

INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Professor: Matthew Wilson

Email: mhwilson1@mix.wvu.edu

Office: 315D Woodburn Hall

Office Hours: T & Th 11:30 PM-12:30 PM

Room: 306E Woodburn Hall

Dates: 08/17/16 - 12/06/16

Time: T & Th 10:00 AM-11:15 AM

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course provides an honors-level introduction to the comparative study of politics, outlining the comparative method and contrasting it with other focuses in the discipline. The course overviews dominant research agendas and the theoretical frameworks that underlie them. As part of the class, students will also be exposed to relevant published scholarly research in the field. Students will also be encouraged to consider strategies for conducting individual research on a topic of their choice. By introducing students to major political concepts and highlighting issues related to research design, this course should prepare students to pursue more advanced courses in comparative politics.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES:

As a result of the class, students will be able to:

- Identify major research agendas in comparative politics
- Comprehend and summarize scholarly research in comparative politics
- Articulate plans for potential research in comparative politics

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Students are expected to

- (1) read assigned materials before the start of each class;
- (2) attend all lectures and participate in in-class exercises (10% of grade);
- (3) complete two in-class exams (50% of grade, each worth 25%);

Exams will be a combination of multiple choice and short answer based on the lectures.

- (4) give an in-class presentation (20% of grade);

Each student will be expected to read an assigned scholarly article, and summarize the reading in a presentation to the class on their assigned date. The student's grade will be determined by the student's comprehension of the reading and presentation ability. (More information will be provided separately.)

- (5) complete a writing assignment (20% of grade);

Each student will be required to write a 12-page paper outlining a potential research project (theoretical expectations, data, and research design). The student's grade will be determined by the degree of critical thinking, completeness, and course relevance. (More information will be provided separately.)

GRADE SCALE

A: 90-100; B: 80-89.9; C: 70-79.9; D: 60 to 69.9; F: 0-59.9

READING MATERIALS:

Clark, William Roberts, Matt Golder, and Sona N. Golder. 2012. *Principles of Comparative Politics*, 2nd Edition. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Additional readings will be made available online or through the WVU library.

CLASS POLICIES:

Failure to follow class rules will affect the student's participation grade.

1. The use of cell phones in class is not permitted.
2. Computers are allowed to take notes only.
3. Please do not read outside materials.
4. Sleeping in class is not allowed.
5. Grades will not be changed if an issue is reported after two weeks have passed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Academic Integrity. The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, I will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of this course. For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions, please see the West Virginia University Academic Catalog at <http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecreditstermsclassification/#academicintegritytext>. Should you have any questions about possibly improper research citations or references, or any other activity that may be interpreted as an attempt at academic dishonesty, please see me before the assignment is due to discuss the matter.

Adverse Weather Commitment. In the event of inclement or threatening weather, everyone should use his or her best judgment regarding travel to and from campus. Safety should be the main concern. If you cannot get to class because of adverse weather conditions, you should contact me as soon as possible. Similarly, if I am unable to reach our class location, I will notify you of any cancellation or change as soon as possible (at least one hour before class starts), using MIX to prevent you from embarking on any unnecessary travel. If you cannot get to class because of weather conditions, I will make allowances relative to required attendance policies, as well as any scheduled tests, quizzes, or other assessments.

Inclusivity. The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Accessibility Services (293-6700). For more information on West Virginia University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.wvu.edu>.

Sexual Misconduct and Resources. West Virginia University (WVU) does not tolerate sexual misconduct, including harassment, stalking, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, or relationship violence [BOG Policy 44]. It is important for you to know that there are resources available if you or someone you know needs assistance. You may speak to a member of university administration, faculty, or staff, but keep in mind that they have an obligation to report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator. If you want to speak to someone who is permitted to keep your disclosure confidential, please seek assistance from the Carruth Center, 304-293-9355 or 304-293-4431 (24-hour hotline), and locally within the community at the Rape and Domestic Violence Information Center (RDVIC), 304-292-5100 or 304-292-4431 (24-hour hotline).

Students are responsible for knowing both university and course schedules.

The academic calendar is available at: http://provost.wvu.edu/academic_calendar.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

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| 8/18 | Chapter 1. Introduction |
| 8/23 | Chapter 2. What is Science? |
| 8/25 | Chapter 3. What is Politics? |
| 8/30 | Chapter 4. The Origins of the Modern State |
| 9/01 | Chapter 5. Democracy and Dictatorship: Conceptualization and Measurement |
| 9/06 | <i>Presentations and Discussion</i> |
| 9/08 | <i>Lab: Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy</i> |
| 9/13 | Chapter 6. The Economic Determinants of Democracy and Dictatorship |
| 9/15 | <i>Presentations and Discussion</i> |
| 9/20 | Chapter 7. Cultural Determinants of Democracy and Dictatorship |
| 9/22 | Chapter 8. Democratic Transitions |
| 9/27 | Chapter 9. Democracy or Dictatorship: Does it make a Difference? |
| 9/29 | <i>Presentations and Discussion</i> |
| 10/04 | <i>Exam I</i> |
| 10/06 | Chapter 10. Varieties of Dictatorship |
| 10/11 | <i>Lab: Varieties of Dictatorship</i> |
| 10/13 | <i>Presentations and Discussion [Citations for writing assignment due]</i> |
| 10/18 | Chapter 11. Problems with Group Decision Making |
| 10/20 | Chapter 12. Parliamentary, Presidential, and Semi-Presidential Democracies: Making and Breaking Governments |
| 10/25 | Chapter 13. Elections and Electoral Systems |
| 10/27 | <i>Presentations and Discussion</i> |
| 11/01 | <i>Lab: Elections and Electoral Systems</i> |
| 11/03 | Chapter 14. Social Cleavages and Party Systems |
| 11/08 | <i>[Election Day: No class]</i> |
| 11/10 | Chapter 15. Institutional Veto Players |
| 11/15 | <i>Presentations and Discussion</i> |
| 11/17 | <i>Peer Review for Written Assignment</i> |
| 11/22 | <i>[Fall break: No class]</i> |
| 11/24 | <i>[Fall break: No class]</i> |
| 11/29 | Chapter 16. Consequences of Democratic Institutions |
| 12/01 | <i>Presentations and Discussion</i> |
| 12/06 | Recap <i>[Writing Assignment Due]</i> |
| 12/13 | <i>Exam II (5-7pm)</i> |