

Political Science 230 (Fall, 2011)

Introduction to Comparative Politics



Instructor: David MacDonald
 Class: Mondays, 2:30 – 5:20 (Room A-261)
 Office Hours: Immediately after classes.
 Office: D-3081
 Email: david.macdonald@ufv.ca

Required Course Text: Daniele Caramani, *Comparative Politics* (2nd ed.) Oxford U.P., 2011.

Course Objectives: POSC 230 is an introductory course for students wishing to study politics through the comparative method. The course is designed to introduce students to the methodological tools required for the comparative study of nation-states. Once the comparative method has been established, students will be given the opportunity to research and explore various nation-states to analyze specific aspects of the political institutions in these countries.

The Comparative Method

Session #1: Sept. 12: Course Introduction:

- a) Course description.
 - b) “The Comparative Method”
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Session #2: Sept. 19: Introduction to Comparative Politics:

Required Reading: pp. 1-17. Daniele Caramani, “*Introduction to Comparative Politics*”

Session #3: Sept. 26: Theories and Methods:

Required Reading: pp. 23-35. Klaus von Beyme, “*The Evolution of Comparative Politics*” + pp. 50-62. Hans Keman, “*Comparative Research Methods*”

The Historical Context

Session #4:Oct. 03: **The Nation-State:**

Required Reading: Gianfranco Poggi, "*The Nation-State*" pp. 67-82

Session #5:Oct. 17: **Democracies:**

Required Reading: Peter Mair, "*Democracies*" pp. 84-100

Session #6:Oct. 24:

Midterm Exam

Session #7:Oct. 31: **Authoritarian Regimes:**

Required Reading: Paul Brooker, "*Authoritarian Regimes*" pp. 102-116

Structures and Institutions

Session #8:Nov.07: **Constitutions and Judicial Power:**

Required Reading: Alec Stone Sweet, "*Constitutions and Judicial Power*" pp. 162-178

Session #9:Nov. 14: **Elections and Referendums:**

Required Reading: Michael Gallagher, "*Elections and Referendums*" pp. 181-195

Culture, Citizens, States and Democracy

Session #10: Nov.21: **Social Movements:**

Required Reading: Hanspeter Kriesi, “*Social Movements*” pp. 292-308

Writing Assignment Due in Class

Session #11:Nov. 28: **Political Culture:**

Required Reading: Christian Welzel and Ron Inglehart, “*Political Culture*” pp. 311- 329

Session #12: Dec. 05: **Globalization and the Nation-State**
+ Promoting Democracy:

Required Reading: Georg Sorensen, “*Globalization and the Nation-State*” pp. 451- 465

Required Reading: Peter Burnell, “*Promoting Democracy*” pp. 467- 484

GRADING STRUCTURE:

Midterm Exam – 20%

Writing Assignment – 30%

Final Exam – 35%

Participation – 15%

ATTENDANCE IN CLASS IS CRUCIAL!!

Class attendance is extremely important for all students. POSC 230 covers a broad area of Comparative Political studies and so each class is essential for students to receive information pertaining to each week’s topics. Further, students will have ample opportunity in class to ask questions and receive clarification regarding course content. Perhaps most important of all, class discussions will be strongly encouraged in order to facilitate learning and the interchange of ideas. **The participation grade will be calculated by attendance AND participation. Simple attendance will not ensure a satisfactory participation grade.**

WRITING ASSIGNMENT:

Students will be required to submit a 8-12 page writing assignment. The object of the writing assignment is to give the student an opportunity to develop and sharpen his/her writing skills at a university level as well as research and write on an area of interest.

The assignment will require the student to develop an opening paragraph *with a thesis statement*. This introduction and thesis statement will explain and outline the topic of the paper and the comparative method the writer wishes to employ in reaching certain conclusions.

The specific topic of the writing assignment is open to each students' choice from a proposed list. However, the assignment must be written within a recognized comparative approach. Students are especially encouraged to compare countries, themes, institutions, regimes, etc., of their choosing from the suggested list. Specific topics and issues will be distributed by the instructor.

Papers which require extensive grammatical or structural revisions will receive a grade with no comments.

THE INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CHANGE THIS OUTLINE OR ANY OF ITS CONTENTS WHEN DEEMED NECESSARY IN ORDER TO BETTER FACILITATE STUDENTS' NEEDS.
