

Professor Rasma Karklins
Office: BSB 1134
Telephone: 996-2396
E-mail: karklins@uic.edu
Office hours: Th. 3-4 pm

Political Science 130/LASt130
UIC, Spring 2006

TA: Andris Zimelis
Office: BSB 1177
Telephone: 312-413-3434
E-mail: azimel2@uic.edu
Office hours: T 1-2 pm

Introduction to Comparative Politics

The most interesting way to study politics is to use a comparative approach; in fact, we usually compare “better” and “worse” political arrangements and outcomes when we talk about politics. This course will introduce you to the following: (1) the main concepts used in the political science subfield called comparative politics, (2) what it is comparativists try to explain and how they do the explaining, and (3) politics, institutions, and political culture in a number of foreign countries. So, you will become familiar with both the subject matter of comparative politics as a scholarly discipline and with aspects of political life in several countries.

Class sessions on Tuesday and Thursday will consist mostly of lectures based on the assigned readings; the seminar sessions on Friday will consist mostly of discussion.

The work **requirements** for the course are two in-class exams, a final exam, and a discussion paper. The **exams** will be in the classroom and will consist of multiple-choice, short-answer, and short essay questions. The exams will cover material from both the required readings and the lectures. Therefore, coming regularly to class and taking notes is very important for doing well in the course.

At a date chosen by himself or herself, each student will prepare a **discussion paper** on some aspect of the material covered during one particular full week of the course. Here the work entails: 1. Reading the assigned material at least one week ahead of the class and choosing one or two topics to be highlighted in the paper; when choosing topics it is important to focus on issues that do indeed lend themselves to discussion; 2. The student prepares an outline (2-3 pages) of arguments and points and submits this to the TA at the beginning of the Tuesday class. 3. The student works with the TA during Friday discussion presenting the arguments to the class; 4. After having actively participated in the class discussion, the student revises his or her discussion paper to cover the most pertinent points (3-4 pages) and submits the paper to the TA no later than at the beginning of the next class session.

The **grade** for the course will be determined according to the following distribution:

1. First exam 20 percent
2. Second exam..... 20 percent
3. Discussion paper..... 20 percent
4. Final exam 30 percent
5. Class participation..... 10 percent

The following text is required and can be purchased at the Circle Center Bookstore:

Michael J. Sodaro, Comparative Politics: A Global Introduction, 2.nd ed., 2004

Students are encouraged to do additional readings, especially for their discussion papers. Look at table of contents and indexes of the required text for additional material!

Attendance policy: class attendance is mandatory; if you fail to attend more than three sessions, your course grade will be lowered by one letter grade. There will be no make-up exams. In case of illness or another serious reason why you cannot attend class or take a scheduled exam, you need to document the circumstance and discuss alternative arrangements with the instructor.

Weekly class topics and required reading assignments:

January 10 and 12/13: Introduction

Sodaro, pp. 6-11, 26-27, 56-61, 70-71..

January 17 and 18/19: Major Topics of Comparative Politics

Sodaro: pp. 30-52.

January 24 and 26/27: The Concept of Power

Sodaro: pp. 98-106, 111-115

January 31 and Feb. 2/3: The State and Its Institutions

Sodaro pp.119-127, 133-139.

February 7/10: The Political Institutions of France

Sodaro, pp. 408-417.

February 9: In-Class Exam

February 14 and 16/17: States and Nations

Sodaro pp.141-150, 380-381, 396-397.

February 21and 23/24: Democracy: What Is It?

Sodaro pp.162-183; 20-25.

February 28 and March 2/3: Democracy: How Does It Work?
Sodaro pp. 185-205

March 7, 9/10, and 14/17: Democracy: What Does It Take?
Sodaro pp. 79-90, 207-220;227-229

March 16: In-Class exam

March 20-24: NO CLASSES< SPRING BREAK

March 28 and 30/31: People and Politics
Sodaro pp.230-251.

April 4 and 6/7: Political Culture
Sodaro pp. 255-269. 348-349, 438-441.

April 11 and 13/14: Political Ideologies:
Sodaro pp.270- 295.

April 18 and 20/21: Country Survey: Russia
Sodaro pp. 526-529, 540-545, 547-550, 560-575..

April 25 and 27/28: Country Survey: China
Sodaro pp. 580-581, 608-616.

Final Exam: May 2, 1-3 pm

Note: Students with Disabilities who require accommodation should register with the Office for Disability Services: 312-413-2183.