

Las Positas College
3000 Campus Hill Drive
Livermore, CA 94551-7650
(925) 424-1000
(925) 443-0742 (Fax)

Course Outline for POLI 20
COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT
Effective: Fall 2005

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

POLI 20 — COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT — 3.00 units

Contemporary forms of government, institutions and political problems of selected national governments. Strongly Recommended: Political Science 1 or 7 and eligibility for English 1A. 3 hours lecture.

3.00 Units Lecture

Prerequisite

POLI 7 - Introduction to American Government
and

ENG 1A - Critical Reading and Composition

Grading Methods:

Optional

Discipline:

	<u>MIN</u>
Lecture Hours:	54.00
Total Hours:	54.00

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT:

III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

Before entering the course a student should be able to:

- A. POLI7
- B. ENG1A

IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. compare and contrast democracies, transitional democracies, and non-democratic (authoritarian) nations and governments
2. analyze, discuss, compare and contrast political systems of selected nations
3. analyze and describe governments, policymaking, politics and issues in an objective, critical manner
4. analyze and discuss historical development through to contemporary systems of selected nations, governments, institutions and processes
5. interpret political events in framework of different governmental structures and processes
6. analyze and explain policymaking and public policy of selected nations
7. analyze, discuss, describe political culture and socialization in relation to governments, politics, processes in selected nations
8. identify, distinguish, interpret and explain the institutions, roles and processes of interest articulation and aggregation, including political parties, groups and organizations and military/armies of selected nations
9. identify and explain political inputs, outputs and outcomes
10. distinguish, explain and interpret function of written and unwritten structures of constitutional governments
11. identify, distinguish and explain governmental structures, institutions, and political processes, i.e., assemblies and legislatures; Parliaments v. Congress, and legislative process and functions in selected nations
12. identify, distinguish and explain governmental structures, institutions, and political processes, i.e., executives; Prime Minister v. President and roles and responsibilities
13. identify, distinguish and explain governmental structures, institutions, and political processes i.e., judiciaries; legal and court structures and legal proceedings and procedures
14. identify, distinguish and explain governmental structures, institutions, and political processes, i.e., bureaucracies; roles and responsibilities, functions and processes
15. research and critically analyze political processes from selected governmental structures within nations

V. CONTENT:

- A. Selected governments, politics, processes presented historically in context through the 20th Century. Example: Historical political development of the Soviet Union into 20th Century
- B. Governments in contemporary society: contemporary structures, roles, functions, responsibilities, processes of selected nations
- C. Patterns of 20th Century government: growth in 20th Century of "transitional nations" toward democratic nations
- D. The framework of limited government

1. Concept of "limited government" and differing operations in selected nations
2. Selected nations transitioning and operating with limited government structure
3. Role of "popular" within limited government structure
- E. Political leadership and administration: executives, assemblies, judiciary and bureaucracy implementations, functions, roles and responsibilities
- F. Elections, political parties, "group interests," legislators and processes
 1. Election structures and processes in selected nations
 2. Role and responsibilities of "popular" in elections
 3. Role and responsibilities of leaders, public officials, governmental institutions
 4. Role and responsibilities of political parties
 5. Role and responsibilities of "group interests"
- G. Interest articulation and interest aggregation
 1. Defining "what" and "how" the wants and needs are translated in selected nations, governments
 2. Role, functions, responsibilities of government institutions, "groups," popular leaders in selected nations
 3. Avenues for articulating "interests" in selected nations, governments
 4. Avenues for aggregating "interests" in selected nations, governments
- H. Ideology and Politics
 1. Concept of political ideas and approaches to governments, politics, and processes
 2. Role of ideology (ideas) from historical context relating to development of selected nations, governments, politics, processes
 3. Ideology and its influence through to the 20th Century
- I. Interrelations of National and International politics
 1. Historical patterns and influence of international affairs on selected nations
 2. Commentary patterns and influence of international affairs on selected nations
- J. Democracy in the modern world: defining expanding concept of "democracy" in 20th and 21st Centuries

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Discussion** - Class and small group discussions
- B. Primary and secondary readings and internet assignments
- C. Small group activities
- D. Role playing simulations
- E. **Audio-visual Activity** - Audio visual materials
- F. **Lecture** -

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

A. Reading from handouts and text: 1. Why and how of comparative politics 2. Constitutional democracies, parliamentary systems and pluralism 3. Models, regimes, and regions: the idea of the State 4. Monarchies, Dictatorships, Parliaments, limited democracies and rule B. Writing assignments 1. Define development as it relates to states and societies. 2. What are the causes of "underdevelopment?" What are the symptoms? 3. How do the electoral systems and processes of Mexico and Russia differ? 4. Explain the many influences affecting the creation of legislation in Germany. 5. Explain how interests are articulated and aggregated in Japan. C. Class discussion 1. Given the choice between serving as the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, which job would you prefer and why? 2. Compare and contrast the constitutional powers of the French President and the British Prime Minister. 3. To what degree do such variables as climate, resources, food and population size play a role in shaping political institutions? D. Small group discussions 1. Develop and present a selected aspect of a nation – states political, economic or cultural institutions

VIII. EVALUATION:

A. **Methods**

1. Exams/Tests
2. Research Projects
3. Papers
4. Oral Presentation
5. Projects
6. Other:
 - a. Methods of evaluation: Grades will be based on cumulative scores from exams, group presentations, written reports, a research paper, and participation in class discussions and activities.
 - b. Final Exam or Project
 1. Example final exam question: Compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of the United States' liberal democracy with that of Japan. Be sure to include description and discussion of popular sovereignty, political equality, representation, and participation.
 2. Example of final exam project: Oral presentation of the research paper on the legislative process within a nation.

B. **Frequency**

1. Two midterms
2. A final exam
3. Regular oral presentations
4. Eight to ten written reports
5. One research paper at end of semester

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

1. Almond, Gabriel A., et al. *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*. 8th ed., Pearson/Longman, 2003.
2. Kesselman, Mark, Joel Krieger and William A. Joseph *Introduction to Comparative Politics*. 2nd ed., Houghton Mifflin, 2000.
3. Magstadt, Thomas *Nations and Governments*. 4th ed., Bedford/St. Martin, 2002.
4. Rourke, John T. and John Rourke *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in World Politics*. 11th ed., McGraw Hill/Dushkin, 2003.
5. Wilson, Frank L *Concepts and Issues in Comparative Politics: An Introduction to Comparative Analysis*. 2nd ed., Prentice Hall, 2002.

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS:

- A. Blue books
- B. Original source documents and case studies