

Comparative Government and Politics

Political Science 211 -002 Spring 2007 T/R 8:30- 9:45 am

Instructor : Fumiko Sasaki

Classroom : WRI C 301

Email : fumiko.sasaki@unlv.edu

Office : WRI A220

Office hours : Tue / Thu 4:00-5:30

Phone : 702-895-5230

1, Course Objectives

The goal of this course is for the students to understand how and why politics and government in the world differ. The students are expected to acquire the tools to analyze, understand, criticize, and challenge the political events and phenomena in the world through the course. To achieve this goal, we must learn first what is politics, what is the government, how governments functions. Then we will examine the difference of political culture, and the institutions and functions of governments in different states. We will take up some distinguished or typical state for examination.

The study here should not be static: We will also learn why a government function as such, how it has been and will be affected by the interaction with other states. We will also examine and discuss the relevant topics in politics, economy and society in the world to deepen our understanding and to train critical thinking, decision making, problem solving, and developing new interest and ideas. .

Throughout this course, students are expected to learn what is universal and what is different among the people, and what is human nature. These learning will enable students to think about what is the best institution for America with the given condition.

2, Structure and sequences of class activities

The class consists of the following matters: lectures, discussions, 3 exams, final exam, country report.

Lectures: will be based on the textbook, but not limited to it. The topic of each class is on the following pages. Students are expected to read the relevant chapters in advance.

Discussions: I believe that Socratic dialogue (Q & A) as the best way to develop and understand the issue in question. So I will throw some questions or problems which will enable the student think about our world and our better future. Students are expected to participate actively, and not to leave any questions and issues unsolved.

Exams : will be given three times in the semester. The schedule is below. They are closed-book sit-down exam. Essay style. It will not take more than one hour.

Final exam : is due May. 10 Thu, 8:00am. It is also closed-book, sit-down exam on the issues throughout the course. Essay style. It will be one-hour exam.

Country Report : Students are assigned to study the political system -- not only political institution but also political culture, history, and social features on which the political institutions are found. I will assign each student one country at the orientation. Two students in each class report on the country they are assigned.

Today's Topic : Students are expected to pick up one article or essay from newspaper, magazine, or internet on the world politics every class. The subject and country are their choice. I will ask some students at the beginning of every class to report briefly their topic. No specific analysis is required, but opinion is. No written paper of this report is necessary.

3, Textbooks

Almond, Gabriel, et. al. Comparative Politics: Theoretical Framework,

4, Grading procedures

The grade consists of the following: Class participation (including today's topic) 20%
Exams 40%
Final 20%
Country Report 20%

5, Course policies

Attendance -- required for all classes except emergency.

Cheating -- strictly prohibited.

6, Statement for students with physical disabilities

“ Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his other abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities ”

7, Class Schedule

Week 1, Orientation / What is Social Science?

Week 2, What is Political Science?

Week 3, The World : So diverse, so complex and so dynamic. (chap. 1)

Week 4, Why we compare? / Concepts in Comparative Politics (chap. 2)

Week 5, Catch-up / Exam

Week 6, Political Culture and Socialization (chap. 3)

Week 7, Interest Articulation (Chap. 4)

Week 8, Catch-up / Case Studies (US)

Week 9, Exam / Case Studies (Japan)

Week 10, Interest Aggregation and Political Parties (chap. 5)

Week 11, Government and Policy Making (chap. 6)

Week 12, Catch-up / Exam

Week 13, Public Policy (chap 7)

Week 14, Catch-up

Week 15, Case Studies (China, Egypt)

Final, May 10, Thu, 8:00am WRI 301

