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**POSC 2610: (Fordham -- Rose Hill)**

**Introduction to Comparative Politics**

**Spring 2011**

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| **Instructor**: José A. Alemán | **Office:** Faber Hall 662 |
| **Office hours:** MR, 1 - 2 p.m.  and by appointment | **E-mail:** [aleman@fordham.edu](mailto:aleman@fordham.edu) |
| **Course web site:** Blackboard (IMPORTANT: you must have a working account!) | |

TEXTs (required):

Boix, Carles. 2003. *Democracy and Redistribution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 052153267.

Dahl, Robert. 1971. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Heaven: Yale University Press. ISBN: 0300013914.

Inglehart, Ronald & Welzel, Christian. 2005. *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 9780521846950.

DESCRIPTION:

This course is structured around two important questions: why are some countries democratic but not others, and why do some autocracies become democratic while some democracies backslide into dictatorship? Along the way, the course touches on many important questions in the comparative study of political institutions, behaviors, and attitudes. Course materials help students understand the relationship between various social, economic, and cultural factors on the one hand and political outcomes on the other. We will use theoretical arguments and a wide range of case studies to address several important questions: why are presidential democracies more brittle than parliamentary ones? What effect does democracy have on the distribution of economic resources in society? Does culture affect politics?

GOALS:

This class approaches similarities and differences in political outcomes in a systematic way. As such, it should be useful to both political science majors and non majors alike. No previous course work in political science is necessary (although familiarity with the politics of individual countries is helpful). We will use examples drawn from around the world to examine topics like the relationship between economic development and democracy, the autonomy of political institutions from broader social forces, and the relationship between religion and politics. At the end of the course, you should be able to construct informed analyses of global political events, drawing on the theories and evidence learned in class.

REQUIREMENTS:

(A) **attendance** and **participation:** as stated in the attendance policy of the Undergraduate Faculty Handbook, attendance is mandatory and students are expected to attend class having done the readings and ready to participate with questions and comments. Four classes or more missed constitute grounds for failure in the course and the student’s name will be forwarded to the Dean. In the event of an extraordinary circumstance, students must provide adequate documentation to the Dean’s office, who will then determine whether the absence is excused or not. Arriving late to class, after attendance has been taken, counts as an absence. For each 3 unexcused absences, a full letter grade will be subtracted from the final grade.

(B) **take-home assignments:** there will be 3 take home assignments, each worth 15% of the grade. No late assignments will be accepted except in case of a medical condition (accompanied by doctor’s note). Assignments may not be rewritten for a higher grade, nor will drafts be accepted in advance. We will use turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>), the online plagiarism detection tool, as a repository of written assignments.

(C) **mid-term and final examinations**: the mid-term and final exams will be done in class. Cheating (using unauthorized materials or giving unauthorized assistance during an examination or other academic exercise) and plagiarism (using others' ideas and words without acknowledgment) are serious offenses and will be forwarded to the Dean. No extra credit opportunities should be requested in case you do poorly in exams and/or papers.

EVALUATION:

(A) class participation: 10%

(B) take-home assignments: 45%

(C) midterm examination: 20%

(D) final examination: 25%

RESOURCES:

(A) **books:** the above list of texts are required and available for purchase at the Fordham University bookstore **or** on reserve at Walsh library. Additional handouts and readings will be made available online through blackboard.

(B) **special assistance:** students withdisabilities should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to allow for coordination of assistance with the Office of Disability Services (ODS). Students in need of additional assistance should contact or visit the Writing Center (x4032) located at Dealy E-533.

**Course schedule**

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| 1/20 | Comparative politics: What is it? Why study it?  **No readings** |
| 1/24 | Political Regimes: Definitions  Dahl (chapter 1) |
| 1/27 | Historical Sequences  Dahl (chapter 3) |
| 1/31 | Social Pluralism  Dahl (chapter 4) |
| 2/3 | Level of Development  Dahl (chapter 5) |
| 2/7 | Asset (In)equality  Dahl (chapter 6); Frontline: ‘The Hugo Chavez Show’ |
| 2/10 | Paths of Political Development  Acemoglu and Robinson (chapters 1, 2, 3) 🡪 *available on blackboard* |
| 2/14 | Proportional representation versus plurality electoral systems  Sodaro (chapter 8) 🡪 *available on blackboard* |
| 2/17 | Parliamentarism and Presidentialism  Sodaro (chapter 8) 🡪 *available on blackboard* |
| 2/22 | Analytical Techniques in the Study of Politics  🡪 *no reading* |
| 2/24 | Modernization and Democracy  Boix (Introduction) |
| 2/28 | Social Movements and Revolutions  Boix (Chapter 2) |
| 3/3 | Extensions to and Modifications to Boix  Blackboard reading: ‘The perils of Petrocracy’ |
| 3/7 | review |
| 3/10 | **Midterm** |
| 3/14-3/21 | **Spring Recess** |
| 3/21 | Historical examples  Boix (Chapter 3); Frontline World: ‘Burma: State of Fear’ |
| 3/24 | Trade, Migration and Political Institutions  Boix (chapter 4) |
| 3/28 | The Public Sector and Social Transfers  Boix (chapter 5) |
| 3/31 | Development and the Public Sector  Boix (chapter 6); P.O.V.: ‘Taxing the Poor’ |
| 4/4 | Democracy and Accountability  Boix (chapter 7) |
| 4/7 | A Cultural Theory of Politics?  Inglehart and Welzel (chapter 1) |
| 4/11 | Value Change  Inglehart and Welzel (chapter 2); Wide Angle: ‘Class of 2006’ |
| 4/14 | Democratic Values and Democratic Institutions  Inglehart and Welzel (chapter 7); Wide Angle: ‘Turkey’s Tigers’ |
| 4/18 | Democratic Values and Democratic Institutions (cont’d)  Inglehart and Welzel (chapter 8); Wide Angle: ‘The People’s Court’ |
| 4/21-4/25 | **Easter Recess** |
| 4/28 | Social Forces, Collective Action, and International Events  Inglehart and Welzel (chapter 9); |
| 4/31 | Components of a Prodemocratic Culture  Inglehart and Welzel (chapter 11, Conclusion) |
| 5/4 | Review |