INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

POLI 2053, Section 2  
Fall 2013

Course instructor: Michael Toje  
Contact: mtoje1@lsu.edu

Course location: Tureaud 210  
Course time: TR, 12:00-1:20

Office: Stubbs 334  
Hours: TR, 1:20 pm – 2:00 pm

Course Description & Objectives
Politics does not exist in a vacuum. Countries have certain institutions and practices for a reason, and the class aims to draw a deeper understanding of the historical, cultural, and political background that shape contemporary politics.

This course, then, will introduce students to concepts, ideas, and theories in the field of comparative politics, and their application and practice in the real world. The class consists of two parts: the first part explores abstract themes and generalizable topics within the field. The second part comprises case studies of five or six countries, demonstrating how to apply the concepts, ideas and theories learned in the first part.

Required Textbook:

ISBN: 9780073526317

Course Requirements
The following several components make up the final grade:
• Participation – Participating in class lectures, discussions, and activities in an active and constructive manner is part of this class. Earning participation points in a class you are not regularly attending will be difficult. Participation will make up 10% of your overall score.
• Final – The textbook has many case studies in it, but it is by no means exhaustive. Each student will write a chapter of a country not listed in the textbook. While the chapters in the text can run from four to 50 pages, this assignment will be approximately 8-10 pages. More details on the final paper will follow Exam I. This project will be worth 15% of your overall grade.
• Exams – Two in-class exams will be given during the course. Each exam will be worth 15% of your overall score.
• Final Exam – The course will have a comprehensive final exam. The final exam will be worth 30% of your overall grade.

Assignment Policy
The instructor reserves the right to change the listed assignments. Students will receive a revised syllabus if the listing of course assignments changes.

Attendance Policy
Class attendance is the responsibility of the student, and the student is expected to attend all classes. A student who finds it necessary to miss class assumes responsibility for making up
examinations, obtaining lecture notes, and otherwise compensating for what the student may have missed from class. The instructor will determine the validity of a student’s reason(s) for any absences and will assist those students who have valid reasons and documentation.

Valid documentable reasons for absences include:

1. Illness
2. Serious family emergency
3. Special curricular requirements such as judging trips or field trips
4. Court-imposed legal obligations such as subpoenas or jury duty
5. Military obligations
6. Serious weather conditions
7. Religious observances

**Disability Code**
The Office of Disability Services assists students in identifying and developing accommodations and services to help overcome barriers to the achievement of personal and academic goals. Services are available for students with temporary or permanent disabilities. Accommodations and services are based on the individual student’s disability-based need. Students must provide current documentation of their disabilities. Students should contact the office early to arrange the necessary accommodations. ~ LSU General Catalog

**Late Work**
Please avoid turning in late work. I realize life happens and that you may not always be able to submit your work on time. I will accept one unexcused late assignment at a deduction of 10% for each day it is late. Any additional unexcused late assignments will receive a deduction of 20% for each day they are late. An assignment is late when an assignment is not available, or incomplete, on the date it is due.

**Academic Integrity**
The following is the Louisiana State University’s official statement on academic integrity: “Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give an unfair academic advantage to the student...” (Sec. 5.1, C. of the LSU Code of Student Conduct).

For more specific information see the following website:
http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs/AI.htm

**Plagiarism and Citation Method**
As a student at LSU, your responsibility is to refrain from plagiarizing another’s academic property. To this end, you must utilize an appropriate citation method for all coursework. Ignorance of a citation method is no excuse for academic misconduct. One tool available to assist you in correct citations is the references function in Microsoft Word. This program automatically formats the information you input according to the citation method you select for the document. This program also has the ability to generate a reference or works cited page for the information...
you input. The version of Microsoft Word with these added features is available in most
University computer labs.

**Expectations of Written Work**
All papers are to be college-level papers. This means that they are to be typed, spell-checked and
edited, well written with a logical flow of thought, and correctly cited.

**Group Work and Unauthorized Assistance**
Each student must complete all work without assistance from a classmate or group, unless stated
explicitly by the instructor. Thus can the instructor can assess individual performance on each
assignment. If the students have a group- or partner-based project assigned, each student may
still have individual work to complete. Read the syllabus and assignment directions carefully.
When in doubt, e-mail the instructor or ask during class. Seeking clarification is the sole
responsibility of the student. Assuming group or partner based work is acceptable without
permission constitutes a violation of the LSU Code of Student Conduct.

**Special notice**
Please do not use laptops and mobile devices (iPads, cellphones, etc.) during class time. The only
exception to this is by exemption from the Office of Disability Services. I am well aware of the
benefits and the drawbacks of laptops in class, and I have come to the conclusion that they are
not worth the trouble they cause in the classroom.

**Important Semester Dates**
Sep 4 (Wednesday) – Final date for dropping courses without receiving a grade of “W”
Sep 5 (Thursday) – Final date for adding courses for credit and making section changes
Nov 7 (Thursday) – Fall holiday begins
Nov 27 (Wednesday) – Thanksgiving holiday
Dec 4-8 (Wednesday – Sunday) – Concentrated Study Period
Dec 9-14 (Monday – Saturday) – Final Exam Week

**Course Schedule**

**Week 1: Aug 27-29**
Chapters 1-2

Intro to Comparative
- What is comparative politics?
- What is a state? Nation?
- Power, order, justice, and legitimacy

**Week 2: Sep 3-5**
Chapter 3

The science of politics
- Methods of comparative politics
- Hypothesis testing
(This week – final day for adding or dropping courses)

**Week 3: Sep 10-12**
Chapter 13

Ideology
- Nationalism
- Liberalism
- Conservatism, socialism, and fascism
- Islamism?

**Week 4: Sep 10-12**
Political culture
Chapter 12
- Identity and socialization
- Cleavages and consociation
- Contentious politics

Week 5: Sep 24-26
Chapter 14
Political economy
- Capitalism and socialism
- Corporatism and social democracy
- Development
- Capitalisms?

Week 6: Oct 1-3
Chapter 7
Democracies
- Presidential and Parliamentary
- Majoritarian and PR
- Emergence and consolidation
- What makes a democracy a democracy?

Week 7: Oct 8-10
See Moodle for readings
Non-democracies
- Types
- Stability
- Transition
- Hybrid Regimes

Week 8: Oct 15-17
No assigned readings
Catch-up, midterm review, midterm

Week 9: Oct 22-24
Chapter 6
Globalism and the 21st century
- The new nationalisms and supranationalism
- Unipolarity and multipolarity
- G8, G20, and BRICS

Week 10: Oct 29-31
Chapter 16
UK

Week 11: Nov 5-7
Chapter 17
France
(no class on Thursday – enjoy the fall break!)

Week 12: Nov 12-14
Chapter 18
Germany

Week 13: Nov 19-21
Chapter 20
Russia

Week 14: Nov 26-28
Chapter 21
China
(no class on Thursday – happy Thanksgiving!)

Week 15: Dec 3-5
Iran

Week 16: Dec 10-12
Final exam, papers due