



POLS 130: Introduction to Comparative Politics
2005 Fall Semester Syllabus

	<u>Call #</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Location</u>
Discussion	13281	11:00-11:50 AM	F	2433 EPASW
Discussion	13282	12:00-12:50 PM	F	2433 EPASW
Lecture	13284	11:00-11:50 AM	TR	317 BH

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Description:

This course seeks to provide an introduction to comparative politics, via a focus on political institutions, political culture and political processes. The design of this course serves to familiarize students with the theories utilized in this subfield. It thereby utilizes ideas from seminal theoretical works in the field to explore varying methods for comparing states (a.k.a. countries). This course contains a two-fold purpose. First, it serves as a gateway to more advanced courses in comparative politics. Second, it provides students with a degree of “comparative literacy”.

The course begins with an introduction to the subfield of comparative politics. We will discuss the “comparative vocabulary” and some of the issues scholars in this field examine. Then, this course introduces students to the different types of comparative analysis and the fluid nature of comparative analysis by presenting the development of comparative political thought. This course introduces some of the major concepts in comparative politics, including Marxism, dependency, and democratization. Then, this course explains the structural-functional method of state comparison. After thoroughly examining this method for comparing states, this course requires students to utilize these new tools to build a comparative study of their own.

Text:

Almond, Gabriel A., Russell J. Dalton, G. Bingham Powell, Jr., and Kaare Strom. 2006.

Comparative Politics Today: A World View, Update Edition, 8/E. Longman. New York, USA. 832 pp.

Objectives and Outcomes:

1. To give students a background of comparative political analysis.
2. To acquaint students with the advances and flaws of comparative political analysis.
3. To provide an understanding of how our government differs from, or appears similar to that of other states.
4. To encourage students to participate actively as global citizens.
5. To give students the background to make informed judgments about current political controversies.
6. To teach students about the impact of political institutions, political culture, and political processes on their lives.
7. To introduce students to classic and contemporary research in the field.

Course Methodology:

This course utilizes several different teaching techniques to explain the substantive material:

1. Lecture Session – The instructor shares his knowledge, thoughts, and ideas with you on the various topics, books, and articles. He welcomes your input on this material.
2. Discussion Session – This portion of the course provides students a chance to voice their opinion about international relations in a free and open manner, which comprises the participation portion of the students' grades.
3. Audio-Visual Aids – The instructor utilizes items such as the overhead projector, maps, films, videotapes, computers, musical recordings and other items where appropriate.

Examinations and Grading:

This course involves a total of two (2) non-cumulative examinations. Each exam covers the textbook readings, the classroom lectures, and class discussions. I require students to complete only one paper for this course. At a later date I disseminate further instruction regarding this assignment. Although we complete the tested material prior to the end of the course, your attendance to lectures remains important. A significant portion of your paper grade will be reliant upon the lecture material presented after the second test. Additional assignments/papers/quizzes may be assigned by your TA. Your performance determines your course grade in the following manner:

100 points possible = Test I
100 points possible = Test II
200 points possible = Paper
100 points possible = Discussion Section
500 points possible = Total

Both tests for this course will be taken in your Discussion Session. If alternative arrangements must be made for you to take the test (and this will be allowed in very few cases ... i.e. hospitalization or death - of an immediate family member or your own), then it must be arranged with your TA. The determination of the Discussion Section portion of your grade will also be up to the TA. I expect that attendance and active discussion at the Discussion Section will play a vital role in obtaining a good grade. The Discussion Section portion of your grade provides the opportunity of receiving an "A" in this course. I expect that students will follow

any guidelines established by the TA for these sessions. During the Lecture Section please feel free to ask me questions if you do not understand something, or would like me to elaborate.

All work requires standard grammatical English and prompt attention to due dates. The TA cannot grade what s/he cannot read. Cheating and plagiarism also encounter strict prohibition and require that we deal with them according to UIC policy and procedure

Course and Topic Outline:

An Introduction to Comparing Politics:

08/23/05 (T) – Introducing Comparative Politics

08/25/05 (R) – Types of Comparative Analysis;

Read Almond et. al., Chapter 1.

08/30/05 (T) – Problems With Comparative Analysis;

Read Almond et. al., pp. 31-34 up to “Systems: Environment and Interdependence.”

09/01/05 (R) – Shifts in the Study of Comparative Politics

A Brisk Walk Through the History of Political Science:

09/06/05 (T) – The Normative/Macro Paradigm & The Old Institutional Paradigm

09/08/05 (R) – The Behavioral Paradigm & The New Institutional Paradigms

Vital Concepts in Comparative Study:

Week of 09/13/05 – Marxism

Week of 09/20/05 – Dependency and Development

Week of 09/27/05 – Democratization

09/30/05 (F) – **Test I (In Discussion Section)**

Reworking Functionalism to Allay its Critics:

Week of 10/04/05 – Sketching a Structural-Functional Approach;

Read Almond et. al., pp. 34-44.

Week of 10/11/05 – Political Culture and Political Socialization;

Read Almond et. al., Chapter 3.

Week of 10/18/05 – Interest Articulation;

Read Almond et. al., Chapter 4.

Week of 10/25/05 – Interest Aggregation and Political Parties;

Read Almond et. al., Chapter 5.

Week of 11/01/05 – Government and Policymaking;
Read Almond et. al., Chapter 6.

Week of 11/08/05 – Public Policy;
Read Almond et. al., Chapter 7.

11/11/05 (F) – **Test II (In Discussion Section)**

Examining the Most Difference Technique:

11/15/05 (T) – A Comparative Glance at the United States;
Read Almond et. al., Chapter 19.

11/17/05 (R) – A Comparative Glance at Nigeria;
Read Almond et. al., Chapter 18.

11/22/05 (T) – Comparing the U.S. and Nigeria

11/24/05 (R) – **No Lecture – Thanksgiving Break**

11/25/05 (F) – **No Discussion Section – Thanksgiving Break**

Critical Thinking in Comparative Politics:

11/29/05 (T) – Critiques of the Structural-Functional Approach

12/01/05 (R) – Why it may just all be relative.

12/02/05 (F) – **Final Paper Due in Discussion Section**

I announce the due dates for the paper as the semester progresses.

This syllabus remains subject to change at the instructor's discretion, without prior notice.

Students with disabilities who require accommodations for access and participation in this course must be registered with the Office of Disability Services (ODS). Please contact ODS at (312) 413-2183 (voice) or (312) 413-0123 (TTY). Please also inform the instructor so that appropriate accommodations may be made.