Introduction to Comparative Politics
Political Science 2053

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Office Hours: 1-2:30 M, 10:30-12 W, or by appointment

Spring 2012
MWF 11:40-12:30
112 Tureaud

Course Description:

This course is designed to give students an overview of the political institutions and political cultures of several countries that have a prominent role in world affairs. We will examine the modern histories of each country, and compare the political institutions so that we may better understand the politics and political cultures of the countries we examine. In addition, we will attempt to write and adopt a constitution for a fledgling democracy applying the concepts we have learned from throughout the course. This course is an introductory-level course, and therefore no prior political science courses are necessary to succeed in this course.

Political Science 2053 is a general education course at LSU, which is designed to improve broad knowledge, stimulate life-long learning, and develop critical understanding of political phenomena.

“He who knows one country knows none.”
-Freidrich Muller

“What knows he of England who only England knows?”
-Rudyard Kipling

Course Requirements:

- **Mid-term Exam (March 10, 2012)** - The mid-term will consist of 30 Multiple Choice Questions and 3 short answer responses that will be completed in-class. In addition, students will be given a choice of two prompts for an out-of-class essay which will be due on the day of the in-class portion of the exam. (20 percent of final grade)

- **Final Exam (May 4, 2012)** (30% of final grade)

- **Participation** - This consists of out of class reaction papers, reading quizzes, and meaningful contribution to classroom discussions. Every week, I will send you a news article or maybe 2 that you will type up a response paper to (roughly 1 page in length). You are not to summarize the article(s), it is my expectation that you will analyze the
article and its relation to the course material. **You must be in class to turn in a paper, and I will randomly collect them.** (20% of final grade)

- **Iraq Constitution Project**- Students will be divided into groups, each of which represents a different faction of Iraqi society or a global or regional power who has a vested interest in Iraqi politics. Each group will complete a constitution they would like the Iraqis to adopt in order to promote a stable and democratic Iraq. Additionally, each group will negotiate with students from the other groups in order to build a coalition large enough to adopt a single Iraqi Constitution. (15% of final grade)

- **Two Country Paper**- Students will select any two countries we cover in this course, and write a paper comparing their respective histories, political institutions, parties, and cultures. Due March 26th. (15% of the final grade)

**Required Text:**

Hauss, Charles  *Comparative Politics: Domestic Responses to Global Challenges*  (7th Edition)

**Special Needs:**

Any student with a learning disability should make me aware of it so I that I may accommodate your situation appropriately and in accordance with LSU policy. Additionally, athletes and club members who will miss class and/or deadlines due to their involvement in extracurricular activities are required to know and follow school policy and procedures for making up the work.

**Academic Honesty:**

Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated, and all matters will be automatically referred to judicial affairs. All students are expected to know and abide by LSU policy regarding plagiarism. [http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs/Plagiarism.htm](http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs/Plagiarism.htm)

**Additional Rules and Procedures:**

- All cell phones and any other mobile electronic devices are to be turned off and put away for the duration of all of our class periods. Failure to comply with this instruction will have a negative impact on your participation grade.
- **Students are expected to attend all class sessions and in a punctual manner.** There is a strong correlation between success in my classes and excellent attendance.
- All reading assignments are due on the day they are mentioned in the syllabus. Students are expected to report to each class fully prepared, and periodic un-announced reading
quizzes and response essays will be assigned to ensure that students are up to date with the course material.

- Laptops are not to be used in this class. While I am fully aware of the benefits that laptops can have in facilitating a student’s education, it has been my experience that more often than not, students are surfing the web rather than actively engaging in classroom material. This content of this course requires your full attention, and I believe that we will all get more from this course without these distractions.

Course Outline:

January 18:
Class Introduction

January 20
Core concepts in Comparative Politics, types of states (Read Chapter 1)

January 23
Types of Democracies (Read selections from Arend Lijphart’s Patterns of Democracy)

January 25
Cleavages and Party Systems (Read Chapter 2)

January 27
American Political Institutions (Read Chapter 3)

January 30
American Political Culture and Parties

February 1
British History/Institutions (Read Chapter 4)

February 3
British Political Culture and Parties

February 6
French History (Read Chapter 5)

February 8
French Political Institutions

February 10
French Political Parties

February 13

February 15
German History Day (Read Selection from Jackson Spielvogel’s Hitler and NAZI Germany)
February 17
German Political Institutions (Read Chapter 6)

February 20
Mardi Gras (no class)

February 22
Mardi Gras (no class)

February 24
German Political Parties

February 27
German Political Culture

February 29
The Origin of the European Union (Read Chapter 7)

March 2
The Institutions of the European Union

March 5
Review for Mid-Term Exam

March 7
Mid-Term Exam

March 9
The Rise of the Soviet Union (Read Chapter 8)

March 12
The Fall of the Soviet Union

March 14
Contemporary Russian Institutions and Parties (Read Chapter 9)

March 16
Russian Political Culture and Society

March 19
Chinese History and Institutions (Read Chapter 10)

March 21
Chinese Political Culture

March 23
The Less Developed Countries Introduction (Read Chapter 11)
March 26
Introduction to the Modern Middle East
Two Country Paper Due

March 28
Iranian History (Read Chapter 13)

March 30
Iranian State

April 2
Iranian Political Culture

April 4
Iraqi History (Read Chapter 14)

April 6, April 9, April 11, April 13
Spring Break

April 16
Contemporary Iraqi State

April 18
Guest Lecture: Rebuilding Post-War Iraq

April 20
Constitution Presentations (All groups’ drafts are due)

April 23
Constitution Presentations

April 25
Constitutions Negotiations

April 27
Final Vote

April 30
In-Class Discussion

May 2
Review for Final Exam

May 4
Final Exam