Introduction to Comparative Politics
Political Science 240 - Section 01
Spring 2011
M, W, F: 10:30-11:20 (Weinstein 209)

Professor: Dr. Jenny Pribble
Office Hours: Fridays 1:30-3:30 and by appointment
Office: 202D Weinstein Hall
Email: jpribble@richmond.edu

Overview and Course Objectives:
Why do some countries have democratic forms of government while others are ruled by authoritarian leaders? Why do several European countries have welfare states while the United States does not? Why does ethnic violence occur? Why is Latin America characterized by such high levels of income inequality? These are but a few of the interesting and important questions that we will analyze and discuss during the course of this semester.

This is an introductory course in comparative politics. The class is designed to be accessible to students with no prior knowledge of particular regions of the world or with the study of comparative politics. There are, therefore, no prerequisites. Students will explore major themes in comparative politics and analyze several country case studies. By the end of the semester, you will be able to explain concepts such as democracy, authoritarianism, the welfare state, dependent development, and the comparative method. Moreover, students will be able to identify the challenges facing countries in Africa, Europe, and Latin America and offer competing explanations for why these countries exhibit such divergent political and economic trajectories.

Course Organization:
The course is divided into two sections. During the first half of the semester we will study general themes in Comparative Politics, including democracy, authoritarianism, and political economy. In the latter part of the semester we will analyze country cases from distinct regions of the world, including Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. The class will meet three times a week for 50 minutes. Our in-class time will involve interactive lectures and a discussion of the readings. We will also carry out some group projects and view documentaries and films.

Required Texts:
1.) O’Neil, Patrick. 2009. Essentials of Comparative Politics (Third Edition). New York: Norton. (In the remainder of this syllabus I refer to this as “Essentials.”)
2.) O’Neil, Patrick and Ronald Rogowski. 2009. *Essential Readings in Comparative Politics*. New York: Norton. (In the remainder of this syllabus I refer to this as “ER.”)

3.) Online Reserves & Blackboard: Several of the readings required for the class are taken from scholarly journals or books. These readings are available through the library’s e-reserves and/or through blackboard (as noted in the syllabus). I will post the class lectures and other handouts on blackboard (you can access this by logging on at: blackboard.richmond.edu).

You should complete the assigned readings before each class session. I will provide reading questions on blackboard to help guide your preparation. Coming to class prepared is important so that you can participate actively in discussions and engage in the interactive lecture period. I reserve the right to give unannounced reading quizzes if I sense that students are not completing the assignments. Grades on such a quiz would count toward your participation.

**Recommended Texts:**
This class will deal with the politics of countries as diverse as Sweden and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Keeping up-to-date with current events around the globe will, therefore, serve you well. I highly recommend that you read online newspapers or take advantage of the free newspaper service available to all UR students.

**Evaluation and Course Requirements:**

1.) **Class attendance and participation (10%)**

   It is essential that you come to class prepared. This means that you are expected to complete and reflect upon the required reading before each class session so that you can actively engage in discussion and ask questions.

   We will be dealing with interesting and controversial issues in class, and I hope that we will have lively and fun debates. This is the essence of a political science class. It is important that you respect one another and the instructor. Remember that differences of opinion can provide an opportunity for intellectual growth.

   Be on time and attend all classes. I will take attendance at the beginning of each class and if you are more than 10 minutes late it will count as an absence. After 3 absences, any additional absence will result in a one-letter-grade reduction to your participation grade.

2.) **Country and Theme presentation (10%)**

   In order to deepen your knowledge of specific countries and apply the concepts that we learn about during the course of the semester to a particular case, you will work in groups of 2-3 people to prepare and deliver a short (12-15 minutes) presentation that explores one of the course concepts within the context of a
country. For example, if you are interested in the welfare state, you might present about Sweden and discuss how the welfare state came to exist, how it has changed in recent years, and how it affects politics in that country. You should use power point for the presentation and send me a copy of the file after your presentation. The presentations will be given during the final four class meetings. In addition to other resources, I encourage you to use the library’s research guide to help prepare the presentation: http://library.richmond.edu/information/csguides/PLSC240Pribble.htm Please feel free to come and meet with me about the presentation as well.

3.) Three Essays (30% [1st = 5%, 2nd = 10%, and 3rd = 15%])

You will write three short research essays about central themes explored in this course. The paper assignments will be posted on blackboard and we will go over them in class. Papers cannot be submitted via email and must be turned in at the beginning of class on the due-date. A late paper will result in a letter-grade reduction in grade per day late.

4.) Mid-term Exam (25%)

A closed-book mid-term exam will be given on October 12. The exam will mix short answer and long essay questions. You are responsible for mastering all course materials, including aspects of the reading that may not have been discussed during class.

5.) Final Exam (25%)

The closed-book final exam will be given on December 6. The exam will mix short answer and long essay questions and will cover the entire semester. You are responsible for mastering all course materials, including aspects of the reading that may not have been discussed during class.

Grading Scale

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Late Work: All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the specified date. Late assignments will result in a letter grade reduction per day late.

Make-up Work: There will be no make-ups for either exam unless there are documented extraordinary circumstances that prevented you from taking the exam. Additionally, there will be no extra credit assignments.
Honor Code: All work must adhere to the University’s Student Honor Code and pledge. For details of the code, see: http://www.richmond.edu/about/honorcode.html. Please write and sign the pledge on all assignments and tests.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. Plagiarism, very briefly, refers to stealing other peoples’ written work (from books, articles, newspapers, web sources, etc.) or verbal ideas. You must cite all material that is not your own. If you have doubts of what constitutes plagiarism, consult the student honor code, and/or talk to me. Finally, all in-class exams are to be taken without the assistance of books, notes, or other people.

Classroom Etiquette: I want to create a nice learning environment for you and your peers. To do this, I ask that you respect a few basic ground rules:

• I will start class on time and expect you to arrive to class on time. I make important announcements at the beginning of class as well as take attendance. In addition, people coming in late could disrupt the professor and their fellow students.

• Many students prefer to take notes with their laptops. This is fine; however, I expect you to refrain from activities unrelated to the class (eg. emailing, instant messaging, surfing the internet). I reserve the right to ask you not to use your computer if I suspect you are engaging in these activities.

• Please remember to turn off your cell phone.

Getting Help: If you are having difficulties with the class and reading materials, please come and see me during my office hours. I also encourage you to use these on-campus resources:

Academic Skills Center (http://asc.richmond.edu or 289-8626) helps students assess their academic strengths and weaknesses; hone their academic skills through teaching effective test preparation, critical reading and thinking, information processing, concentration, and related techniques; work on specific subject areas (e.g., calculus, chemistry, accounting, etc.); and encourage campus and community involvement.

Career Development Center (http://cdc.richmond.edu/ or 289-8547) can assist you in exploring your interests and abilities, choosing a major, connecting with internships and learning experiences, investigating graduate and professional school options, and landing your first job. We encourage you to schedule an appointment with a career advisor during your first year.

Counseling and Psychological Services (289-8119) assists students in meeting academic, personal, or emotional challenges. Services include assessment, short-term counseling and psychotherapy, crisis intervention and related services.

Speech Center (http://speech.richmond.edu or 289-6409): Assists with preparation and practice in the pursuit of excellence in public expression. Recording, playback,
coaching and critique sessions offered by teams of student consultants trained to assist in developing ideas, arranging key points for more effective organization, improving style and delivery, and handling multimedia aids for individual and group presentations.

**Writing Center** assists writers at all levels of experience, across all majors. Students can schedule appointments with trained writing consultants who offer friendly critiques of written work: [http://writing.richmond.edu](http://writing.richmond.edu)

**Boatwright Library Research Librarians** assist students with identifying and locating the best resources for class assignments, research papers and other course projects. Librarians also assist students with questions about citing sources correctly. Students can schedule a personal research appointment, meet with librarians at the library’s main service desk, email, text or IM. Link to [http://library.richmond.edu/help/ask.html](http://library.richmond.edu/help/ask.html) or call 289-8669.

**Class Schedule and Assignments:**

**Week 1: What is Comparative Politics?**

August 22: Introduction & Syllabus

August 24: An overview of comparative politics
  - **Essentials:** “Chapter 1: Introduction,” (pgs. 1-20).

August 26: The Comparative Method:

**Week 2: Using the Comparative Method to Explain Political Outcomes**

August 29: Comparative Research: In-class exercise & **Receive Writing Assignment #1**
  - **ER:** “The Science in Social Science,” (pgs. 14-19).

August 31: Approaches to Studying Comparative Politics
  - **Online Reserves:** Peters, B. Guy. “Approaches in Comparative Politics,” in Daniele Carmani (ed.) *Comparative Politics*. (pgs. 44-61).
September 2: The State

Week 3: Understanding Key Concepts in Comparative Politics

September 5: Ethnicity and Nationalism in Comparative Politics: In-class Film (Ghosts of Rwanda)
- Essentials: “Chapter 3: Nations and Society,” (pgs. 47-57). **Please note that I have not assigned the full chapter, but only a portion
- ER: “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War,” (pgs. 77-84)
  “Clash of Civilization,” (pgs. 84-96)

**FIRST PAPER DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS**

September 7: Ethnicity and Nationalism in Comparative Politics.
- Online Reserves: Varshney, Ashutosh. “Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict,” in The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics, Carlos Boix and Susan Stokes (eds.).

September 9: What is Political Economy: Understanding the Building Blocks
- Essentials: “Chapter 4: Political Economy,” (pgs. 77-87).

Week 4: Political Economy

September 12: What is Political Economy: the Big Picture

September 14: Watch film: Life & Debt

September 16: Finish & discuss: Life & Debt
Week 5: Political Regime Type: what is democracy? How do democratic regimes come to exist? How do democracies differ from one another?

Political Regime Type: Authoritarian Regimes

September 19: Defining Democracy & Sources of Democracy

September 21: Sources of Democracy Past & Present
- ER: “Economic Development and Democracy” (Pgs. 268-281)
- ER: “Tuning In, Tuning Out,” (pgs. 170-198)

September 23: Democratic Transitions & Democratic Consolidation

Receive Writing Assignment #2
- Blackboard: Print and read the handout on writing tips; please also bring it to class.

Week 6: Political Regimes and Democracy Continued– Political Institutions and State Design

September 26: How do democracies differ?: Political Institutions and State Design
- ER: “The Number of Parties,” (pg. 282-286)

September 28: How do democracies differ? -- Political Institutions and State Design

September 30: A new Era of Democracy in the Middle East?
- TBA
Week 7: Political Regime Type: what is authoritarianism? Why do authoritarian regimes emerge? How do authoritarian regimes stay in power? What are the consequences of authoritarianism?

October 3: Defining Authoritarianism
  - ER: “Modern Nondemocratic Regimes,” (206-218)

October 5: A Study in Totalitarianism: In-class Film on North Korea: *A State of Mind*
  **SECOND PAPER DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS**

October 7: Finish in-class film and discuss: *A State of Mind*

Week 8: Review and Exam

October 10: NO CLASS FALL BREAK

October 12: Mid-Term Exam

October 14: An Overview of Advanced Industrialized Democracies & the EU

Week 9: Advanced Industrialized Democracies

October 17: How does the EU Work? Is the EU democratic?

October 19: The EU: Obstacles in the Integration Process

October 21: The Welfare State: an Overview
Week 10: Advanced Industrialized Democracies and the Welfare State

October 24: The Welfare State in Comparative Perspective
- In-class film: “Sick around the World,"

October 26: The Welfare State in Comparative Perspective

October 28: The Communist System & the Dual Transition
- Essentials: “Chapter 8: Communism & Postcommunism,” (pg. 197-229).

Week 11: Communist and Post-Communist Regimes

October 31: Post-Communist Trajectories and the Challenges of Development: China

November 2: The Challenges of Development and Democratization

November 4: Africa and the Challenges for Democracy
- Watch Film: Democracy in the Rough

Week 12: Less-Developed and Newly Industrializing Countries

November 7: Africa and the Challenges of Democracy & Development

Receive Paper Assignment #3
November 9: Africa and the Challenges of Democracy & Development

November 11: What Can I do with a Political Science Degree?
  • Visit from the Career Development Center.

Week 13: Less-Developed and Newly Industrializing Countries

November 14: Latin America and the Challenges of Democracy & Development

November 16: Argentina and the 2001 Crisis

November 18: Chile: Stability, but Discontent

Week 14: Bringing It Together: Group Presentations

November 21: Group Presentations (3)

November 23: No Class - Thanksgiving

November 25: No class - Thanksgiving

Week 15: Bringing it Together: Group Presentations

November 28: Group Presentations (3)
  **PAPER #3 DUE TODAY**

November 30: Group Presentations (3)

December 2: Wrap up & Group Presentations (3) – CLASS TO MEET IN JEPSON G21

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, December 6, 2-5pm (Weinstein 209)