POLI 130: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Professor Andrew Reynolds

Class: Mon-Wed 9-9.50am
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Poli 130: The purpose of this course is to highlight the study of comparative politics by seeking to understand differences among a set of diverse states on three continents. Attention will be focused on one established democracy (the United Kingdom), a province only recently recovering from turmoil within that state (Northern Ireland), a newly democratizing state in Africa (South Africa), a military junta in Asia (Burma), a fragile ethnically divided society in South Asia which is going through an extensive process of constitutional change (Afghanistan) and the pre-eminent case in the Arab Spring (Egypt). These states will be analyzed in a broad comparative framework and in terms of two contrasting models of democracy: majoritarian and consensus democracy. Through lectures, videos, parliamentary simulations and discussion sections we shall try to explain both the relationships between these dimensions and the reasons why some countries have developed along majoritarian and others along consensual lines.

Students are required to attend twice weekly lectures and their sections. 10% of the course grade depends on active participation in class and recitation sections. Students must be enrolled in both the lecture class and a recitation section to receive a grade.

IN-CLASS EXAMS: There will be two in-class term exams consisting of short answer questions. The exams will be closed book. Each exam will count for 15% of the final grade.

RECIDATION SECTIONS: Attendance at recitations is mandatory. Students will complete papers amounting to 10 pages in total throughout the semester: details specified by your TA. Performance in sections will account for 30% of the final grade.

FINAL EXAM: The required final exam will be given in finals week - date to be announced. It will consist of both objective and essay questions (closed book) and it will cover the entire course. The final will account for 40% of the final grade.
REQUIRED READINGS: Required readings for each class will be posted on sakai. In addition, students are expected to pay special attention to articles on the four countries covered in the course in the New York Times, Washington Post, Chicago Tribune, Christian Science Monitor or any comparable newspaper. There may be a short article required reading for each recitation section. These will be handed out in class.

SMALL PRINT:
- All class lectures, debates and video showings are compulsory. Recitation sections are also compulsory and unexcused absences will reduce your final grade, attendance will be recorded.
- In class I am doing a one-man performance show. It is an early morning matinee. Chatting to your neighbour, cell phone use, using wireless for non class related matters, sleeping, or reading non course related materials, are grounds for expulsion from classroom – as is failing to laugh at my jokes.
- If you have a valid reason for missing recitation you must notify your TA before hand. If you have a valid reason for missing a mid-term please communicate with me at least two days before the given exam.
- If you are truly unhappy with your exam grade, after discussing it with your TA you may request me to re-grade the exam – If I do, the grade can go down as well as up.
- I am given no role in altering the date of the final exam. If you bring me a letter from the Dean’s office ordering a change of date I shall comply – but university regulations dictate that I can only move it for individuals upon receipt of such a note.

CLASS OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENTS

January

Wed 9  The Comparative Method: Why do it, and how to do it?
Readings: Lijphart, Patterns of Democracy, ch’s 1 and 4.

Mon 14  Majoritarian democracy
Lijphart, Patterns of Democracy, ch.2.

Wed 16  The United Kingdom
Readings: TBA

Monday 21  No Class: MLK jnr Day.

Wed 23  The United Kingdom (PMQT)
Readings: TBA

Mon 28  The United Kingdom (Yes PM)
Readings: TBA
Wed 30  UK House of Commons role playing simulation

February

Mon 4  Consensual/ Power sharing vs. Majoritarianism
Lijphart, Patterns of Democracy, ch.3.

Wed 6  South Africa – Introduction

Mon 11  South Africa – (1)

Web 13  South Africa – (2)

Mon 18  In class short exam #1

Wed 20  Afghanistan

Mon 25  Afghanistan Video 1: Hell of a Nation

Wed 27  The Arab Spring
Brownlee, Masoud, and Reynolds. Ch.1

March

Mon 4  Building Democracy Abroad – Class Debate

Wed 6  Egypt
Masoud TBA

March 8-17th Spring Break
Mon 18 Parliamentary vs. Presidential government
Lijphart, Democracy, ch.7.

Wed 20 Northern Ireland – introduction & history (1)

Mon 25 Northern Ireland – (2)

Wed 27 Northern Ireland – From the Bomb to the Ballot (1)
1) Brendan O’Leary. "Gender and Consociational Power-sharing in N Ireland"
2) Brendan O’Leary "The Belfast Agreement...."

April

Mon 1 Northern Ireland – From the Bomb to the Ballot (2)

Wed 3 In class short exam #2

Mon 8 The world of electoral systems
On the web at (all in bite size chunks):
http://www.aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/es/esa01
http://www.aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/es/esa02
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http://www.aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/es/esa09
http://www.aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/es/esa10
http://www.aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/es/esa11
Wed 10       Electoral Systems (2)

Mon 15       Burma History

Wed 17       Burma Future

Mon 22       The Globalization of Democracy -- Designing constitutions for divided societies

Wed 24       Review session

FINAL EXAM:   MONDAY MAY 6\textsuperscript{th} 8am-11am