best way to earn points for participation is to come to class every day prepared with at least one question or comment.

Reading quizzes. I will periodically give short in-class quizzes at the start of class. If you miss a quiz, you will receive a zero for that day's quiz. There is no limit to the number of quizzes; they will be averaged out to account for 10% of your total grade.

Short essays. You will have *four opportunities* to write *two* short essays (3-4 pages). Each is worth 7 points and asks you to write on a specific prompt.

- **Options 1A and 1B:** You must submit an essay for *one* of the following two deadlines: February 16 (Option 1A) or February 23 (Option 1B).
- **Options 2A and 2B:** You must submit an essay for *one* of the following two deadlines: March 9 (Option 2A) or March 16 (Option 2B).

For either option, if you submit an essay for the first deadline, you may submit another for the second deadline if you are unhappy with your grade (but you will write a new essay on the second prompt).

In-class exams. There are two in-class exams during the semester. Each covers materials (readings, handouts, and discussions) covered to that point. Each includes one essay question (worth 7 points), two short answer questions (each worth 3 points), and seven identification questions (each worth 1 point). I will hand out a study guide in the previous class and you will be allowed one 3x5 index card with notes.

Final exam. The final exam covers material from *How Soccer Explains the World* and ask you to place that text in the context of earlier materials from the textbook and reader. The exam includes two essay questions (worth 7 points each). I will hand out a study guide in the previous class and you will be allowed one 3x5 index card with notes.

RESEARCH PAPER: BRIEF GUIDELINES AND DEADLINES

During the semester, you will work on a research paper (a comparative study) on a topic of your choice. The paper must be 7-8 pages long, use proper reference citations (using the *Chicago Manual of Style*)¹ and include a reference bibliography and a title page (not included in the page count). Additional guidelines will be handed out later. The research paper is due May 1.

You will select two “cases” of your choice to compare, using the method introduced in Landman, “How to Compare Countries” (on Blackboard). Your two cases must be from two different parts of the world. Part of the assignment is to demonstrate your ability to use the comparative method to justify your case selection. Additional guidelines will be handed out later. The research paper is due May 1.

Writing a research paper involves a number of important steps:

- selecting a preliminary research topic and cases
- preliminary research on your topic(s) to determine if there are enough reference materials available (*if not, you may have to select a different topic!*)
- selecting and organizing your reference materials
- preparing a paper outline (*never start writing until you have outlined your ideas!*)
- writing a preliminary draft
- editing a “final” draft

None of these steps should be rushed; each is a crucial part of writing a polished paper.

Please note the following deadlines associated with your final research paper:

- **February 2:** research interest statement (in 50 words or less, specify an issue or theme from the course readings you would like to explore)
- **February 16-27:** office hour visits (you must sign up for a 10-minute meeting in which we will discuss your case selections)
- **March 23:** précis and brief proposal (in 700 words or less, give a brief description of your two cases and describe your research design)
- **April 8:** annotated reference bibliography (must include *at least* 2 books & 5 peer-review articles beyond the assigned readings)

I will provide guidelines for each of these assignments. While they are not graded, failure to submit any one will result in a 10% deduction to your final paper grade (if you fail to meet all four deadlines, you automatically lose 40% of your final paper grade).

Writing Tips & Guidelines

Spend the necessary time. Writing is a craft; it is not something we do carelessly. Style and polish count, both in college and post-college writing. The Mount’s Writing Center is an excellent place to go for help and guidance. I am also willing to help by reading drafts or answering any questions you might have.

¹ A quick guide is online at: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

College papers require the use of “scholarly” sources. Do not use any of the following as reference citations in your paper:

- encyclopedias (this includes Wikipedia, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and others)
- dictionaries
- country “backgrounders” (such as CIA World Fact Book, Library of Congress Country Studies, and others)

These sources may be good places to *start* learning about a topic, but they are not worthy of citations.

The following types of references may be appropriate under certain circumstances (see me), but your paper should not exclusively (or even primarily) rely on them:

- newspaper articles
- newsmagazine articles (this includes *The Economist*, *Newsweek*, and others)
- online news sources (this includes PBS, National Geographic, and others)

STUDY TIPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

How to Read for This Course

This course involves a substantial amount of reading. *Don't panic!* One of the important lessons of college is to learn how to read and synthesize information quickly. The purpose of a liberal arts education is not to teach you to memorize large chunks of information.

The textbook (*Essentials of Comparative Politics*) will require greater attention to detail and we will cover it more slowly. In the reader (*Essential Readings in Comparative Politics*), pay careful attention to each reading's individual argument, since each reading adopts a different perspective from the others and are meant to illustrate ongoing debates within the academic community.

Later in the semester we will read a less “dense” book that you should be able to read more quickly. You should read this later text with two distinct, but related, purposes:

- for examples of case studies (while you work on your own research paper)
- for more detailed explorations of themes or issues raised earlier in the semester

I don't expect you to become an “expert” on the subtle nuances of international soccer (or, more properly, “football”). I do, however, expect you to develop a richer appreciation for how the concepts and issues we have learned “matter” in people's everyday life.

Time Management Tips

You should spend about as much time reading and preparing for class each week as the time we spend in class. I recommend one hour reading and taking notes for each class period, plus 5 minutes reviewing your notes *before* and 5 minutes reviewing your notes *after* each class.

I recommend spending another 2-3 hours per week for your writing assignments. Set aside 20-30 minutes each day for working on writing assignments for this class. If you

work on your writing projects consistently, you will save yourself the stress of an “all-nighter” (and your will be of higher quality).

GENERAL RULES & EXPECTATIONS

Special Accommodations

I will make special accommodations when necessary and appropriate. But it is your responsibility to inform me of such circumstances as early as possible and appropriate. This includes accommodations for extra time on exams.

Late Work

I do not accept late work. If you give yourself plenty of time for assignments, and avoid procrastinating, you will be prepared for any crisis. You can always submit work early. If you know ahead of time that you will miss a deadline, you are better off submitting what you have up to that point, than not submitting anything at all.

Classroom Rules

I have very few rules for my classroom, most of which are common sense:

- no use of cell phones (this also means no texting) in class
- no use of laptops (if you are allowed one, a special note taker may be present to sit at the back of the class)
- no sleeping (if you can't stay awake, don't come to my class)
- arrive on time (arriving late is disruptive; if you are more than 5 minutes late, don't come to my class)
- bring the readings to class (I frequently reference specific pages during discussion; you should, too)
- treat everyone with the same kind of respect you would expect to be treated yourself

Academic Honesty

Finally, it is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the Mount's guidelines regarding academic honesty. Pay close attention to pages 52-53 of the university's undergraduate manual, particularly regarding cheating and plagiarism. Plagiarism (in its many forms) is a serious offense that may lead to your expulsion from the university. If you have doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, see me right away (it's not plagiarism until you submit an assignment in for a grade).

SEMESTER SCHEDULE

- Week 1** January 12
Introduction and hand out syllabus; go over class expectations
- January 14
Essentials, Chapter 1 (“Introduction,” pp. 1-19)
Macridis, “A Survey of the Field of Comparative Government” (on Blackboard)
Readings: Lichback & Zuckerman (“Research Traditions and Theory,” pp. 2-6)
- Week 2** January 19
Essentials, Chapter 2 (“The State,” pp. 20-43)
Readings: Weber (“Politics as a Vocation,” pp. 31-37)
- January 21
Readings: Juergensmeyer (“The New Religious State,” pp. 37-45);
Rotberg (“The New Nature of Nation-State Failure,” pp. 61-68); Herbst
 (“War and the State in Africa,” pp. 46-61)
- Week 3** January 26
Essentials, Chapter 3 (“Nations and Society,” pp. 44-76)
Readings: Hobsbawm (“Nationalism,” pp. 70-79)
- January 28
Readings: Huntington (“The Clash of Civilizations?” pp. 105-118); Sen
 (“Civilizational Imprisonments,” pp. 118-126)
- Week 4** February 2
Essentials, Chapter 4 (“Political Economy,” pp. 77-109)
Readings: Smith (“Wealth of Nations,” pp. 129-135)
Research interest statement due
- February 4
Readings: North (“Institutions,” pp. 143-155); Alesina, Glaeser, and
Sacerdote (“Why Doesn’t the United States Have a European-Style
Welfare State?” pp. 155-166); **in-class activity**
- Week 5** February 9
First in-class exam
- February 11
Landman, “How to Compare Countries” (on Blackboard); review
semester research paper assignment guidelines

- Week 6**
- February 16
Essentials, Chapter 5 (“Authoritarianism,” pp. 110-133)
Readings: Linz & Stepan (“Modern Nondemocratic Regimes,” pp. 168-181); Diamond (“Thinking about Hybrid Regimes,” pp. 181-192)
Short essay due (option 1A)
- February 18
Readings: Snyder & Ballentine (“Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas,” pp. 193-213); Fish (“Islam and Authoritarianism,” pp. 214-228)
- Week 7**
- February 23
Essentials, Chapter 6 (“Democracy,” pp. 134-160)
Readings: Zakaria (“A Brief History of Human Liberty,” pp. 231-246); Schmitter & Karl (“What Democracy Is ... and Is Not,” pp. 247-256)
Short essay due (option 1B)
- February 25
Readings: Putnam (“Tuning In, Tuning Out,” pp. 266-294); Berman (“Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic,” pp. 294-305)
- Week 8**
- March 9
Essentials, Chapter 7 (“Advanced Democracies,” pp. 161-188)
Readings: Tocqueville (“Democracy in America,” pp. 308-315)
Short essay due (option 2A)
- March 11
Readings: Lipset (“Economic Development and Democracy,” pp. 316-329); Huber & Powell (“Congruence between Citizens and Policymakers in Two Visions of Liberal Democracy,” pp. 334-342)
- Week 9**
- March 16
Essentials, Chapter 8 (“Communism & Post-Communism,” pp. 189-218)
Readings: Marx (“Manifesto of the Communist Party,” pp. 353-366)
Short essay due (option 2B)
- March 18
Readings: Przeworski (“The Fall of Communism,” pp. 366-371); Bunce (“Rethinking Recent Democratization,” pp. 371-381); Buruma (“What Beijing Can Learn from Moscow,” pp. 392-399)
- Week 10**
- March 23
Essentials, Chapter 9 (“LDCs and NICs,” pp. 219-249)
Readings: Pritchett (“Divergence, Big Time,” pp. 410-422); **in-class activity**
Précis and brief proposal due

March 25

Readings: Collier & Gunning (“Why Has Africa Grown Slowly?” pp. 428-445); Barro (“Democracy: A Recipe for Growth?” pp. 445-447); Przeworski et al (“Political Regimes and Economic Growth,” pp. 448-456)

Week 11

March 30

Essentials, Chapter 11 (“Political Violence,” pp. 277-308)
Readings: Skocpol (“Social Revolutions,” pp. 509-527)

April 1

Readings: Crenshaw (“The Causes of Terrorism,” pp. 527-543); Margalit & Buruma (“Occidentalism,” pp. 544-552); Goldstone (“States, Terrorists, and the Clash of Civilizations,” pp. 552-566)

Week 12

April 6

Second in-class exam

April 8

Essentials, Chapter 10 (“Globalization,” pp. 250-276)
Readings: Fukuyama (“The End of History?” pp. 459-473); Hofman (“Clash of Globalizations,” pp. 474-480)
Annotated reference bibliography due

Week 13

April 16

Foer, Chapter 1 (“The Gangster’s Paradise,” pp. 7-34); Chapter 4 (“The Sentimental Hooligan,” pp. 89-114)

April 18

Foer, Chapter 2 (“The Pornography of Sects,” pp. 35-64)

Week 14

April 20

Foer, Chapter 5 (“The Survival of the Top Hats,” pp. 115-140); Chapter 7 (“The New Oligarchs,” pp. 167-192)

April 22

Foer, Chapter 3 (“The Jewish Question,” pp. 65-88)

Week 15

April 27

Foer, Chapter 8 (“The Discreet Charm of Bourgeois Nationalism,” pp. 193-216); Chapter 10 (“The American Culture Wars,” pp. 235-248)

April 29

Foer, Chapter 9 (“Islam’s Hope,” pp. 217-234)

May 1
Semester paper due

Finals Week May ???
Final in-class exam, ???