

**Political Science 229
Comparative Politics
SUNY New Paltz**

MWR 1:40-2:50
Room: Humanities 216
Fall 2008

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Office Hours: M,R 9:00-10:30 W 3-4 or by appointment
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Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the study of comparative politics. We explore how political systems can be compared and what the differences between countries are in the way in which politics is conducted. Since there has been an increase in the number of democratic countries around the world, we will explore what democracy means based on how it is carried out by states today as well as why some countries are more democratic than others. We study major schools of thought about political economy, political institutions, political culture and effects of international factors for possible explanations of variations in levels of democracy in different parts of the world. We read comparative work looking across different countries and case studies of single countries (Britain, Turkey, China, Mexico, South Africa) to try to assess which theories of democratization better explain the level of democratization in these countries.

Course Requirements

Attendance and Class Activities

You are required to attend class regularly. Unless excused in advance or you have proof of emergency, you may not miss more than 3 class periods without penalty. Do not come to class late. If you walk in late, you are responsible for getting the instructor to mark you present after class. 3 late arrivals equal an absence up to two absences, after the 6th lateness all late arrivals are counted as absent.

Participation is part of your grade in this course. Come to class prepared to participate. I would like our discussions to be focused on the relevant topic, but the expression of varying viewpoints is encouraged. Some of these discussions will cover issues upon which we may not all agree. While it is expected that you will develop your own views, it is important that everyone be willing to hear alternative viewpoints and that we treat one another with respect regardless of whether we agree or disagree.

Readings (Available at the University Bookstore or Eres)

- 1) Dahl, Robert. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*, 1971, Yale University Press
- 2) Lijphart, Ardend. *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, 1999, Yale University Press.

3) Sorensen, George, *Democracy and Democratization: Processes and Prospects in a Changing World*, Third Edition, 2007, Westview Press.

4) Shively, Phillips, *Intro to Comparative Politics*, McGraw Hill Text.

Additional Readings on Blackboard and Blackboard Eres

You must do all the readings for the week before coming to class. Additional readings that are not included in the syllabus may be assigned by the instructor.

Country Case Study Paper

Students are expected to write a paper on a country case study. These papers should be 5-6 pages in length. The paper should explain which school of thought, political economy, institutions, culture or international factors, best explains state of democracy in this country. Each student will write the paper individually with their own conclusions, but there will be a group of students writing on the same country. These groups will work together to prepare an in class presentations on the country as a group Further instructions will be provided on the paper during the semester. No late assignments are accepted unless there is a valid excuse with prior approval. The instructor will deduct one point from the paper each day it is late.

Students may choose from the following countries (if you have a group with an alternative country suggestion, I will consider this as well)

Chile
Egypt
Indonesia
Iran
Nigeria
Russia
South Korea
Venezuela

Exams

There will be three written in class exams. No make up exams are given unless you get an approval from the instructor prior to the exam with a valid excuse or bring evidence of a valid excuse after the exam such as a doctor's note.

The instructor will post relevant information for the course on blackboard. You are required to use blackboard and thus must obtain an email account. More information will be distributed in class.

Grading Policy

Mid Term Exam 1	20%
Mid Term Exam 2	20%
Final Exam	25%
Paper	20%
Presentation	5%
Attendance and Participation	10%
Total	100%

WARNING!!!

You are responsible for all of the policies explained in this syllabus. Ignorance of these policies is not an acceptable excuse for failing to meet the course requirements. You are encouraged to read over this syllabus very carefully and refer to it regularly throughout the course. On rare occasion, changes in policy which supersede the syllabus may be announced in class. You are responsible for knowing any updated policies regardless of whether you were in attendance when new policies were announced.

Note: It is the policy of SUNY New Paltz to provide reasonable accommodation for qualified individuals with disabilities. Students in need should contact the Disability Resource Center in room 205 of the Student Union Building or phone (845) 257-3020 for more information.

Note: Students should be aware of and adhere to all college academic integrity policies in regard to cheating, forgery, and plagiarism.

Note: If questions arise about class cancellations or delays due to snow or other conditions call 257-INFO.

Course Outline

WHAT DO WE COMPARE? HOW COUNTRIES VARY? WHY DO THOSE DIFFERENCES MATTER?

Aug 25 What is Comparative Politics? Why and how to we compare?
Shively Introduction

Aug 27 What is a state?
Shively Chapter 2

Aug 28 What is democracy?
Sorensen Chapter 1,
Dahl Chapter 1

Sep 3 What is democracy (continued)
Dahl Chapter 2

POLITICAL ECONOMY

Sept 4 Origins of democracy: Is capitalism the answer?
Marx Communist Manifesto (ERES)
Shively Britain Chapter (30-50)

Sep 8 Origins of democracy: Is capitalism the answer?
Moore 3-39 (ERES) Capitalism and British Democracy

Sep 10 Modernization Theory and Democracy
Dahl 3-4

Sept 11 Equality and Democracy
Dahl 5-6

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

Sept 15 British Democratic Institutions
Shively, Decision making in the state (75-85)

Sept 17 Comparing Institutions: Are presidents same as prime ministers?
Lijphart Chapter 7

Sept 18 Perils of Presidentialism
Juan Linz Journal of Democracy (ERES)

Sept 22 Legislatures
Lijphart Ch. 11

Sept 24 Elections and Party Systems
Lijphart Ch. 5,
Optional (ERES): Downs, Anthony An Economic Theory of Democracy 22-31 and 114-41

Sept 25 Elections and Party Systems
Lijphart Ch. 8

Oct 1 Quality of Democracy: Consensus vs. Majoritarian model
Lijphart Ch. 16

Oct 2 Review

Oct 6 Exam 1

Oct 8 Library Day for research paper

POLITICAL CULTURE

Oct 13 Does culture matter for democracy?
Civic Culture Almond, Verba (1-32) (ERES)

Oct 15 Does culture matter for democracy?
Civic Culture continued

Oct 16 How would we measure the impact of civic culture?
Putnam, Making Democracy Work Chapters 1-4 (ERES)

Oct 20 Civic Culture continued:
Bowling Alone (ERES)
America's Civic Health 06 (BB)
Survey Summary of College Trends 2005 (BB)

Oct 22 Comparative Study of US Political Party Positions with other countries' parties
(Assignment to be distributed)

Oct 23 Comparative Study of US Political Party Positions with other countries' parties
(Assignment to be distributed)

Oct 27 In class meeting with groups for presentations

POLITICAL ECONOMY, INSTITUTIONS OR CULTURE?

CASE STUDIES IN DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE THIRD WAVE

Oct 29 Third Wave: Transition to Democracy and Consolidation of democracy
Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 in Sorensen

NOVEMBER 4: ELECTION DAY DON'T FORGET TO VOTE.

Oct 30 Review

Nov 3 Exam 2

Nov 5 Consolidation of Democracy? Case of Turkey
Andrew Mango, Testing Time (ERES)

Nov 6 Consolidation of Democracy? Case of Turkey

Nov 10 Consolidation of Democracy? Case of Mexico
Roderic A. Camp, Mexico's Democratic Transformation in Shively (99-140)

Nov 12 Consolidation of Democracy? Case of Mexico (Cont.)

INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCES IN EXPLANATIONS

Nov 13 What is the role of international forces on democratization?
Chapter 4 Sorensen

Nov 17 Role of International Community in Democratization
Pierre Du Toit, South Africa after Ten Years of Democracy in Shively book (217-270)

Nov 19 Persistent Authoritarianism: Is there hope for democracy in China?
Shively, Non Democratic Governance (85-89)
Marc Blecher, China From State Socialist to Capitalist Iconoclast in Shively (143-214)

Nov 20 Finish reading China in Shively

Nov 24 Papers due, day of catch up and discussion on papers.

Dec 1 Student Presentations

Dec 3 Student Presentations

Dec 4 Student Presentations

Dec 8 What should Democracy Mean Today? What is the future of democracy and democratization?

Conclusion Sorensen

Optional Reading: David Held Chapter 9-10 (ERES)

Dec 10 Final Discussion and Review

Final: YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE TO VERIFY THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS CORRECT! Thursday, 12/18/2008 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.