Introduction to comparative politics
POLI 2053

Professor Xi Chen
Office: 206 Stubbs Hall
Phone: 225-578-2573
Email: xchen@lsu.edu

Spring, 2009
Tuesday 5:10- 8:00PM
Office Hours:
Monday 2:00- 4:00 PM

This course provides an introduction to the concepts, theories, and methods of comparative politics illustrated with real-world examples. It is divided into six modules. In each module we will explore a theme in comparative politics, and also discuss a country as a case to illustrate and test the theories. The main goal of this course is to help students to acquire the basic tools of comparative politics to analyze some important political questions across a variety of national contexts: How are citizens linked to their political system? Why do authoritarian states democratize? When can ordinary people engage in collective action to advance their interests? How do people develop their national or other ethnic identities? What political institutions work better than others?

It is important to follow current events and become familiar with how politics work in particular countries. Students are encouraged to make a habit of reading at least one newspaper or magazine with extensive international coverage, such as The New York Times and The Economist.

Course Requirements

Course grades will be determined in the following manner:

Class participation 10%
Two quizzes 10%
Midterm 20%
Final 30%
10-12 page paper 30%

Class members are required to write a research paper on one of the topics covered in the course. You may discuss a single country or compare two or more countries. The paper should go beyond description, and will be graded primarily based on the quality of analysis. A preliminary submission of no more than two pages, identifying the country or event, including a short annotated bibliography and a tentative question to be addressed, will be due on March 17. The final version of the paper should be double-spaced with standard 1” margins and typed in 12-point Times New Roman font. It is due on April 28 in class. Work turned in after the deadline without adequate justification will be marked down half a letter grade for each day it is late.

The midterm examination will be held in class on March 3. The final examination will be of the take-home variety. The exam will be handed out in class on April 28, and will be
due by 5 p. m. on May 5. The midterm examination will cover the first half of the course, and the final examination the second half. Examinations will draw on both class sessions and required readings.

Readings


Introduction (January 13)
CP, Chapters 1-2

*Optional:*
Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I, Parts 1-2; Book III, Parts 1-7

Module 1:
*Theme: The State and Regime Types (January 20)*

Optional:

**Case: Iran (January 27)**
CP, Chapter 11

Optional:

**Module 2:**
**Theme: Democratization (February 3)**

Optional:

**Case: Russia (February 10)**
CP, Chapter 7

Optional:
Module 3:
**Theme: Political Representation (February 17)**

Optional:

Midterm Exam (March 3)

**Case: Mexico (March 10)**
CP, Chapter 9

Optional:
Fox, Jonathan, "The Difficult Transition from Clientelism to Citizenship," *World Politics* 46/2 (Jan 94): pp. 151-184

Module 4:
**Theme: Social Movements and Revolutions (March 17)**

Optional:
Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald eds. Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996): Intro and Chapters 2, 3, 7
Theda Skocpol, States and Social Revolutions (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979): 3-32

Case: China (March 24)
CP, Chapter 8

Optional:
Shi, Tianjian, Political Participation in Beijing (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997): Chapter 1

Module 5:
Theme: Nationalism and Ethnic Politics (March 31)

Optional:
Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities (1993): Chapters 1, 10

Case: Nigeria (April 14)
CP, Chapter 14

Optional:
Module 6:
Theme: Political Institutions (April 21)

Optional:
Thomas Baylis, “Presidents versus Prime Minister,” World Politics 48 (1996): 297-323

Case: India (April 28)
CP, Chapter 10

Optional: