Comparative Politics (CPO 3103)

University of Central Florida
Fall 2015

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MWF 10:30 – 11:20 AM
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Office Hours:
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or by appointment

I. Description

This course serves an introduction to comparative politics field of the discipline of political science. It discusses the comparative method, the nation-state system, the causes of poverty and development, the trajectory of democratization, the institutional basis of political power, and the politics of identity in different parts of the world. The tension between the diversity of human experience and the increasing demands for universal norms and standards in a globalized age is a recurring theme in this course. The three major objectives of the course are to

- Introduce students to one of main fields of political science: comparative politics.
- Provide students with a basic understanding of the implementation of different types of regime types, constitutions, legislatives and executives across the globe.
- Develop students' knowledge of cross-national and cross-regional differences in salient political issues such as poverty, democracy, and violence.

On completing this course students will be able to:

- Evaluate the relative merits of causal claims about socioeconomic and political processes.
- Identify different characteristics of political regimes in the world.
- Discuss the relevance of identities to political struggles in different parts of the world.
- Analyze the impact of institutions and government policies upon the democratization process in each country.

II. Requirements

Exams and Assignments

Grades will be based on four short exams, a Tableau graph, a research paper, a final exam, and class participation. The distribution of the final grade is as follows:

- 40%: Four scheduled short exams (10 % each)
- 10%: Tableau graph (due **October 9**)
- 20%: Short research paper (due **November 30**)
- 20 % Final Exam (**December 14**)
- 10%: Class participation

- Short exams are composed of multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blanks, and short answer questions. They are not cumulative. Questions come from both the lectures and required readings. Short exam dates are **September 14**, **October 5**, **October 30**, and **December 7**.

- Tableau software produces visually informative and appealing graphs (www.tableausoftware.com). Each student will have access to Tableau 9 and create a graph focusing on a certain issue in global politics. The graphs will be electronically submitted by 5 pm on October 9. Training in Tableau and data that can be used to create graphs will be available in September.

- Each student will also write a research paper on one of the topics listed at the end of this syllabus. Detailed information about the papers is provided in Section VI (pp. 7-8).

- The final exam on December 14 will cover all the assigned material in this course.

- Class participation grade will reflect physical attendance as well as contribution to class discussions.

Grade and Make-Up Policy

Due dates are absolutely non-negotiable. Students who fail to complete Tableau and Research Paper assignments on time automatically receive **0 points for the assignment**. Students who miss exams are given make-ups only if they are able to provide **proper documentation** for their absence. Make-ups must be taken only within three days of the original short exam date. No more than one make-up for each student is given throughout the semester.

The following grade scale is applicable in this class: A: 100-94, A-: 93-90, B+: 89-87, B: 86-84, B-: 83-80, C+: 79-77, C: 76-74, C-: 73-70, D+: 69-67, D: 66-60, F: 59-0. Grades are rounded to the nearest integer (e.g., 79.4=79, 79.6=80).

III. Academic Honesty

As reflected in the UCF creed, integrity and scholarship are core values that should guide our conduct and decisions as members of the UCF community. Plagiarism and cheating contradict these values, and so are very serious academic offenses. UCF's Golden Rule defines plagiarism as follows: "**whereby another's work is used or appropriated without any indication of the source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own.**"

A detailed description of what is meant by academic integrity is also found in that catalog. For more information and student responsibilities, see

All acts of academic dishonesty including plagiarism, cheating, submitting false documents, and copying another student's work will be penalized by **an F for the course** without any exception and leniency. If you are not sure what constitutes as academic dishonesty while doing your research, you should consult me at once.

IV. Accessibility

The UCF is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the professor to request accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Student Resource Center Room 132, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before **requesting accommodations from the professor.**

V. Course Schedule

The following textbook is used in this class. All additional readings will be made available in advance.

J. Tyler Dickovick and Jonathan Eastwood. *Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases.* Oxford UP, 2nd edition, 2015.

Week I (August 24-29)

- The Comparative Approach and Inquiry

Dickovick and Eastwood, *Comparative Politics*, chapters 1-2.

Week II (August 31-September 4)

- The Evolution of Sovereign States System
- Weak (e.g., Nigeria) and Powerful (e.g., France) States

Dickovick and Eastwood, *Comparative Politics,* chapter 3.

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Week III (September 9 & 11)

- Political Economy of Markets
- Welfare State (e.g., Germany) and Income Inequality (e.g., USA)

Dickovick and Eastwood, *Comparative Politics,* chapter 4.
Dani Rodrik, "Designing Capitalism 3.0," in *The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and the Future of the World Economy,* 2012.

Week IV (September 14-18)

- Poverty, Natural Resources & Economic Development

Dickovick & Eastwood, *Comparative Politics*., chapter 5.
Acemoglu/Davison and Diamond Debate: "What Makes Countries Rich or Poor?" The New York Review of Books June 7, 2012 and August 16, 2012.

Short Exam I on September 14

Week V (September 21-25)

- Democracy and Democratization
- The Indian Exceptionalism?

Dickovick and Eastwood, *Comparative Politics,* chapter 6.

Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, "How Development Leads to Democracy," *Foreign Affairs* March/April 2009.

Week VI (September 28-October 2)

- Authoritarianism and Dedemocratization
- The Islamic Republic in Iran and the Weimar Republic in Germany

Dickovick and Eastwood, *Comparative Politics,* chapter 7.
Washington Post article on the cult of leader in North Korea (February 2015).

Week VII (October 5-9)

- Constitutions and the Design of Basic Laws
- Federalism in India and Nigeria
- Judicial Activism in the US

Dickovick and Eastwood, *Comparative Politics,* chapter 8.

Short Exam II on October 5
Tableau Graph due October 9.

Week VIII (October 12-16)

- Legislatures
- The US and UK models compared

Dickovick and Eastwood, *Comparative Politics,* chapter 9.

Week IX (October 19-23)

- Executives**:** Presidents, Prime Ministers, and Kings
- Populism

Dickovick and Eastwood, *Comparative Politics,* chapter 10.

Week X (October 26-30)

- Political Parties and Party Systems
- The hegemonic parties in Mexico and Japan

Dickovick and Eastwood, *Comparative Politics,* chapter 11.

Short Exam III on October 30

Week XI (November 2-6)

- Political Violence and Revolution-I
- Revolutions in France, Russia, China, and Iran

Dickovick and Eastwood, *Comparative Politics,* chapter 12.

Week XII (November 9 & 13)

- Political Violence and Revolution-II
- The Syrian Civil War: States, Groups, and Individuals

Thanassis Cambanis, "The Surprising Appeal of ISIS," The Boston Globe, June 29, 2014. Available at http://www.bostonglobe.com/ideas/2014/06/28/the-surprising-appealisis/l9YwC0GVPQ3i4eBXt1o0hI/story.html.
Güneş Murat Tezcür and Sabri Çiftçi, "Radical Turks: Why Turkish Citizens are Joining ISIS," Foreign Affairs November 11, 2014. Available at

http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/142352/gunes-murat-tezcur-and-sabri-ciftci/radicalturks.

Week XIII (November 16-20)

- Nationalism & Ethnicity
- The Kurdish Question

Dickovick and Eastwood, *Comparative Politics,* chapter 13.
Reading on the Kurds (TBA)

Week XIV (November 23 & 25)

- Politics of Identity: Gender
- The Question of Muslim Women

Dickovick and Eastwood, *Comparative Politics,* chapter 14.
Amartya Sen, "More than 100 Million Women are Missing," *The New York Review of Books*, December 20, 1990. Available at http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1990/dec/20/more-than-100-million-women-are-missing.
Lila Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? American Anthropologist 104 (September 2002).

Week XV (November 30-December 7)

- Politics of Identity: Religion
- The Idea of the Islamic State

Dickovick and Eastwood, *Comparative Politics*, chapter 15.

Short Research Papers due December 2.
Short Exam IV on December 7.

VI. Short Research Papers

Students are required to write a research paper by choosing one of the topics listed below. The papers should be electronically submitted as WORD documents by 5 pm on November 23. Turnitin.com, an automated system which instructors can use to quickly and easily compare each student's assignment with billions of web sites, as well as an enormous database of student papers that grows with each submission, will process papers. Late submissions are not accepted under any condition. Research papers should be **between 1,750 and 2,000** including a **separate bibliography that should include at least 6 reliable sources.** They should be **conceptual** and **analytical** (rather than purely descriptive) meaning they identify competing/opposing perspectives, demonstrate familiarity with the differences and similarities between rival points of view, and offer a compelling argument. They should also discuss other plausible arguments and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses in a fair manner. Papers are evaluated according to five criteria: a) the quality and scope of research, b) the quality of writing and organization, c) the accuracy of knowledge, d) the coherence and consistency of the main argument, and e) grammar, style and format.

All conventional citation styles are acceptable. Students are most welcome to consult me whenever they need guidance and suggestions. A good source to consult when writing a research paper is K. L. Turabian 2007. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. U of Chicago Press.

UCF Library's website provides access to numerous search engines that will enable students to locate relevant sources in a time efficient manner. Search engines such as LexisNexis, Google Scholar, JSTOR, WorldCat, and Web of Science are valuable tools for doing research. Electronic sources edited by anonymous users are not accepted as reliable sources. Papers should not rely on Wikipedia entries. A good paper would be the basis of a Wikipedia entry.

Research projects should explore one of the following topics reported and discussed in the media, scholarly publications, policy circles and other relevant sources.

Presentation/Paper Topics

1. Statehood

Membership in the UN is the ultimate criterion of statehood. The UN had originally 51 members, but has now 193 members. Some territorial entities have been more successful than others in claiming statehood. While some very small entities such as Andorra, Belize, and Kiritabi have gained UN membership, other entities with larger population and resources such as Kurdistan, Somaliland, Taiwan, Tibet are not members of the UN. Choose a state that has recently gained UN membership and a territorial entity still lacking it. Compare and contrast their historical trajectory. What factors explain one's success and other's failure?

2. Poverty & Economic Growth

Many countries have achieved remarkable economic growth and improved their citizens' life standards since the mid-20th century. At the same time, countries with similar characteristics have exhibited very different performances. Choose a pair of countries from Latin America and Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, or Asia with divergent economic growth in the last decades (Use World Development Indicators database available at Google Public Data Explorer, www.google.com/publicdata for initial exploration). What factors are responsible for this divergence?

3. Democracy and Authoritarianism

Choose two countries with very similar characteristics but different types of regimes. What factors explain this divergence? Alternatively, choose two countries with very different characteristics but similar types of regimes. What factors explain this convergence?

4. Presidentialism and Parliamentarism

Choose a country ruled by a parliamentary system and compare it with another country having a presidential system. Identify the relative strengths and weaknesses of these two systems on the basis of this comparison. For instance, which system seems to produce political stability? Which system seems to ensure greater political freedoms?

5. Politics of Ethnic Identity: The Kurdish Question

Movements demanding greater rights and power for ethnic groups have been ubiquitous in contemporary times. These movements often pose a strong challenge to the authority of the states and sometimes gain statehood. Focus on the Kurds and discuss the evolution of their nationalist struggle in two different countries (e.g., Iran-Turkey, Iraq-Syria, etc.). What factors facilitate ethnic mobilization? Why factors contribute to violence? What factors shape the success of Kurdish struggle?