POLITICAL SCIENCE 2053
Introduction to Comparative Politics
Fall 2012
Wednesday 5:00-8:00/Tureaud 228

Instructor: Dr. Harry Mokeba
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Office Hours: 9:30-10:30 MWF
11:30-12:30 MWF
3:00-5:00 MW

OBJECTIVE: The course is designed to provide students with the tools necessary for examining politics across the countries of the world. In particular, we will provide a foundation for understanding the concepts on which political systems operate, the forces that account for change and continuity and the basis for comparing political performance in the first, second and third worlds. It is expected that by the end of the semester, students must have developed the analytical skills for explaining the differences and similarities existing in the select countries discussed in class. Poli 2053 is a general education course designed to improve broad knowledge, stimulate life-long learning and develop critical understanding of the political phenomena.

The University strives toward Learning Competency and the fulfillment of the following objectives:
- Ability to think, describe, interpret and analyze the world
- Facility to make sense of the world that impact on our own local system
- The need to gain critical perspectives of the governments and institutions across various political systems

TEXTBOOK: There is one major text required for this course:

G. Bingham Powell: Comparative Politics Today

You are also required to read assigned articles from The New York Times for the multiple choice tests and the two-country paper.

EXAMS and PAPERS: As part of the general education requirement (all students of 2053) will do standard multiple choice questions during the mid-term and final exams. A major essay question will also be administered to all sections of 2053. Much of the content of the mid-term and final exam (essays and definitions) come from the lectures. You will do a brief comparative survey of recent political developments in any two countries of your choice. For this 3-5 page paper, do not select any of the ten countries covered in the lectures.

GRADES:  
- Class Participation 10 pts
- Early Take-Home Exam 10 pts (Wed. Sept. 5)
- Mid-Term Exam (In-Class) 20 pts (Wed. Oct. 10)
LECTURE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Aug. 22  Course Introduction: The Study of Politics
         The Value of Comparative Politics
         Comparative Methods and Problems
         Powell, Chapters 1, 2

Aug. 29  Characteristics of Political Systems:
         Defined by their Context
         Driven by Constitutions and Ideologies
         Sustained by their Economics
         Powell, Chapters 3, 4

Sept. 5  Institutional Approach
         Legislature, Executive, Judiciary
         Interest Groups, Political Parties and Individuals
         Powell, Chapters 5, 6, 7

Sept. 5  Return Take-Home Exam

Sept. 12 Politics in Capitalist Democracies: Historical Basis and Contemporary Attributes
          Great Britain
          Powell, Chapter 8

Sept. 19 Politics in Capitalist Democracies: Historical Basis and Contemporary Attributes
          France
          Powell, Chapter 9

Sept. 26 Politics in Capitalist Democracies: Historical Basis and Contemporary Attributes
          Germany and Japan
          Powell, Chapters 10, 11
Oct. 3  Review Session

Oct. 10  Mid-Term Exam (In-Class) and NYT Multiple Choice Test

Oct. 17  Overview of Communism and the Third World

Oct. 17  Transition from Communism: Historical Basis and Contemporary Attributes
         Russia
         Powell, Chapter 12

Oct. 24  Transition from Communism: Historical Basis and Contemporary Attributes
         China
         Powell, Chapter 13

Oct. 31  Developing Countries: Historical Basis and Contemporary Attributes
         India
         Powell, Chapter 17

Nov. 7   Developing Countries: Historical Basis and Contemporary Attributes
         Mexico
         Powell, Chapter 14

Nov. 14  Developing Countries: Historical Basis and Contemporary Attributes
         Iran/Nigeria
         Powell, Chapters 16, 18

Nov. 14  Two-Country Survey of Recent Events Due

Nov. 28  NYT Multiple Choice Test/Review Session/Return Papers and Pre-Final Grades/Course Evaluation

Dec. 5   Final Exam 8:00pm-10:00pm