

POL204: Comparative Politics

Fall 2014

Class Meetings: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00-12:15, Chavez 111

Professor Jennifer Cyr

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Office hours: Tuesday, 9-11 am, or by appointment

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Why do civil wars happen in some places but not others? Why does oil wealth seem to depress democracy in the developing world? Why is democracy so different in the United States than in Mexico or India? As students of comparative politics, we examine the world around us and attempt to understand the empirical puzzles that we see. We *compare* political institutions, policy processes, decision-making procedures, and political life across the globe. In so doing, we advance our understanding of politics and political systems around the world.

In order to think comparatively about the world around us, we must have the proper tools. The primary objective of this course is to acquaint you with these tools. The course will provide an analysis of comparative, cross-national political concepts while surveying the diversity of major political systems found in the contemporary world. Our survey will extend to past and present (and future?) superpowers, to democracies and autocracies, and to political systems in transition. We will work to identify and relate more abstract theoretical material to the concrete realities of governance, politics, and power. We will compare and contrast political experiences across place and time. We will explore institutions, rules, and interests.

Comparative politics entails more than a mere description of other countries and their political systems. It involves developing an analytical framework for understanding the intricacies of politics in all countries, including the United States. By the end of the semester, you should “see” the world around you differently. It should seem more familiar, more complex, and infinitely more interesting!

Course Requirements:

Student obligations for the course include: (a) doing a lot of reading; (b) having the readings completed before they are due; (c) attending all class meetings; (d)

completing three exams; and (e) undertaking a focused country study, which includes a series of short assignments.

Despite the size of the class, I fully expect it to be more than just a monologue on the part of the instructor. I hope to engage the class as much as possible in order to foment a dialogue and discussion of the topics under consideration. This is why reading before class is vital. This is also why your attendance and participation in meetings is assumed. Lectures should be both lively and informative – and we can only achieve this as a group.

In-class Exercises and Breakout Sessions: I will periodically ask students to break up into groups (i.e. 3-5 students) to discuss or consider a question or task for a short time period. These sessions are designed to help you better absorb the material by moving beyond what we have encountered in lectures and readings. A short final report or document with the results of your deliberations will be handed in at the end of the class. This report will serve as proof of attendance for that particular meeting.

NEW RULE! No laptops in class. It turns out you learn more (and better) without computers: <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/elements/2014/06/the-case-for-banning-laptops-in-the-classroom.html>.

Common Courtesy: We all have electronic devices that keep our finger on the pulse of the world around us. I am a big fan of these devices, but I find that they can be incredibly distracting – and their owners incredibly disrespectful! – when used at inappropriate times. Please refrain from using them during class time. This is not a request.

The final course grade will be determined on the basis of the following graded components:

First Exam	20%	In class on Thursday, 18 September
Second Exam	20%	In class on Thursday, 23 October
Focused Country Study	20%	Two, two-page reports, each is worth 10% <i>First report</i> , due by 11 am on 30 September <i>Second report</i> , due by 11 am on 25 November
Comprehensive Final Exam	35%	Take-home exam, due on 16 December
Attendance/Participation	5%	Random five sessions (1% each)

Exams: The first two exams will be shorter in length and will take place during class on the dates specified above. They will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. The final exam will be take-home and will be due on our class' scheduled final exam date, 16 December, at 12:30 pm. More detailed information on the exams will be forthcoming in class. Please note that the date and time for each

exam is firm. Make-up exams will only be given in the most extraordinary – documented – circumstances. Please note that, in accordance with university regulations, the final exam will be due no later than during the officially scheduled final exam time period, though you are free to turn it in earlier.

Focused Country Study: To complete the focused country study, you must select a country, track its domestic politics during the semester, and prepare three short, written assignments in which you consider issues from class as they pertain to your country of study. You may select any contemporary sovereign country other than your native country. For example, students from Japan may not choose Japan. Students from Mexico cannot choose Mexico. I encourage you to choose a country in which you are interested and on which there is sufficient, accessible information. You may choose a country that you already know quite well. You may also decide to learn about a country in which you have no prior experience. You may not select any of the countries that are featured in the course: Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States, China, Mexico, or Egypt. Certain administrative units, while fascinating in their own right, do not constitute states and are therefore not appropriate for this assignment: e.g., Hong Kong, Kurdistan, Monaco, Northern Ireland, Scotland, the Vatican, and Wales. Other sub-state actors or regions, such as the European Union, are also not acceptable.

These are the assignments for your country of interest:

#1: On September 4, you will be asked to email our TAs, Roman and Emily, the country that you will be studying. This way, we can be sure that you are following the guidelines above. Please do so by the beginning of class.

#2: In a first, two-page paper, you will overview the formal political institutional arrangements in your country (e.g. What are the branches of government? Are there elections? Is it a federal system?) and the norms by which the government operates (e.g. Are the branches of government independent? Who actually exercises power in the country? Are political rights and liberties respected?). You will also identify the key political and societal actors (e.g. political parties, interest groups, media, etc) that attempt to influence government. This paper must be uploaded electronically to D2L by 11:00 am, on September 30. This paper is worth 10 points of the total 20 points assigned to the Focused Country Study.

#3: In the second, two-page paper, you will identify and discuss the most important policy issues that are currently on your country's agenda. These might be with respect to the economy, human rights, the environment, corruption, culture, etc. Please note how the government and other important actors are reacting to these policies. This paper must be uploaded electronically to D2L by 11:00 am, on November 25. This paper is worth 10 points of the total 20 points assigned to the Focused Country Study.

#4: Finally, the take-home final exam will include a question that will relate to your chosen country.

Each two-page paper should be double-spaced using 11- or 12-point font, 1 inch margins, and Times New Roman font. (If you use Google Docs, please make sure your paper is set correctly to these specifications.) The turn-around time on these papers will be quick. Late papers will be penalized one letter grade for each day late.

Attendance: I will be taking attendance five times throughout the course. These dates will be chosen randomly, and you will be given 1 point (1%) for each day that you are present. Please note that if you are absent on all five days that I take attendance the maximum percentage that you can obtain for the entire course is 95%. This leaves little wiggle room if you would like an A for the course.

Grade allocation:

89.5-100 = A

80-89.49999 = B

70-79.49999 = C

60-69.49999 = D

Extra Credit opportunity: There will be an opportunity to earn an extra credit point in this course. This semester, individuals affiliated with SGPP will conduct several academic research projects at the SGPP Research Center. You will receive notice throughout the semester regarding these opportunities. After participating in a project, you will receive ONE percentage point, which will be applied to your final score at the end of the semester. Please do not contact me about these opportunities. If you have questions, please send an email to SGPPResearch@email.arizona.edu. Also, a representative from the SGPP Research Center will visit our class to explain the SGPP Research Center and how you should sign up for a project. The projects typically involve completing a short survey, which usually takes between 15 minutes to an hour to complete.

Plagiarism is strictly forbidden and will be pursued and punished following the terms put forth by the University of Arizona. For more information on the university's policies, please see the following website:

<http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/codeofacademicintegrity>.

Please keep in mind that the University of Arizona seeks to *promote a safe environment* where students may participate in the educational process without compromising their health, safety or welfare. As such, the university prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the University community, including to one's self. For more information, please see the following website:

<http://policy.web.arizona.edu/threatening-behavior-students>.

Accessibility and Accommodations:

It is the University's goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. You are also welcome to contact Disability Resources (520-621-3268) to establish reasonable accommodations.

Please be aware that the accessible table and chairs in this room should remain available for students who find that standard classroom seating is not usable.

Books and Course Materials to Purchase: There is one item to purchase for this course: *Comparative Governance: Political Structure and Diversity Across the Globe*, W. Phillips Shively and Paulette Kurzer (New York: McGraw-Hill, with 2013 updates). All other materials will be available electronically on D2L.

INTRODUCTION. What is comparative politics?

26 August: Introduction to the course

28 August: NO CLASS

FIRST SECTION. Understanding the State: Formation, Consolidation, and Breakdown

2 September: The comparative enterprise

Readings: Why (and How) Should We Compare?, CG textbook

4-9 September: What is the State?

****Due 4 September: Email Roman and Emily your choice of country**

Readings: Chapter 2, CG, The Setting of Power: The State
Chapter 3, CG, Holding the State Together;
Excerpt from "Politics as a Vocation," pp. 77-79, Max Weber (on D2L).

11 September: Forming the State and Holding it Together

Readings: "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," Charles Tilly (on D2L).

16 September: Russia (& the Soviet Union) as a Case Study of State Formation and Collapse

Readings: Start reading Russian Federation: System Building and Policy Making à la Russe, CG Textbook (by Dr. Willerton);

“The Formation of the Union of Soviet Republics” (on D2L); and “Fall of the Soviet Union” (on D2L).

18 September: First exam

SECOND SECTION. The State, the Government, and Regime in Past, Present, and Future (?) “Superpowers”: The United Kingdom, the United States, and China

23-25 September: Introduction

Readings: Decision Making in the State, CG Textbook; Examine the “Why Democracy” website: <http://www.whydemocracy.net/>; “Democracy or Autocracy: Which is Better for Economic Growth?” (on D2L).

30 September-2 October: The United Kingdom: “Growing” into Democracy

****Due 30 September: 1st Country Paper due via D2L by 11 am.**

Readings: Britain: Modern Politics in a Very Old State, CG Textbook; “The Historic Legacy of Tony Blair,” Vernon Bogdanor (on D2L).

7-9 October: The United States: An “Exceptional” Place?

Readings: The Political System of the United States, CG Textbook; “American Exceptionalism Reaffirmed,” Seymour Martin Lipset (on D2L); “Why Louisiana Doesn’t Matter,” Christopher Malone (on D2L).

14-16 October: China: Economic Liberalization without Political Liberties

Readings: China: From State Socialist to Capitalist Iconoclast, CG Textbook; “The Quiet Revolution: The Emergence of Capitalism,” Doug Guthrie (on D2L); “Authoritarian Resilience,” Andrew Nathan (on D2L).

21 October: Finish up China, and compare all three cases

23 October: Second Exam

THIRD SECTION. The Complexities of Democratic Transitions and State Development: Economic, Cultural, Social, and Leadership Factors in Mexico, Egypt, and (Revisiting) Russia

28-30 October: Introduction (Chapter Modules).

Readings: Political Conflict, CG Textbook; The State and the Economy, CG Textbook; “The Devil’s Excrement,” Moises Naím (on D2L).

4-6 November: Mexico

Readings: Mexico’s Democratic Transformation, CG Textbook; “Mexico: Development and Democracy at a Crossroads,” Shannon O’Neil (on D2L).

D2L); “Authoritarian Inheritances and Mexico’s Incomplete Democratic Transition,” Pamela Starr (on D2L).

11 November: No Class, Veteran’s Day

13-20 November: Egypt

Readings: Egypt: Facing the Challenge of Transition from Authoritarian Rule, CG Textbook; “Why are there no Arab Democracies?” Larry Diamond (on D2L); Egypt’s Revolution Redines What’s Possible... (on D2L); “After the Arab Spring: The Return of the Generals” (on D2L); “The Brotherhood Will Be Back” (on D2L). (*More resources on the events of 2011, when President Mubarak was forced out of office: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12327995>*.)

25 November: **2nd Country Paper due via D2L by 11 am. NO CLASS.**

27 November: Thanksgiving holiday. NO CLASS.

2-4 December: Revisiting Russia

**December 4: Take-home Final Exam Distributed*

Reading: Reread Russian Federation: System Building and Policy Making à la Russe, CG Textbook; “Putin’s Patrimony,” Robert Skidelsky (on D2L)

9 December: Finish up Russia, and compare all three cases

16 December: TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM DUE by 12:30 pm.