

# Political Science 230 Winter 2011

## Introduction to Comparative Politics



Instructor: David MacDonald  
 Class: Mondays, 2:30 – 5:20 (Room A-416)  
 Office Hours: Immediately after classes.  
 Office: D-3085  
 Email: david.macdonald@ufv.ca

**Required Course Text:** Daniele Caramani, *Comparative Politics* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.) Oxford U.P., 2008.

**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: Jan. 10: Course Introduction:***

- a) Course explanation and description.
  - b) “The Comparative Method”
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***Session #2: Jan. 17: Introduction to Comparative Politics:***

**Required Reading: Text: pp. 1-22. Daniele Caramani, “*Introduction to Comparative Politics*”**

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***Session #3: Jan. 24: Theories and Methods:***

**Required Reading: Text: pp. 28-80. Klaus von Beyme, “*The Evolution of Comparative Politics*”**

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## The Historical Context

*Session #4: Jan. 31: The Nation-State:*

**Required Reading: Text: Gianfranco Poggi, “*The Nation-State*” pp. 86-104**

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*Session #5: Feb. 07: Democracies:*

**Required Reading: Text: Peter Mair, “*Democracies*” pp. 108-130**

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## Reading Week

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*Session #6: Feb. 21:*

## Midterm Exam

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*Session #7: Feb. 28: Authoritarian Regimes:*

**Required Reading: Text: Paul Brooker, “*Authoritarian Regimes*” pp. 133-154**

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## Structures and Institutions

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

**Required Reading: Text: Alec Stone Sweet, “*Constitutions and Judicial Power*” pp. 217-238**

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

**Required Reading: Text: Michael Gallagher, “*Elections and Referendums*” pp. 240-260**

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## Culture, Citizens, States and Democracy:

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

**Required Reading:** Hanspeter Kriesi, “*Social Movements*” pp. 392-415

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### *Writing Assignment Due in Class*

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

**Required Reading: Text:** Svante Ersson and Jan-Erik Lane, “*Political Culture*” pp. 419-471

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*Session #12: April 04:* **Political Participation:**

**Required Reading:** Herbert Kitschelt and Philipp Rehm, “*Political Participation*” pp. 445-491

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*Session #13: April 11:* **Globalization and the Nation-State + Promoting Democracy:**

**Required Reading:** Georg Sorensen, “*Globalization and the Nation-State*” pp. 602-622

**Required Reading:** Peter Burnell, “*Promoting Democracy*” pp. 625-649

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### 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 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 with 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.

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

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