

PLSC240–Introduction to Comparative Politics¹²

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Class Hours: TBA

Class Location: TBA

Themes of the Course

Why did Kuwaiti U.N. diplomats in New York “rack up” an average of 50 parking violations annually between 1997 and 2002, while Swedish, Japanese, and Canadian diplomats committed a combined total of exactly zero parking violations during the same period? Why does the United States have a two-party political system at the federal level while its very similar northern neighbor, Canada, has a multiparty system? Is oil wealth incompatible with democratic rule? Are predominantly Islamic societies more likely to be authoritarian than democratic? Why have Poland and Hungary made a seemingly successful transition to democracy while Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan have been less successful in this regard? Why did ethnic violence break out between Serbs and Croats in the wake of the dissolution of Yugoslavia and why, conversely, did Slovakia and the Czech Republic separate peacefully as the Czechoslovak state was disintegrating during the same period? Why have the sub-Saharan countries in Africa been unable to develop economically while the “Asian Tigers” (and China) have seen economic growth rates that have been described as miraculous?

These, and similar, questions are the substance of the study of comparative politics. Using the tools of social scientific analysis and various methodological approaches, we will examine these issues and attempt to answer these and similar questions.

The course is structured thematically and will, additionally, introduce students to important concepts in comparative politics, such as democratization, the state, institutions, political culture, civil society, political economy, and incorporate these into the comparative analysis of various countries around the world.

Course Requirements and Policies

1. Attendance: In order to do well in this course, attending *all* sessions is crucial. You will be responsible for *all* course material; as such, any topic raised in lecture (even if it is not in the assigned reading material) can legitimately be the basis for an examination question.
2. The assignments/papers/exams must be the student’s own work. Plagiarism is a violation of the University of Richmond Student Honor Code³. **You will be *required* to include and sign the honor pledge on all assignments:** *“I pledge that I have neither received nor given unauthorized assistance during the completion of this work.”* All assignments (unless directed otherwise) will be turned in electronically via the *Digital Dropbox* area of Blackboard.

¹An electronic version of this syllabus can be found in the Course Documents folder of Blackboard

²I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus as required by the demands of the course. You will be informed in the appropriate manner should any changes be necessary.

³The Richmond Student Honor Code website is at <http://scs.richmond.edu/honorcode/>.

3. Two Short Papers: Each paper will be 4 pages in length and will be the result of a more detailed analysis of a topic we will have covered to that point. The papers will be due on **Tuesday, February 19th**, and **Tuesday, April 15th**. You will be given the specific assignment two weeks before each paper's due date. **Late papers:** Papers will be due by the beginning of class electronically, via Digital Dropbox in Blackboard, on the due date. A late paper will have its grade revised downward a full letter-grade (e.g., from an 'A' to a 'B') every day, or portion thereof, that it is late.
4. Mid-term Exam: There will be a single mid-term examination, which will be given on **Tuesday, March 3rd**. If you do not take the mid-term, you will receive a score of 0, *unless you have a legitimate excuse* (i.e. a doctor's or Dean's note, or you know in advance that you will not be able to make class for a valid reason—such as being away from Richmond because you play on a school team or are a member of a school club).⁴
5. Participation: This is crucial as it is worth 1/4 of your grade. Please come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings for that session. The best way to do poorly in this course is if you either do not attend regularly or show up and make no effort to engage in class discussion.
6. Semester-long Blog Assignment: You and a partner will be responsible for keeping a weblog or “blog” over the course of the semester. You will make entries to your blog periodically and will also be responsible for posting comments on the blogs of classmates. I will have more information regarding the specific requirements of this criterion on Thursday, January 17th.
7. Final Exam: This will be an in-class exam, which is *cumulative* in nature and will be given during final exam period. The exam is scheduled for **Friday, May 2nd, 9-12** Link to Final Exam Schedule ⁵
There will be no make-up examinations. If you, for any reason whatsoever, can not be here to take the exam on the date and time listed above, do not take this course.
8. Missed Exams: There will be no make-up examinations given except for cases involving *extraordinary* circumstances, for which you will be required to have documentation such as a doctor's note or a letter from a Dean.

Evaluative Criteria

Your grade in the course will be comprised of the following:

Short Papers (10% each)	20% total
Mid-term Exam	15%
Final Exam	25%
Blog Assignment	15%
Participation	25%

⁴If you possess a DAN (if you don't know what this is, then this is not relevant to you), please meet with me during office hours as soon as possible in order to discuss how we will address the matter of the mid-term.

⁵The final exam schedule can be found at http://oncampus.richmond.edu/academics/registrar/inserts/schedule/ExamSched_Spring08.pdf

Grading Scale

You will be assigned a final grade in this course based on the following scale:

A \geq 93	\geq 80 B- $<$ 83	\geq 67 D+ $<$ 70
\geq 90 A- $<$ 93	\geq 77 C+ $<$ 80	\geq 63 D $<$ 67
\geq 87 B+ $<$ 90	\geq 73 C $<$ 77	\geq 60 D- $<$ 63
\geq 83 B $<$ 87	\geq 70 C- $<$ 73	F $<$ 60

Required Textbooks

The following books are available for purchase from the University Bookstore:

- O' Neil, Patrick. *Essentials of Comparative Politics* (Essentials).
- O' Neil, Patrick and Ronald Rogowski. *Essential Readings in Comparative Politics* (Readings).
- Diamond, Larry and Leonardo Morlino. *Assessing the Quality of Democracy* (Diamond/Morlino).
- Note: Additional readings will be available through the Course Documents folder of Blackboard or through the library's electronic databases.
- Note: A course page has been set up for us at the Library's website. This will help you with your papers and assignments.

The home page is here: <http://library.richmond.edu/information/csguides/plsc240.htm>

- I would also like you to read a newspaper/news magazine to keep current on issues around the world that are relevant to this course. You will also have to read the press (or watch television news) in order to help you with your blog assignment. One (or more) of the following newspapers would be appropriate: the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Financial Times, The International Herald Tribune, or the Christian Science Monitor. News magazines of note are The Economist, US World and News Report, Time Magazine, etc. I would also encourage you to read foreign newspapers/magazines as well, both in English or in some other language if you have the ability to do so. The standard news programs on ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox News, CNN, and PBS are all appropriate choices, although foreign sources such as ABC (Australia), BBC, Sky News, CBC, etc., are also good choices in this Internet age. To see archived American news programs from 1968 to the present, the Vanderbilt Television News Archive is a great source⁶.

Assigned Readings⁷

Topic One: Introduction-What is Comparative Politics?

- Essentials–Chapter 1
- Readings–Chapter 1
 - Lichbach & Zuckerman–“Research Traditions and Theory in Comparative Politics: An Introduction...”
- Macridis–“A Survey of the Field of Comparative Government” [Course Documents Folder]

Topic Two: Research Traditions and Theory in Comparative Politics

- Readings–Chapter 1

⁶The URL is <http://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu/>.

⁷Readings will be supplemented by several videos/films over the course of the semester.

- Lave & March–“Observation, Speculation, and Modeling”
- Ragin, Charles–Chapters 1 and 2 of *The Comparative Method* [Course Documents Folder]
- Shepsle & Bonchek–Chapters 1 and 2 of *Analyzing Politics: Rationality, Behavior, and Institutions* [Course Documents Folder]
- Inglehart–“The Renaissance of Political Culture” *American Political Science Review* Vol. 82, No. 4 (Dec., 1988), pp. 1203-1230. [Link to Article]
- Whitefield, Stephen and Geoffrey Evans, 1999. “Political Culture versus Rational Choice: Explaining Responses to Transition in the Czech Republic and Estonia”, *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 29, No. 1, pp.129-154 Link to Article
- Alesina, Alberto and Paola Giuliano. 2007. “The Power of the Family” Unpublished Paper. [Link to Article]

Topic Three: States

- Essentials Chapter 2
- Readings–Chapter 2
 - Weber–“Politics as a Vocation”
 - Juergensmeyer–“The New Religious State”
 - Herbst–“War and the State in Africa”
 - Rotberg–“The New Nature of Nation-State Failure”
- Failed States Index hand-out [Course Documents Folder]

Topic Four: Nations and Society

- Essentials Chapter 3
- Readings–Chapter 3
 - Hobsbawm–“Nationalism”
 - *The Economist*–“The Global Menace of Local Strife”
 - Collier–“Ethnic Diversity: An Economic Analysis”
 - Huntington–“The Clash of Civilizations?”
 - Sen–“Civilizational Imprisonments: How to Misunderstand Everybody in the World”
- Hibbing, John R., John R. Alford, and Carolyn L. Funk. 2005. “Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted?”, *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 99, No. 2: 153-167. [Link to Article]
- Amodio, David M., et al. Sep 28, 2007. “Neurocognitive Correlates of Liberalism and Conservatism.” *Nature Neuroscience–Advance Online Publication* [Link to Article]
- Tessler, Mark. “Islam and Democracy in the Middle East: The Impact of Religious Orientations on Attitudes Toward Democracy in Four Arab Countries,” *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 34 (April 2002): 337-354. Link to Article

Topic Five: Political Economy

- Essentials Chapter 4
- Readings–Chapter 4

- Smith–“An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations (excerpts)”
- Ricardo–“On Foreign Trade (excerpts)”
- North–“Institutions”
- Alesina, Glaeser, & Sacerdote “Why doesn’t the United States have a European-Style Welfare State?”
- Jensen, Nathan and Leonard Wantchekon. “Resource Wealth and Political Regimes in Africa.” [\[Link to Article\]](#)
- Snyder, Richard. “Does Lootable Wealth Breed Disorder? A Political Economy of Extraction Framework.” [\[Link to Article\]](#)
- “Game Theory: An Introductory Sketch” [Link to Article](#)

Topic Six: Authoritarianism

- Essentials Chapter 5
- Readings Selections from Chapter 5
 - Linz, Juan J. and Alfred Stepan. “Modern Nondemocratic Regimes.”
 - Diamond, Larry. “Thinking about Hybrid Regimes.”
 - Snyder, Jack and Karen Ballentine. “Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas.”
 - Fish, Steven M. “Islam and Authoritarianism.”

Topic Seven: Democracy

- Essentials Chapter 6
- Readings–Chapter 6
 - Zakaria–“A Brief History of Human Liberty”
 - Schmitter and Karl–“What Democracy Is... and Is Not”
 - Lijphart–“Constitutional Choices for New Democracies”
 - Putnam–“Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social and Capital in America”
 - Berman–“Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic”
- Stepan, Alfred. “Religion, Democracy, and the ”Twin Tolerations.” *Journal of Democracy*, 11:4, October 2000, pp. 37-57. [\[Link to Article\]](#)
- Fish, Stephen M., and Robert S. Brooks. “Does Diversity Hurt Democracy?”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 154-166. [\[Link to Article\]](#)
- Assessing the Quality of Democracy
 - Diamond and Morlino–“Introduction”
 - O’Donnell–“Why the Rule of Law Matters”
 - Schmitter–“The Ambiguous Virtues of Accountability”
 - Beetham–“Freedom as the Foundation”
 - Rueschemeyer–“Addressing Inequality”
 - Bingham Powell, Jr.–“The Chain of Responsiveness”
 - Plattner–“A Skeptical Perspective”

- PLUS one of the Comparative Case Studies (I'll assign one to you randomly in advance.)

Topic Eight: Advanced Democracies

- Essentials Chapter 7
- Readings–Chapter 7
 - de Tocqueville–“Author’s Introduction” to *Democracy in America*
 - Lipset–“Economic Development and Democracy”
 - Duverger–“The Number of Parties.”
 - Huber, Bingham Powell, Jr.–“Congruence Between Citizens and Policymakers in Two Visions of Liberal Democracy”
 - *The Economist*–“Is Government Disappearing?”
- Shepsle and Bonchek–“Voting Methods and Electoral Systems” [Course Documents Folder]

Topic Nine: Communism and Post-Communism

- Essentials Chapter 8
- Readings Selections from Chapter 8
 - Marx and Engels–“Manifesto of the Communist Party”
 - Przeworski–“A Prologue: The Fall of Communism,” from *Democracy and the Market*
 - Bunce, Valerie–“Rethinking Recent Democratization: Lessons from Post-Communist Experience”
 - Pye–“Traumatized Political Cultures: The After Effects of Totalitarianism in China and Russia”
 - Buruma–“What Beijing can learn from Moscow”

Topic Ten: Less-Developed and Newly Industrializing Countries

- Essentials Chapter 9
- Readings Selections from Chapter 9
 - Easterly–“To Help the Poor” from *The Elusive Quest for Growth*
 - Collier and Gunning–“Why has Africa Grown Slowly?”
 - Prtichett–“Divergence, Big Time”
 - Barro–“Democracy: A Recipe for Growth?”
 - Przeworski et. al–“Political Regimes and Economic Growth”

Topic Eleven: Globalization

- Essentials Chapter 10
- Readings Selections from Chapter 10
 - Fukuyama–“The End of History?”
 - Hoffman–“Clash of Globalizations”
 - Galbraith–“A Perfect Crime: Inequality in the Age of Globalization”
 - Nye, Joseph S., Jr. “Globalization’s Democratic Deficit.”

- Florida–“The World is Spiky: Globalization has Changed the Economic Playing Field but Hasn’t Levelled it”
- *The Economist*–“Grinding the Poor”

Topic Twelve: Political Violence

- Essentials Chapter 11
- Readings Selections from Chapter 11
 - Skocpol–“France, Russia, China: A Structural Analysis of Social Revolutions.”
 - Crenshaw–“The Causes of Terrorism”
 - Margalit and Buruma–“Occidentalism”
 - Goldstone–“States, Terrorists, and the Clash of Civilizations,” from *Understanding September 11*