

## **POLS-120-09A: Comparative Politics**

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### **Introduction:**

This course introduces the comparative study of modern political systems. It outlines the major concepts and methods of comparative political analysis. It then applies these methods to the study of political institutions in democratic and non-democratic countries, as well as the challenges that these regimes confront. The focus of the class is on simultaneously learning about how the game of politics is played in different countries while also discovering *how* differences in the 'rules of the game' influence political outcomes in those countries. The course is divided into three sections. Sections one and two focus on exploring how political conflicts between competing groups are managed by the political institutions (parties, legislatures, etc.) of democracies and non-democracies, respectively and concludes with a comparison of policy outputs in dictatorships and democracies. The final section of the course explores ethnicity as a source of political instability and concludes with an in-dept comparison of how racial and ethnic divisions have influenced politics in Northern Ireland and the United States.

### A sample of the questions you will be able to answer at the end of this course:

1. Why do countries like Israel, Ireland, South Africa and Germany have *so many* political parties while the United States has so few?
2. What's the difference between a proportional electoral system and a majoritarian electoral system? What in the world is STV-PR (It's not a tropical disease)?
3. Why is the policy making process so often slow and frustrating in the United States? Is it more efficient in other countries? Why/why not?
  - a. Relatedly: Why do our European friends have such difficulty understanding things like the 'fiscal cliff'?
4. I just joined a local soccer club, why is that good for democracy?
5. What is a political party and what functions do parties serve in a democracy?
  - a. Why do political parties exist in non-democracies?
  - b. Why can't John Boehner and Harry Reid always get their way? Do party leaders in other countries have these same problems?
6. What's the difference between a presidential democracy and a parliamentary democracy?
7. [Name of a parliamentary democracy goes here] just changed their prime minister without having an election! Is that even legal? Isn't that some kind of coup?
8. The US Supreme Court seems pretty influential. What gives the USSC its power/influence? Do other countries have similar courts? How does the presence/absence of a Supreme Court affect policy making?
9. I always thought economic growth led to democratization. What's the deal with countries that have lots of oil wealth but are still ruled by monarchs or other dictators?
10. What is a public good? Why are they so difficult to produce?
11. Why is Dr. B. so obsessed with Ireland?

To begin answering these, and many other, questions about the political world we will use a variety of tools and techniques, including open ended discussions, simulation games, debates and, where necessary, the occasional lecture. My goal in this class is to provide you with opportunities to actively engage with the concepts, principles and ideas outlined below. The first step in that engagement is *careful and active reading* of the assigned texts. Beyond reading the text carefully, I encourage you to *ask a lot of questions*. If you encounter something in the text or in class that seems confusing or unfamiliar *ask about it*; chances are that someone else also feels confused and uncertain. Additionally, do not feel limited to the materials on the syllabus as topics of discussion. If you have unique knowledge or

experiences that are related to what we're talking about in class, I encourage you to share them and ask questions about how the concepts we're discussing apply to cases with which you are familiar.

In addition to answering your questions in class, I am also available for individual consultations, both in person and online (see details below).

### **Email Policy**

All official communication related to this course will be sent via email to your @emory.edu email address. Please check this account regularly. If you do not know how to access your emory.edu account, then please contact OCIT (additional information available at <http://oxford.emory.edu/operations/information-technology/students/student-email-office-365/>).

### **Office Visits**

Generally, I maintain an 'open door' policy and welcome you to drop in when you have questions or concerns related to the class. I am also available for consultations, both in person and via Skype, outside of those hours by appointment.

### **Evaluation**

Current Events Presentations 20%

Fidelity Checks 20%

Mid-Term Exam 25% (27 February)

Final Exam 25% (Review Session TBD; **29 April 9:00 – 12:00**)

Participation and Attendance: 10%

**Fidelity Checks:** Throughout the semester, there will be at least four but not more than six unannounced 'fidelity checks.' Each fidelity check will contain a number of multiple choice or short answer style questions about the assigned reading material as well as recent developments in current events. There will be no make-ups for these fidelity checks except in extraordinary circumstances as provided for in the Oxford College Catalog. Your lowest fidelity check score will be dropped when calculating this component of your final grade.

**Current Events Presentations:** Each Monday (as well as on Wednesdays & Fridays denoted with an asterisk\* below) we will begin the class period with a discussion of recent current events. There will be no current events presentations on exam days. Two student volunteers will facilitate each period's discussion. The duties of the facilitators will be as follows:

First, each student facilitator should select a single article from a major national newspaper that they believe is related to the topic assigned on the syllabus for that day (e.g. if you are a facilitator on February 9<sup>th</sup> – Political Parties you will select a newspaper article related to Political Parties).

Second, having selected an article, each facilitator will post a link to the article and two possible discussion questions to the 'Discussion' section of the course Blackboard site (available at <https://classes.emory.edu>). These items should be posted *no later than* 5:00 PM the day before you are serving as a facilitator (e.g. if you are serving as a facilitator on February 9<sup>th</sup>, you would be required to post your article & discussion questions by 5:00 PM on February 8<sup>th</sup>.)

Finally, at the beginning of the class period each facilitator will introduce their article, describe its relevance to the topic being covered and raise questions for discussion in a short – not more than five minutes – presentation. At the conclusion of this presentation each facilitator will moderate a group discussion of their article. The discussion should last between five and ten minutes.

### **Participation and Attendance**

Students must attend all lectures for this course. Attendance will be taken during every lecture by means

of an attendance sheet, which will be circulated at the beginning of class. Each unexcused absence in excess of the third unexcused absence will result in one 'minus' in the student's final grade (e.g. an A becomes an A-).

Students are expected to contribute actively to the debates and discussions in class. Discussion will focus on helping the students apply the concepts covered in lecture and will use activities such as simulations and debates to accomplish this goal. These activities will largely be based on the reading materials provided, but they may also require additional light reading, typically in the form of news items relevant to the issue being discussed, which will be forwarded to you by the instructor. It is vital that you arrive ready to talk about and debate the theoretical issues and questions that have been raised by the readings and during lectures.

### **Exams**

All exams are cumulative. The Mid-Term and final will contain a mixture of multiple choice and short answer questions.

### **Course Text Books and Materials**

Paul Brooker. 2009. *Non-Democratic Regimes*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan). (Hereinafter *NDR*)

Michael Gallagher, et al. 2011. *Representative Government in Modern Europe: Institutions, Parties and Governments, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition*. (Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education). (Hereinafter Gallagher et al)

### **Reserve Materials**

Reserve materials, indicated in the syllabus by a parenthetical (Reserve), will be made available electronically via the course Blackboard website.

### **Reading and Discussion Schedule**

#### **14 January (W): Introduction and Political Knowledge Quiz**

There are no required readings for this meeting. A short lecture introducing some of the fundamental concepts in the study of comparative politics will be preceded by a brief (10 fill in the blank or multiple choice questions) political knowledge quiz. This quiz *will not* count toward the final grade in the class and will be submitted anonymously. It is intended as a diagnostic tool for the instructor, to assess the level of knowledge incoming students have of modern political systems.

#### **16 January (F): What is Political *Science*, anyway?**

1. Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba, "Chapter 1: The *Science* in Social Science." pp. 3-19 and 28-33 (Reserve)
2. Gabriel A. Almond and Stephen J. Genco. "Clouds Clocks and the Study of Politics." pp. 489-490 and 492-497 (Reserve). \*\*SKIP the last paragraph on page 490 (below the dashed line) and the first two paragraphs on page 492 (above the dashed line).

#### **19 January (M): NO CLASS – MLK HOLIDAY**

#### **21 & 23 January (WF\*): What is Democracy?**

##### **\*\*\*Writing Assignment\*\*\***

1. Michael Coppedge, John Gerring et al, "Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: A New Approach." READ ONLY pp. 252-261 (Reserve)

## **Part I: Political Institutions in Western Democracies**

### **26 & 28 January (MW): Civic Culture, Civic Associations and Social Capital**

1. Clark, Golder and Golder "Chapter 7: Cultural Determinants of Democracy and Dictatorship." Pp. 217 – 223 (Reserve)
2. Robert Putnam *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, pp. 287 – 290 and 336 – 341 (Reserve)
3. Ray Fisman "Maybe Bowling Alone Isn't So Bad" (Reserve)

### **30 January (F\*): Electoral Rules I: The Rules of the Game**

1. Gallagher et al, Chapter 11
2. Richard Sinnott, "The Rules of the Electoral Game" (Reserve)

### **2 February (M): Electoral Rules II: Simulation Game**

*No required readings – Prepare for simulation using guidelines distributed in class.*

### **4 February (W): Electoral Rules III: Discussion of Simulation**

**\*\*\*Writing Assignment\*\*\***

### **6 & 9 February (F\*M): Political Parties**

1. Gallagher et al, Chapter 10
2. Gallagher et al Chapter 7, SELECTED PAGES (TBD)
3. John Aldrich, *Why Parties?* (Reserve)

### **11 February - 16 February (W\*FM): Executives**

1. Gallagher et al Chapter 2 pp. 27 – 33 (skim the rest of the chapter) and Chapter 12 pp. 416 – 437
  - a. (skim the rest of the chapter)
2. *Coalition Formation Simulation* (9/26):
  - A. Prepare for the coalition formation simulation to be held on 26 September using guidelines distributed in
  - B. Prior to the start of class on 10/1 write a brief essay (250-300 words, double spaced) reflecting on the government simulation and how it played out. Was your group able to obtain its desired result? If not, why not? Was your group part of any potential winning coalitions? If so, why did your coalition not win?

### **18 February – 20 February (W\*F): Legislatures**

1. Gallagher et al Chapter 3
2. Michael Gallagher, "Parliament" In *The Politics of the Republic of Ireland* (Reserve)

### **23 February (M): Legal Systems and Judicial Review**

1. Gallagher et al Chapter 4

### **25 February (W): Politics in the UK**

1. Richard Rose, "Politics in Britain" (*Reserve*)

### **27 February (F): Mid-Term Exam**

## **Part II: Non-Democracies and Transitions to Democracy**

### **2 – 4 March (MW): Types of Dictatorship**

1. *NDR*, Chapter 2
2. Jose Antonia Cheibub, Jennifer Gandhi and James Vreeland, "Democracy and Dictatorship Revisited"

### **6 March (F\*): Authoritarian Elections**

1. Jennifer Gandhi and Ellen Lust-Okar, "Elections Under Authoritarianism" (Reserve)

**9 – 13 March: NO CLASS – Spring Break**

**16 - 20 March (MWF): The Search for Legitimacy**

1. *NDR*, Chapter 5
2. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*

**23 March – 27 March (MWF) The Resource Curse**

1. Michael Ross, "Does Oil Hinder Democracy," pp. 325-337 & 356-357 (Reserve)
2. Moises Naim, "The Devil's Excrement: Can oil-rich countries avoid the resource curse?" (Reserve)
3. Louise Arbour, "No Exit" (Reserve)
4. Freedom House "Country Report: Nigeria" (Reserve)

**30 March – 3 April (MWF): Transitions to Democracy**

1. *NDR*, Chapter 7
2. Clark, Golder and Golder "Chapter 8: Democratic Transitions," pp. 277 – 290, skip Box 8.5.

**6 April – 10 April (MWF) Democratization and Conflict**

1. Selection from: Ed Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and War" (Reserve)
2. Selection from: Erica Chenoweth, "Terrorism and Democracy" (Reserve)

**Part III: Ethnicity, Conflict and Instability**

**13 - 17 April (MWF): Ethnicity as a Cause of Civil War**

1. Selection from: Monica Duffy Toft, "The Origins of Ethnic Wars" (Reserve)
2. Paul Collier, "The Market for Civil War" (Reserve)

**20 April – 24 April (MW): Managing Ethnic Conflict I - Partition**

1. Brendan O'Leary, "Debating Partition: Justifications and Critiques" (Reserve)
2. Donald Horowitz, "The Many Uses of Federalism" (Reserve)
3. Rene Lemarchand, "Consociationalism and Power Sharing in Africa: Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo" (Excerpt - Reserve)

**27 April: Ethnic Conflict in Northern Ireland – A Simulation Approach**

Reading material TBD

**29 April 9:00 – 12:00: Final Exam**

**\*\*\*\*SPECIAL NOTE ON THE TAKING OF EXAMS FROM THE OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

**"Students must have the permission of the Dean of Academic Affairs to take an exam earlier than scheduled. Permission is normally granted for medical reasons or for participating in educational programs.**

**Leave early for rides or flights, vacations, relatives' or friends' weddings or graduations, jobs, or having more than one exam on one day, are not considered valid reasons to request an earlier or later exam.**

**CONFLICT EXAM – If a student has three exams on the same day, the student in conjunction with their professor may schedule one exam on the CONFLICT EXAM day.**