Introduction

Politicians, journalists, academics and lay-people make political comparisons on a daily basis, whether they acknowledge it or not. For example, in discussions of foreign policy and the perceived need to bring democracy to the Middle East, commentators are basing that core assumption on a comparison of the virtues of democracy over the drawbacks of dictatorship.

In order to make better comparisons and gain a better grasp on the issues that shape the world beyond our borders, we need to understand how history, culture, institutions, economics and interests shape politics in other lands. This course is designed to help us better understand concepts such as “democracy,” “liberty,” and “development” by observing and comparing how such seemingly abstract notions differ from country to country, and region to region.

To that end, we will explore in some depth the politics, history and economics associated with five different countries from various regions of the globe. We will begin by scrutinizing some basic elements of democracy and expanding upon our understanding of democracy in the American context by examining politics in Great Britain. We will then look at two authoritarian states—China and Iran. The final two countries—Russia and Nigeria—occupy a contentious middle ground between democracy and dictatorship. Additionally, in each case, we will look beyond the individual country and address broader regional challenges. Beyond simply describing the history and current political scene of each country, we will make a concerted effort to contrast them with one another, and derive political lessons from one to enhance governance in another. Moreover, each country will provide inroads into some of the more relevant sub-fields of study within comparative politics—state formation, contentious politics, nationalism, totalitarianism and democratization, political institutions and constitutional engineering, political culture, comparative revolutions, and so forth.
Three particular themes of note will extend through all five cases: 1) democracy, 2) economic structure and performance, and 3) challenges for the future. The history, functioning, promise and pitfalls of democracy will be a core concern, as states increasingly scrutinize the will of the people as the only legitimate basis for sovereignty. Economic policy and performance is heavily influenced by politics both domestically and internationally. How each state has shaped their economic policy is of crucial concern to comparative political scientists. Finally, each state faces a number of problems for the future—be they economic, political or social. While frequently concerned with various aspects of history, it is necessary for the comparativist to constantly consider these issues with an eye towards future political developments.

Assignments and Grading

Grading will be based upon participation in section as well as three in-class assignments: two mid-term examinations (the form of which will be announced later), as well as a final examination. The grade breakdown is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First mid-term exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second mid-term exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>35%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Grading Scale:

- 100—93%: A
- 92.9—90%: A-
- 89.9—87%: B+
- 86.9—83%: B
- 82.9—80%: B-
- 79.9—77%: C+
- 76.9—73%: C
- 72.9—70%: C-
- 69.9—60%: D
- Below 60%: F

Section Participation

Your TA will determine your section participation grade based upon classroom attendance and participation. It is necessary that you regularly attend both lecture and section. *Missing a class does not exempt you from the materials covered on that day.* You may want to exchange e-mail addresses with some of your classmates to get notes and other materials you might have missed. Just showing up to class will not ensure that you receive a satisfactory class participation grade. You will be expected to come to class having read all of the assigned readings for that week, and had time to think critically about them. Ensuring that everyone is familiar with the arguments put forth in the various readings is the minimum condition for developing an effective classroom environment.

Exams

The exams will be cumulative in that there will be a continuity of similar topics, concepts and perspectives throughout the class, but the focus of each exam will primarily concern the countries which immediately precede each exam. Lecture and discussion materials, as well as topics covered in the assigned readings—whether addressed directly in lecture—are all fair game for exam questions.

*Note:* Make-up exams will only be granted under extreme circumstances, resulting either from 1) genuine family emergencies, 2) travel associated with university obligations (academic or athletic), or 3) severe illness or injury. If you are traveling due to university obligations, you must inform us at least two weeks prior to the event. If you are genuinely ill or injured, *you will need proper documentation from your physician. These regulations will be rigorously enforced!!!*
Questions on Exams
Invariably throughout the semester, students have questions about the grade they received on a particular assignment that goes beyond the given comments on the paper or exam. If you feel that you did not deserve the grade you received on a given assignment, I am certainly open to discussing the matter. However, I will insist upon the following:

1) A 24-hour “cooling off” period. Please do not approach your TA or me with questions about “why did I receive this grade” within 24-hours of having your assignment returned to you. This will allow you time to re-read the comments, and understand whatever shortcomings may be in question.

2) Come to office hours. The TAs and I will not discuss individual grades during, before or after either discussion section or lecture. Questions about grades will only be considered in face-to-face discussions with your TA or myself. In the end, it is exceedingly rare that a grade will be altered—but if you can persuade me that the evaluation was in error, I am not opposed to re-evaluating the grade.

Readings
The following required readings are available for purchase.


All remaining materials will be included in a course reading packet that will be available for purchase, as well as being available on electronic reserve.

Course Website
This syllabus, along with relevant class announcements, review materials, reading assignments, and other information will be available on the course website, located at http://compass.uiuc.edu.

Words of Advice
Keep up!
Introduction to Comparative Politics is one of the more difficult courses for students to take, because it requires mastery not only of politics, but also history, sociology, economics, and even anthropology. Additionally, it requires an in-depth knowledge of each of the countries, and the various theoretical viewpoints associated with comparative politics. In short, there is a lot of information to be mastered here, so don’t fall behind in the readings. In fact, it is usually helpful to take notes on each of the assigned readings in addition to the lecture notes.
Keep clean!

Breaches of the University of Illinois Student Code, especially Article 1, Part 4 concerning breaches of Academic Integrity (such as cheating on exams and plagiarism) are serious business. Not only are such activities contrary to your entire purpose in attending college and official university policy, I also consider such breaches a personal affront to me as both an instructor and a competent human being—so consider this your prior warning: blatant breaches of academic integrity are discovered, I will prosecute them to the fullest extent.

Please take a moment to familiarize yourself with the Student Code, available online at: http://www.admin.uiuc.edu/policy/code/.

The Penalties for Infractions of Academic Integrity (§ 1-403) are steep, and you should be aware of them: at a minimum, you will flunk the assignment or test, and likely, the entire class. Moreover, you may be brought before an ethics review tribunal, where it will be recommended that you be suspended not only from UIUC, but the entire University of Illinois system. Note will be made of your transgressions in your university file—which will be made known to any other college that you may look to enroll in. Needless to say, most universities would be reluctant to accept a known cheater or plagiarizer to their institutions, and many employers would be reluctant to hire someone with such marks in their file. So, long story short: don’t waste my time, don’t waste your time—just don’t do it.

Assigned Readings and Organization of the Course:

I. Introduction: Expanding Understandings of Politics & Democracy in Comparative Perspective

Week 1:
Thursday, August 23—Introduction

Week 2:
Tuesday, August 28—Origins of Democracy and the Modern Nation-State

Thursday, August 30—Democracy and Comparative Politics
• Introduction to Comparative Politics, Chapter 1, pp. 1-27.
Week 3:
Tuesday, September 4—**Putting the US in its Place: Varieties of Institutions**

II. **The United Kingdom**

Thursday, September 6
- *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, Chapter 2, pp. 39-89.

Week 4:
Tuesday, September 11—**Economic Policy: Keynesianism, Thatcherism & “New Labour”**

Thursday, September 13—**Social Capital in the US and UK**

Week 5:
Tuesday, September 18—**Gradualism, Sequencing, and Democracy in European and the EU**
+ **Review for midterm**
Thursday, September 20

~~First Midterm Examination~~

III. China

Week 6:
Tuesday, September 25

- *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, Chapter 13, pp. 627-679.

Thursday, September 27—From Totalitarianism to Authoritarianism


Week 7:
Tuesday, October 2—Challenges of Liberalization and Globalization


Thursday, October 4—Regional Challenges in China and South Asia

- Friedman, Edward, “Is China a Success while India is a Failure?” Manuscript. (Course packet)

IV. Iran

Week 8:
Tuesday, October 9

- *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, Chapter 12, pp. 577-621.

Thursday, October 11—Monarchy, Revolution and Theocracy


Week 9:
Tuesday, October 16—Reform?

(October, 2005), pp. 9-22. (Course packet)
  *Readings in Comparative Politics*, pp. 276-281.
• Sazegara, Mohsen, “What Should ‘We’ Do Now?” *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 16, No. 4
  (October, 2005), pp. 64-73. (Course packet)
  (March/April, 2005), pp. 20-33. (Course packet)

Thursday, October 18—*Iran and the “Clash of Civilizations” + Review for Exam*

  *Readings in Comparative Politics*, pp. 18-32.
  in Comparative Politics*, pp. 32-40.
• Vedrine, Hubert, “How Can We Deny the Clash between Islam and the West?” *Le Monde*,
  Paris, Feb 28, 2003. (Course packet)
• Siyasat-e Ruz, Tehran, “America’s Threats, Its Aims and Reasons,” April 9, 2003. (Read
  section C: “The Ideological War of the Future,” skim the rest.) (Course packet)
  17, No. 3, (July 2006), pp. 5-12. (Course packet)

Week 10:
Tuesday, October 23

~~Second Midterm Examination~~

V.  **Russia**
Thursday, October 25

• *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, Chapter 8, pp. 353-407.

Week 11:
Tuesday, October 30—*Postcommunist “Virtual” Economies*

  110-124. (Course packet)
• Brzezinski, Matthew, *Casino Moscow: A Tale of Greed and Adventure on Capitalism’s
  Woman,” pp. 119-144. (Course packet)
• Tymoshenko, Yuliya, “Containing Russia,” *Foreign Affairs*, (May/June 2007) pp. 69-
  (Course packet)

Thursday, November 1—*Political Challenges of Demographic Crisis*

• Feshbach, Murray, “Russia’s Population Meltdown,” *Wilson Quarterly*, vol. 25, no. 1
  (2001), pp. 15-21. (Course packet)
• Specter, Michael, “The Devastation,” *New Yorker*, Vol. 80, No. 30 (Oct 11, 2004), pp. 58-
  69. (Course packet)
Week 12:
Tuesday, November 6—**Beyond “Transitology”**

Thursday, November 8—**The New “Revolutions”**

**VI. Nigeria**

Week 13:
Tuesday, November 13
- *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, Chapter 11, pp. 519-573.

Thursday, November 15—**Constructing Ethnicity in Weak States**

Week 14: Thanksgiving Break
Tuesday, November 20—No Class!
Thursday, November 22—No Class!

Week 15:
Tuesday, November 27—**Engineering National Unity**
Thursday, November 29—**Weak and Failed States: West Africa and Beyond**


**VII. Where Do We Go From Here?**

**Week 16:**

**Tuesday, December 4**


**Thursday, December 6—Wrap-up and Review**


**Final Exam:**

**8:00am—11:00am, Thursday, December 13**