CPO4062 - Comparative Judicial Process
Dr. Bruce M. Wilson

Course Home

Instructor Contact:

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Dr. Wilson's websites	At UCF

Required book:

The Judicialization of Politics in Latin America. 2005. Rachel Sieder, Line Schjolden, Alan Angell (Eds). London: Palgrave.

This is the only required book for this class and is available in paperback and hardcover. I have used the book in previous semesters, so there are large numbers of used copies available at the UCF book store and online.

All other readings will be made available to you, without cost, through the class webpages.

Course Description:

Superior Courts in some countries are vitally important to everyday political events, in others they are moribund, politically unimportant institutions that do little to reign in the actions of popular branches of government or to uphold and enforce individual and collective constitutional rights. With this in mind, this class introduces students to the significance of Superior Courts in a variety of countries, with an emphasis on events in the post-war period. This class examines the rise (and lack thereof) of Superior Courts in developed and less developed countries and evaluates the impact of these institutions' actions on the way countries are governed. We will use a series of country case studies to illuminate the consequence of the rise of Courts on governance and on key groups in society.

Course Objectives:

At the end of this course you will be able to:

- Understand the motivation for judicial reform across many counties
- Understand that why some Superior Courts are powerful upholders of constitutions while others are not
- Understand the relevance of constitutions
- Understand the variance of court behavior across diverse
- Understand the inter-relationship between popularly elected branches of government and Superior Courts.
- Understand how some marginalized groups have been able to develop legal strategies to pursue their constitutional rights.
- Develop basic computer skills and use them for research and communication.

Evaluation Procedures:

Grade Categories	Description of the requirements	Weight toward final grade
Intro module	one introductory module	2%
Substantive modules	Six (6) substantive modules Your lowest module grade will be dropped	70%
Final Exam	cumulative exam on all materials	28%

- The nature of on-line classes encourages (requires?) cooperation among students. So, this class is not a “competitive sport” but should be an interesting, thought-provoking, collaborative discovery of major issues and topics in Latin American politics.
    - Having said that, essays and quizzes should be completely your own work
- Grading information on specific assignments will be provided in the assignment itself.
- If you miss more than three (3) assignments or modules, you will likely not be able to earn a passing grade for the class.

Other Information:

- The nature of mixed media (online) classes requires cooperation among students. So, this class is not a "competitive sport" but should be an interesting, thought-provoking, collaborative discovery of major issues and topics in Comparative politics.
- Grading information on specific assignments will be provided in the assignment itself.
- Grades will be assigned according to final points students earn in the course. There will be no + or - grades in this class:

  100-90 A
  89-80 B
  79-70 C
  69-60 D
  59 or lower

Assignments:

- You are responsible for keeping a copy of all assignments for this class. You are also responsible for checking that the grades posted online are correct; any discrepancies must be reported to the instructor within 1 week of being posted.

Late, make-up, and extra credit work

- All late work will be penalized at a rate of 5 points per day late (including weekend days). No work will be accepted more than a week after the deadline.
- There are no substitute assignments and positively no extra-credit, **so please don't ask!**
- Academic integrity: The University of Central Florida has a very clear policy with respect to academic integrity. Please familiarize yourself with the policies of the "Golden Rule." especially p. 11 and p.16. All Assignments will have to be completed on your own.

Disclaimer:

- The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus during the semester as he deems appropriate.

Accommodations for students with disabilities:

- If you need to make any arrangements for fulfilling assignments or taking exams to accommodate for a disability, please contact the instructor.

Login and Password Information

To access the "eCommunity" or "Class Login" portions of this course, students must follow UCF's log-in and password conventions.

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Date	Topic and Module	Reading
May 14-21	Module #1: Getting Started: Introduction to Comparative Courts and Learning Online	"Learning online" on course homepage; See Module #1 Start reading ahead (this will make your life easier as the semester progresses)
May 18-28	Module #2: The Role of Constitutions and Superior Courts • What is a constitution? • What is a Superior Court? • What is the relationship between the two? • Understand that the importance of	Read: • Mauricio García-Villegas. "Law as Hope" (LINKS page) • Sieder et al, Chapter 1

	Superior Courts varies by country and over time within countries • Understand the background of the US Supreme Court's role • Participate in an on-line discussion • take a quiz • Write a two-page, double-spaced summary of the of the readings and the forum discussion	
May 28-June 4	Module #3: Understanding Rights Revolutions (USA) • Understand the role of Constitutions in facilitating Rights Revolutions • Understand what permitted the rights revolution in the US	Read: Read: • Charles Epp, 1998. Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 (LINKS page)
June 4-11	Module #4: Rights Revolution (Latin America) • Understand the difference between Common and Civil Law legal systems • Understand the depth and causes of rights revolutions in Costa Rica and Colombia • Compare competing explanations for US and Latin American Rights Revolutions.	Read: • Wilson "Colombian and Costa Rican Rights Revolutions." (LINKS page) • see module
June 11- 25	Module #5: Judicial Reform, Rule of Law, and Democratic Governance in Latin America • Study a specific Latin American country • Understand the underpinnings and scope of Judicial Reform in the last 20 years • Understand the motivation for and impact of judicial reform • Participate in an on-line discussion	Read: • Sieder et al. 2005. book (see module for which specific chapters you need to read).

	• write a two page paper	
June 25- July 3	Module #6: Courts and Accountability • Understand why some African Courts engaged in Accountability and others did not. • Be able to draw conclusions from the case studies • reevaluate importance of Civil and Common law systems	Read: Siri Gloppen, et al “Courts and Political Power in Latin America and Africa." 2010. • Chapter 2: Theory • Chapter 5: Africa case studies (LINKS page)
July 5-11	Mod #7 International Courts and Domestic Politics	Read:
July 12-13	Final cumulative exam	All readings throughout the semester

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