In this General Education course, we study the fundamentals of politics. Understanding politics is a sine qua non of leading a good life, for politics affects our quotidian – everyday life. As such, political science is a “master science,” in the words of Aristotle, on which all arenas of human activity depend, and from which all other practical sciences take their cue. Broadly speaking, studying politics necessarily involves comparison – for example, comparing countries (China and the United States), systems (democracy and dictatorship; universal and selective social welfare), ideologies (conservatism, liberalism, and socialism), and time periods (the 19th century and 20th century; the Cold War era and post-Cold War era). Hence, comparative politics is the most important subfield in political science, which requires critical thinking and rigorous analytical skills. We will learn why we compare, what to compare, and how to compare.

The main purpose of this course is to equip students with solid understanding of ‘big issues’ in politics around the world. As an introductory course, this class has three major goals: 1) to understand various theories, approaches, and empirics widely studied in the comparative study of politics, 2) to provide an analytical and comparative framework to understand ‘big issues’ in the world, and 3) to provide a broad perspective about the world we live in and the ability to relate some of our own interests to existing concerns of other scholars. The course is organized around questions that reflect both interesting phenomena and puzzles that call for explanations. We will examine some of the answers to these questions that have been proposed on the basis of comparative research. In this way, we will cover the areas in which research in political science is the most active and has contributed most significantly to the production of knowledge. To do so, this course is divided into four parts.

The first part entitled “Power, Ideology, and the Capital-Nation-State” constitutes the foundations of comparative politics. We will conceptualize politics, discuss competing ideologies, and understand the modern nation-state: its meaning and the historical formation. Some ontological and methodological issues will be discussed between the first and second parts. The second part “Democracies, Dictatorships, and People” will deal with the emergence and demise of political regimes (democracies and dictatorships), by focusing on various features of democratization, and by comparing top-down (elite-driven) and bottom-up (mass-driven) processes of democratic transitions. In the third part “Democratic Institutional Design” we will discuss the institutional design under democracy, by comparing different electoral rules (majoritarian and proportional), executive-legislative relationships (parliamentary and presidential), and different party systems (two-party and multiparty). The final part “Socioeconomic Policies under Globalization” will investigate why and how socioeconomic policies differ across countries and their divergent consequences. Attention should be paid to varieties of welfare capitalism. Economic “miracles” and “disasters” will be examined as well. We will also study the impacts of globalization on domestic politics.
READING

Each student is expected to read (before class) all the assigned readings for each session. The required readings are based on two sources. The first source is the course textbook. The textbook provides a background to understand topics and lectures:


The second source is readings from journal articles to book chapters. These readings are also essential to understanding lectures. These readings are posted as pdf files on Moodle. Please make sure that all of you have a LSU email account so that you have an access to Moodle through your PAWS desktop.

REQUIREMENTS

Basically, classes will involve lectures of the reading material assigned for each session. But, I will introduce and explain some concepts, issues and theories that are not in the readings, so attendance is crucial. This means that a significant amount of material on the examinations will come from class lectures presenting information not discussed directly in the textbook and other readings. Participation from students is important and will count toward the final grade. At the end of each week, I will distribute memos (posted on Moodle) that contain important points of my lectures. N.B. Some materials and lectures might be difficult, so ask questions whenever necessary. In addition, feel free to stop my lecture and ask, to e-mail me, and to stop by my office. The general philosophy is that students who are eager to learn should be rewarded.

Final grades are based on three in-class examinations (two midterm and one final tests) and attendance/participation for a total of 100 points. The exams constitute two parts. The first part is a set of “identification” questions that ask important concepts, events, and proper names; students should identify what they are in one or two sentences. The second part is a set of “essay questions” that ask to explain some political phenomena and competing theories; students’ answers should be in four to six sentences.

1) First mid-term examination (25%) – Thursday, September 24, 10:30 – 11:50 am
2) Second mid-term examination (25%) – Tuesday, October 27, 10:30 – 11:50 am
3) Final examination (30%) – Monday, December 7, 10:00 – noon
4) Attendance and participation (20%)

GRADING SCALE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>100 ~ 97</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89 ~ 87</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>69 ~ 67</td>
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<td>86 ~ 83</td>
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<td>76 ~ 73</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>72 ~ 70</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>62 ~ 60</td>
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IMPORTANT DATES – NO CLASS

- Conference: October 8, Thursday – No class
- Fall Break: October 29, Thursday – No class
- Thanksgiving: November 26, Thursday – No class
# SCHEDULE/OUTLINE OF TOPICS

(subject to change)

## I. POWER, IDEOLOGY, AND THE CAPITAL-NATION-STATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aug.</td>
<td>25-27</td>
<td>Introduction and Preliminaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sept.</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>What Is Politics?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sept.</td>
<td>8-10</td>
<td>What Do We Believe, and Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>Sept.</td>
<td>15-17-22</td>
<td>Where Does the State Come from, and Where Will It Go?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sept.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>First Midterm Examination, 10:00 – 11:50 am</td>
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## INTERMEZZO

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sept/Oct</td>
<td>29-1</td>
<td>Three Research Traditions and Methods of Comparison</td>
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</table>

## II. DEMOCRACIES, DICTATORSHIPS, AND PEOPLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Month</th>
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<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Oct.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>What Is Democracy? Which Countries Are Democratic?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Oct.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Conference – No Class Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Oct.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Does Culture Matter for Democracy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Oct.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Second Midterm Examination, 10:00 – 11:50 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Oct.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Fall Break – No Class Meeting</td>
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## III. DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>How Are the Elections Organized?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-2</td>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>Where Do Parties Come from? Are They Indispensable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-3</td>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>12-17</td>
<td>How Are Governments Formed in a Parliamentary Democracy?</td>
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## IV. SOCIOECONOMIC POLICIES UNDER GLOBALIZATION

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13-4</td>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>19-24</td>
<td>What Do Governments Do for Their People?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Thanksgiving – No Class Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Why Are There “Miracles” and “Disasters”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Is Globalization Inevitable? Conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Final Examination, 10:00 am – noon</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
READING ASSIGNMENTS AND SPECIFIC TOPICS
(subject to change)

PART I: POWER, IDEOLOGY, AND THE CAPITAL-NATION-STATE

Week 1 (08/25, 08/27) Preliminaries

No require reading.

Week 2 (09/01, 09/03) What Is Politics?

Shively, Chapter 1.

Week 3 (09/08, 09/10) What Do We Believe, and Why?

Shively, Chapter 2.

Week 4-5 (09/15, 09/17, 09/22) Where Does the State Come from, and Where Will It Go?
Politics, the modern nation-state. Importance of war and capitalism in the formation of the state. Why Europe? Capital-nation-state (market-society-state) and three blueprints. Future of the state.

Shively, Chapter 3.


Week 5 (09/24) First Midterm Examination
10:30 – 11:50 am in our classroom.

INTERMEZZO

Week 6 (09/29, 10/01) Three Research Traditions and Methods of Comparison

Shively, Appendix, and the section on “Political Science” in Chapter 1.

PART II: DEMOCRACIES, DICTATORSHIPS, AND PEOPLE

Week 7 (10/06)  What Is Democracy? Which Countries Are Democratic?

Shively, Chapter 7.


Week 7 (10/08)  Conference
No class meeting.

Week 8-9 (10/13, 10/15, 10/20)  Why and How Do Democracies Emerge and Endure?

Shively, Chapter 7 (continue) and Chapter 13.


Week 9 (10/22)  Does Culture Matter for Democracy?
Political socialization. Social capital. Is culture a dependent variable or independent variable? “Civic culture.” Three views. Culture as a religiosity vs. distribution of answers vs. epiphenomenon.

Shively, Chapter 8.

Week 10 (10/27)  Second Midterm Examination
10:30 – 11:50 am in our classroom.

Week 10 (10/29)  Fall Break
No class meeting.

PART III: DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN

Week 11 (11/03)  How Are the Elections Organized?

Shively, Chapter 9 and Chapter 10.

Week 11-12 (11/05, 11/10)  Where Do Parties Come from? Are They Indispensable?
Shively, Chapter 11 and Chapter 12.

**Week 12-13 (11/12, 11/17) How Are Governments Formed in a Democracy?**

Shively, Chapter 14 and Chapter 15.

**PART IV. SOCIOECONOMIC POLICIES UNDER GLOBALIZATION**

**Week 13-14 (11/19, 11/24) What Do Governments Do for Their People?**

Shively, Chapter 4.


**Week 14 (11/26) Thanksgiving Holiday**
No class meeting.

**Week 15 (12/01) Why Are There “Miracles” and “Disasters”?**

Shively, Chapter 5.


**Week 15 (12/03) Is Globalization Inevitable? Conclusion**

Shively, Chapter 5 and Chapter 18.

**Week 16 (12/07) Final Examination**
10:00 – noon in our classroom.