



PSCI 230: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Fall 2007

Humboldt State University
MWF, 10:00-10:50am, FH 232

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and by appointment

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“A man who has tasted only his mother’s soup has no basis to claim that hers is the best.”
—African proverb

This course provides an introduction to comparative politics—one of the four sub-fields of political science (the other being American politics, international relations, and political theory). In this course, we will:

- Be introduced to the field and some of its most important theorists;
- Develop the conceptual and practical tools necessary to navigate the field successfully;
- Examine some of the key debates and questions facing the field today; and
- Familiarize ourselves with a handful of societies and countries around from the world.
- Explore the competing forms of democracy, the nature of economic development, and the diversity of political systems into which societies around the world are organized.

Comparative politics is a diverse field of political science, and we cannot hope to cover all of the possible topics that fall under its banner. What we will do, however, is develop the necessary background knowledge and theoretical framework within which we can make sense of contemporary events and developments in the world around us.

There is an optional (but highly recommended) one credit hour discussion group (PSCI 280, Sec. 3; CRN# 43438). The discussion seminar takes place on Mondays from 1:00-1:50 in FH 181.

Required Book and Readings:

The following book is required and available at the HSU Bookstore:

- Timothy Lim. *Doing Comparative Politics: An Introduction to Issues and Approaches*. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2006).

Additional required readings are available on electronic reserve through the course Moodle site.

Evaluation:

German Election Simulation (15%): In week 7 we will run a simulation of the German electoral system. Your participation in the simulation will be evaluated based on a brief (500 word) position paper you prepare and present (5%) and a brief (500 word) response/analysis of

the simulation (10%). The position paper is due on September 24. The critical response/analysis is due on October 12. More information on the assignments and simulation will be distributed through Moodle.

Iraqi Constitutional Negotiations Simulation (15%): In week 15 we will run a simulation of the negotiations to develop a new Iraqi Constitution. As with your participation previous simulation, your grade will be based on a position paper you prepare and present (5%) and a brief (500 word) response/analysis of the simulation (10%). The position paper is due on November 12. The analysis is due on December 7. More information on the assignments and simulation will be distributed through Moodle.

Map Quiz (5%): The world is comprised of approximately 190 separate states, yet many of us are unfamiliar with even the most important of them. A study sheet consisting of a list of countries and a blank world map on which you should be able to locate those countries will be distributed via Moodle. On the quiz, you will be asked to identify the location of a set of these countries. This assignment is designed to introduce students to the basic geography of the world system. The map quiz will take place on September 10. Note that if you miss the map quiz, you may take a make-up quiz during the final exam.

Periodic Quizzes (25%): There will be regular unannounced quizzes throughout the semester. They will cover readings, lecture materials, and current events from the New York Times. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped, and the remainder will be averaged to determine your quiz mark. Make-up quizzes will not be administered, but occasional extra-credit opportunities may be assigned to replace low quiz scores.

Final Exam (30%): The final exam will take place on for Monday, December 10 from 10:20-12:10. The exam will cover all material from the course (lectures, discussions and readings). A review sheet will be made available before the final exam.

Participation (10%): Regular attendance and participation in class is expected. I expect that you have completed the required readings for a given week *before* the first class that week. A sign-in sheet will be passed around on occasion—it is your responsibility to ensure you sign it.

A Note on Written Work: All written assignments submitted for this course should be properly formatted and cited. I expect that you will proofread your work before submitting it to me, and ideally you will have someone else proof it as well. Consequently, a maximum of two errors (grammatical, improper citation, etc.) per page will be accepted. One point will be deducted from your grade on the assignment for each error beyond the second on each page. All citations must be in APSA format. A style guide is available at

<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocAPSA.html>

Moodle Site: Course information will regularly be posed to the course Moodle Site. If you are not familiar with Moodle, please let me know and I will provide a brief overview on accessing and using it. You can access the course site at:

Moodle: <http://learn.humboldt.edu>.

Your initial login will be your axe id for your username (e.g., nrz3)

Your initial password will be your student identification number

Contacting Me: The most effective way to contact me is through e-mail (noah.zerbe@humboldt.edu). Barring unusual circumstances (being out of town, ill, in a blackout, etc.) I will respond within 24 hours. If not, send me a followup. Please be sure your subject line includes “PSCI 230” and a general description of the topic so that the e-mail is not filtered out as spam. Also, be sure to sign your e-mail so that I know who sent it.

Late Assignments will be penalized at a rate of one-half letter grade per day. All assignments are due in class on the due date listed in the syllabus. Make up exams will not be scheduled without a valid medical excuse. If you have scheduling problems with any due dates, please contact me well before the assignment or exam is due.

Appeals: I am happy to speak with you about marks earned on a particular assignment. Before coming to discuss a grade, however, I request that you: (1) take 24 hours to read my comments before approaching me to discuss the mark; (2) write a detailed explanation of your question, including the specific reason(s) why you think your mark should be changed; and (3) submit your written response to me, and make an appointment with me (either during my office hours or at some other time) to discuss the grade. Under no circumstances will I discuss grades over e-mail or telephone.

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the representation of someone else’s work as your own, and includes but not limited to having someone else do your work or failing to properly attribute work to their sources. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense, and will result in an automatic zero for the assignment, failure of the course, and potentially more serious sanctions from the University according to the Academic Honesty policy. Please contact me *before turning in your assignment* if you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism.

In consideration of your fellow students, please turn off mobile phones before entering the classroom. If you absolutely must arrive late or leave early, please enter or leave quietly and sit near the door to minimize the disruption to your colleagues.

Support: HSU offers excellent resources to help you succeed in your academic endeavors. These include the Library, Computer Labs, Computer Help Desk, Academic Support Center, Learning Center, and Writing Center. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of them!

Disability Resources: If you have a documented disability and would like to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible. Our campus Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) can assist you with the accommodation process and can be reached at (707) 826-4678 or (707) 826-5392 (TTD). The SDRC is located in House 71 (Little Apartments) off Library Circle.

Part 1: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Week 1 (August 20-24): Course Introduction: Key Concepts, Key Debates

Comparative politics is a unique sub-field in political science, in that it represents a methodological approach rather than a discrete field of study. This week provides an overview of the field of comparative politics, as well as an outline of the course.



Required Readings:

- Max Weber, Selections from “Politics as Vocation” (8 pgs).
- Nicolo Machiavelli, Ch. 17 “Concerning Cruelty And Clemency” from *The Prince*. (2 pgs).
- Chad Raphael. “Theory of Hegemony and Ideology.” (8 pgs).

Learning Outcomes:

- Define politics, and differentiate government, state and nation.
- Define power and hegemony.

Week 2 (August 27-31): States & Nations

Although human beings have organized themselves into political groupings and communities throughout recorded history, the nation-state is a relatively recent development. Indeed, states only became the dominant form of political organization after the 1600s. This week, we explore the process of state formation and expansion. We also seek to understand how the state differs from other forms of social organization, what the state does, and why.



Max Weber

Required Readings:

- Ellen Meiksins Wood. “Unhappy Families: Global Capitalism in a World of Nation-States.” *Monthly Review*. 51(3) (1999): 11 pgs.
- Charles Tilly, “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime” in Peter R. Evans, Dietrich Rueschmeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 169-191

Learning Outcomes:

- Outline the process by which states developed out of feudal Europe.
- List the fundamental characteristics and major functions of the modern state.
- Explain the concepts of strong and weak states and their significance.

Week 3 (September 3-7): Globalization

Note: No class Monday, September 3: Happy Labor Day!



It is commonly argued that the world is more global now than ever, with call centers in India resulting in the loss of American jobs and European farm subsidies undermining agriculture in Africa. This week, we explore the contested meanings, merits, and implications of ‘globalization’ for the nation state, cultural and political sovereignty, and economic development.

Required Readings:

- Lim, Ch. 9 “Globalization” (pp. 265-90).
- Joseph Stiglitz. “Another World is Possible.” Ch. 1 (pp. 3-24) in *Making Globalization Work*. (NY: WW Norton, 2006).
- William Tabb. “Globalization is An Issue; The Power of Capital is The Issue.” *Monthly Review*. (June, 1997).

Learning Outcomes:

- Define globalization and assess its impact on the state.
- Explain what is meant by the term “new constitutionalism” and assess the concept’s validity.

Part 2: The Developed North

Week 4 (September 10-14): Electoral Systems: PR and SMD

Note: Map Quiz September 10

Around the world, democratic systems of government frequently take different forms. One common difference can be observed in competing electoral systems—namely, in the differences between proportional representation and majoritarian systems. This week, we explore the competing electoral systems and ask: What are the effects of different electoral forms on political outcomes? And are some forms more democratic than others?

Required Readings:

- Anthony King. “Running Scared.” *Atlantic Monthly*. (Jan. 1997): 41-61.
- Brian O’Neal. “Electoral Systems.” May 1993. Canadian Library of Parliament, Parliamentary Information and Research Service. BP-334E. (19 pgs).

Learning Outcomes:

- Compare and contrast proportional representation and majoritarian electoral systems.
- Explain why proportional representation is more or less “democratic” than majoritarian electoral systems.

Weeks 5-6 (September 17-21 and 24-28): Political Systems

Presidential and Parliamentary Systems and Federalism

Note: German Position Papers due September 24



British PM Tony Blair

Not all democracies are organized in the same way. This week, we explore the most obvious difference between democratic governments: the relationship between the political executive and the legislature. The relationship usually takes one of two forms. Countries are usually either presidential, in which the political executive is independent from the legislature, or parliamentary, in which the political executive is a part of and accountable to the legislature. We explore the two arch-typical cases: the United States as a presidential system, and the United Kingdom as a parliamentary system, and seek to understand the relative strengths and weaknesses of each.

Required Readings:

- William Heffernan. “Why the Prime Minister Cannot be a President.” *Parliamentary Affairs*. 58(1): 53-70.
- Malcolm Shaw. “Overview: Parliamentary Democracy Today.” *Parliamentary Affairs*. 57(3): 702-13.
- Alfred Stepan with Cindy Skach. “Constitutional Frameworks and Democratic Consolidation: Parliamentarianism versus Presidentialism.” *World Politics*. 46(1) (1993): 1-22.

Learning Outcomes:

- Compare and contrast presidential and parliamentary systems, outlining the strengths and weaknesses of each system, and explaining how the different political systems took different forms in Western Europe.
- Compare and contrast the implementation of presidential and parliamentary systems in the United States and the United Kingdom, and outline the strengths and weaknesses of each system.

Week 7 (October 1-5): German Election Simulation

This week we will run an election simulation based on the German Bundestag in which you will assume the roles of members of the leading political parties in Germany. Your task will be to negotiate the formation of a new government.



Required Readings:

- Monte Palmer. "Germany." Ch. 5 (pp. 175-218) in *Comparative Politics*, 3rd edition.
- Notes on the German political system and political parties (online).

Learning Outcomes:

- Explain the differences between the major German political parties, and place them on the German political spectrum.
- Define the Basic Law and explain its impact on German politics.
- Outline the impacts of proportional representation on German politics, contrasting the German PR system with the SMD system used in the United States and the United Kingdom.

Week 8 (October 8-12): The Welfare State

Note: German Response Papers due October 12

In the years following the Great Depression, and especially after World War II, the welfare state became the defining form of democratic administration in the Western world, only to collapse in the closing years of the 20th century. This week, we examine the rise and fall of the welfare state. We explore the different forms the welfare state took in the United States, Continental Europe, and the Scandinavian countries.

Required Readings:

- Gøsta Esping-Andersen, "Decommodification in Social Policy," Ch. 2 (pp. 35-54) in *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. (Princeton University Press, 1990).
- Karl Polanyi, "The Self-Regulating market and the Fictitious Commodities: Labor, Land and Money," Ch. 6 (pp. 68-76) in *The Great Transformation*, (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1944).
- David Coates. "Models of Capitalism in the New World Order: The UK Case." *Political Studies*. (67) (1999): 643-60.

Learning Outcomes:

- Define the welfare state and highlight the competing forms the welfare state.
- Explain the reasons for the rise and fall of the welfare state.
- Define the commodity fiction and decommodification, and explain how the concepts relate to the welfare state.

Part 3: The Underdeveloped South

Week 9 (October 15-19): Democratization



Nelson Mandela Votes

Since the mid-1970s (Huntington's so called "Third Wave of Democratization"), more than 60 countries in Southern and Eastern Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa have made the transition from authoritarianism to democracy, as democracy has become the key form of political organization around the world. This week, we explore the process of democratization and seek to understand the factors which (pre)condition it. Why are some countries more successful than others in making the transition? What explains why transitions occur peacefully in one case but not in others?

Required Readings:

- Lim, Ch. 6 "What Makes a Democracy?" (pp. 157-202)

- Amartya Sen. “The Importance of Democracy,” Ch. 6 (pp. 146-59) in *Development as Freedom*. (NY: Anchor, 1999).
- Fareed Zakaria. “The Way Out.” Ch. (pp. 239-64) in *The Future of Freedom*. (NY: WW Norton, 2003).

Learning Outcomes:

- Define “democratization” and outline the reasons why the process may be successful or unsuccessful.
- Compare and contrast replacement, transplacement, and transition paths towards democracy.
- Explain the democratization process in Eastern Europe and the transition from apartheid in South Africa, and assess the strength of democracy in the two cases.

Week 10 (October 22-26): Dependency and Development

For most of the world, development is the primary focus of political activity. And while all underdeveloped countries agree on the need to develop, the nature and method of development has been widely debated. Modernization represents the guiding orthodoxy of development theory. However, its failure to lead to successful economic growth in much of the Third World has led to challenges, most notably from dependency theory, which emerged out of Latin America in the 1970s. This week, we explore dependency and modernization theory and approaches to economic development in the Third World.

Required Readings:

- Lim, Ch. 4 “Why are Poor Countries Poor?” (pp. 97-124)
- Lim, Ch. 5 “Why is East Asia Rich?” (pp. 124-156)
- Howard Wiarda, “The Concept of Development: Origins and Main Themes,” Ch. 2 (pp. 29-46) in *Political Development in Emerging Nations*, (Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth).

Learning Outcomes:

- Outline the intellectual and political history of modernization and dependency theories.
- Assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of modernization theory and dependency theories.
- Explain with is meant by “the development of underdevelopment.”

Week 11 (October 29-November 2): Politics in Action: Zimbabwe

The rise and fall of Zimbabwe’s post-independence political and economic system highlights many of the problems presently facing the developing world. This week, we look at Zimbabwe as a case of failed political and economic development, seeking to understand the causes and consequences of its developmental failure.



Robert Mugabe
President of Zimbabwe

Required Readings:

- Samantha Power. “How to Kill a Country.” *Atlantic Monthly*. (December, 2003): 86-100.
- Patrick Bond and Richard Saunders. “Labor, the State, and the Struggle for a Democratic Zimbabwe.” *Monthly Review*. 57(7).

Learning Outcomes:

- Outline the major developments in Zimbabwe’s political and economic history.
- Apply the theories of development and democratization to explain contemporary politics in Zimbabwe.
- Analyze contemporary events in Zimbabwe and assess its future.

Part 4: Issues in Comparative Politics

Week 12 (November 5-9): Social Movements and Collective Action

Elections and referenda are not the only way in which people participate in political processes. More radical forms of participation, including strikes, demonstrations, revolutions and social movements represent important avenues for political participation. Since the 1960s, social movements have emerged around a variety of issues: anti-globalization, fair trade, social justice, workers' rights, gender equity, etc. This week we explore the question of collective action embodied in such movements.



Anti-WTO Protests
Seattle, 1999

Required Readings:

- Lim, Ch 8: "What Makes a Social Movement?" (pp. 233-64).
- Stephen Gill. "Toward a Postmodern Prince? The Battle in Seattle as a Moment in the New Politics of Globalisation." *Millennium* 29(1): 131-41.
- Ellen Meiksins Wood. "The Politics of Capitalism." *Monthly Review*. 51(4) (1999): 11 pgs.

Learning Outcomes:

- Explain why some social cleavages become politicized while others do not.
- Define social capital and assess its status and explanatory capacity..
- Analyze the events surrounding the breakdown of the WTO talks in Seattle in 1999.

Week 13 (November 12-16): Political Culture and The Clash of Civilizations?

Note: No Class Monday, November 12: Happy Veteran's Day!

Note: Iraqi Position Papers due November 14



Map of Huntington's Civilizations

Political culture is a traditional "bread and butter" issue in comparative politics, encompassing a broad range of "soft" factors: political beliefs, attitudes, and values which characterize society. This week, we explore how political culture is articulated in individual countries. We also explore how the concept has been revived in light of post-Cold War, post-911 events.

Required Readings:

- Benjamin Barber, "Jihad vs. McWorld," *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 269 (March, 1992), pp. 53-65.
- Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993.

Learning Outcomes:

- Define political culture, and outline the process through which it is transmitted (political socialization).
- Assess the explanatory power of political culture in the post-911 environment.
- Compare and contrast Huntington and Barber's use of the concept of political culture.

Week 14 (November 19-23): No Classes

Happy Thanksgiving Break!

Week 15 (November 26-30): Action Into Practice: Iraq Iraqi Constitutional Negotiations Simulation



Toppling of Hussein
Statue, Iraq 2003

After removing Saddam Hussein and his Ba'ath Party from power in April, 2003, the United States faced the challenge of constructing a new government for Iraq, virtually from scratch. This week, we will simulate the negotiation of a new Iraqi constitution, putting many of the theoretical debates and issues discussed throughout the course into practice.

Required Readings:

- Charles Hauss. "Iraq." Ch. 14 (pp. 401-32) in *Comparative Politics*, 5th ed.
- Imad Salamey and Frederic Pearson. "The Crisis of Federalism and Electoral Strategies in Iraq." *International Studies Perspectives*. (2005) (6): 190-207.
- Iraqi Constitutional briefing package.

Learning Outcomes:

- Describe the relationship between governmental structure and electoral outcomes in Iraq.
- Assess the positions of the key players in the development of the Iraqi Constitution.
- Consider the reasons for establishing a federal state and an electoral system based on proportional representation in Iraq.
- Analyze contemporary events in Iraq and assess its future.

Week 16 (December 3-7): Wrapping Up

Note: Iraqi Simulation Response due December 7

Week 17 (December 10-14): Final Exams Week

The final exam is scheduled for Monday, December 10 from 10:20-12:10. Please do not ask to take the final exam early!