

PSC 211
Comparative Government and Politics
Spring 2006
MW 08:30 AM-09:45 AM
BEH 103

Professor: Michele Kuenzi
Office: B211 Wright Hall
Office Phone: 895-4693
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 2:30 -4 p.m.* and by appointment
Email: michele.kuenzi@unlv.edu

*I will not be holding office hours on Wednesday, February 1 but will be happy to make an appointment to meet at another time.

Course Description

Comparative politics is one of the broadest fields of political science. In this field, one addresses issues related to, for example, political institutions, political culture, political economy, and political development in countries across the world. Although some associate comparative politics with “the comparative method,” those conducting research in the area of comparative politics use a multitude of methodologies and pursue diverse topics. Perhaps one of the most salient and pertinent subjects in the field of comparative politics today is that of democratization. In this course, some of the basic concepts and tools employed in comparative politics will be introduced. Areas such as political institutions, political development and democratization will be highlighted. In addition, the political systems of specific countries will be examined.

Course Requirements

Required Texts and Reading:

Gregory S. Mahler. 2003. *Comparative Politics: An Institutional and Cross-National Approach*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

Georg Sorensen. 1998. *Democracy and Democratization: Processes and Prospects in a Changing World*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Reserve Readings (electronic): I will designate reserve readings with an **R** in the list of readings. The web site is: <http://ereserves.library.unlv.edu/eres/default.aspx>

Handouts

Grades

The total number of points that can be achieved in this course is 400. The points are allocated in the following way:

	Number of Points	Percentage Equivalent
Quizzes	100	25%
Mid term	120	30%
Attendance	20	5%
Participation	20	5%
Final Exam	140	35%
Totals	400	100%

In other words, quizzes count for 25% of your grade, the mid term for 30%, attendance for 5%, participation for 5%, and the final examination for 35%.

According to the point system, final grades will be assigned in the following way:

A	374 points to 400 points
A-	358 points to 373 points
B+	346 points to 357points
B	330 points to 345 points
B-	318 points to 329 points
C+	306 points to 317 points
C	290 points to 305 points
C-	278 points to 289 points
D+	266 points to 277 points
D	250 points to 265 points
D-	238 points to 249 points
F	237 points and below

Exams

The exams will consist of a mix of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. **Make-up exams will not be given** except in the case of extreme circumstances. The student must be able provide documentation that the absence is for a reason recognized by the university (e.g., illness, death in the family, observance of a religious holiday) and make arrangements with me **prior** to the scheduled exam date. If it is absolutely impossible to make prior arrangements with me, students must contact me as soon as possible about the situation. (Please notify me of any planned absences for religious holidays or official extracurricular activity for UNLV by **February 6, 2006**).

Quizzes

Four quizzes will be administered during the course. **The quizzes will be administered at the beginning of class.** Students may drop their lowest quiz score. Since the lowest quiz score can be dropped and students know in advance the dates of the quizzes, **no makeup quizzes will be administered.**

Quizzes and exams will be based on material covered during class in lectures, films or class discussions and from the required readings. I will periodically introduce current event articles or materials as they relate to the topics and concepts being covered in class. Students will, of course, be responsible for this material as well as material covered in films and guest lectures.

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Attendance, Participation and General Expectations

Attendance will be taken at each class. Students may miss up to three classes without losing attendance points. Because students are already allowed three absences during the term, three points will be subtracted from the attendance points for every absence beyond three, whatever the reason for the absence. Attending class is a very important part of the learning process. If anyone foresees the possibility of missing class more than three times, she/he should consider taking PSC 211 when she/he will be able to attend all of the classes. **Signing the attendance sheet for another student is a form of fraud**, and anyone participating in this activity will be penalized.

Participation in class discussions is strongly encouraged. Of course, participation should be constructive, and all comments should be relevant to the material being covered in class. Students must **do all of the reading!** I will call on students in class and expect their answers to reflect familiarity with the ideas and information in the readings. Respect should be shown for all other class members at all times. Inappropriate and disruptive participation/behavior will result in a drop in the student's grade. If you are habitually late, the attendance portion of your course grade will be marked down substantially.

Students are expected to attend class regularly, arrive promptly and have a collegial demeanor. Students are not allowed to sleep, read newspapers, listen to headphones, or talk to others during class. Engaging in these behaviors will result in a drop in the student's grade. **You must turn off all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices during class. Any exceptions must be cleared with me in advance. If you look at your cell phone during a quiz or exam, you will receive a zero for that quiz or exam.** Arriving late, leaving early, interrupting class with a cell phone or other electronic will also result in a drop in the student's grade.

I reserve the right to modify the course syllabus. Students will be responsible for knowing any changes made to the syllabus during class time whether they were in attendance or not. The instructor's lecture notes are not available to students; it is the student's responsibility to obtain class notes from a classmate, should class be missed.

Learning Enhancement Services (LES) is the office to provide Disability Services. If you have a documented disability that may require assistance, you will need to contact LES for coordination in your academic accommodations. LES is located in the Reynolds Student Services Complex, suite 137. The phone number is 702-895-0866, or TTD 702-895-0652, or you may visit the website at www.unlv.edu/studentlife/les.

Academic Honesty:

All breaches in academic honesty will be handled in accordance with the UNLV Student Conduct Code and Policies, which can be accessed at <http://www.unlv.edu/studentlife>.

Date	
Week 1	
Wednesday, 1/18	Class Introduction
Week 2	
Monday, 1/23	Comparative Politics: Concepts, Topics and Methods Mahler, Chapter 1 R: Collier, David. "The Comparative Method." In Ada W. Finifter (ed.). <i>Political Science: The State of the Discipline II</i> . Washington, DC: American Political Science Association.
Wednesday, 1/25	Conceptions and Measures of Democracy Sorensen, Chapter 1
Week 3	
Monday, 1/30	Please bring a scantron to class for Departmental assessment purposes. Political Institutions: Constitutions Mahler, Chapter 2
Wednesday, 2/1	Political Institutions: The Legislature Mahler, Chapter 4
Week 4	
Monday, 2/6	Parliamentary versus Presidential Regimes Mahler, Chapter 5
Wednesday, 2/8	Quiz 1 Electoral Systems R: Lijphart, Chapter 8, "Electoral Systems: Majority and Plurality Methods Versus Proportional Representation."
Week 5	
Monday, 2/13	Aggregating Interests: Political Parties and Interest Groups Mahler, Chapter 7 R: Lijphart, Chapter 5, "Party Systems: Two Party and Multiparty Systems."
Wednesday, 2/15	The Judiciary Mahler, Chapter 6
Week 6	
Monday, 2/20	President's Day Recess
Wednesday, 2/22	Catch Up Day
Week 7	
Monday, 2/27	Political Economy and Political Development Mahler, Chapter 3
Wednesday, 3/1	Quiz 2 Political Culture R: Inglehart, Ronald. 1988. "The Renaissance of Political Culture." <i>The American Political Science Review</i> 82(4): 1203-1230.
Week 8	
Monday, 3/6	Review for the Midterm Examination
Wednesday, 3/8	Midterm Examination
Week 9	
Monday, 3/13	Spring Break: No Class
Wednesday, 3/15	Spring Break: No Class
Week 10	

Monday, 3/20	R: Ethnicity and Politics Taras, Ray and Rajat Ganguly. 2002. "Ethnic Conflict on the World Stage." Chapter One in <i>Understanding Ethnic Conflict: The International Dimension</i> .
Wednesday, 3/22	Civil Society and Social Capital R: Putnam, Robert. 1995. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." <i>Journal of Democracy</i> 6(1): 65-78.
Week 11	
Monday, 3/27	Democratization Sorensen, Chapter 2
Wednesday, 3/29	Regime Consolidation and the Emerging "Democracies" Sorensen, Chapter 5 R: Zakaria, Fareed, 1997. "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy." <i>Foreign Affairs</i>
Week 12	
Monday, 4/3	Quiz 3 The Consequences of Democracy I Sorensen Chapter 3
Wednesday, 4/5	The Consequences of Democracy II Sorensen Chapter 4
Week 13	
Monday, 4/10	Case Study: France Mahler, Chapter 10
Wednesday, 4/12	Case Study: United Kingdom Mahler, Chapter 9
Week 14	
Monday, 4/17	Case Study: Japan Mahler, Chapter 12
Wednesday, 4/19	Constitution Building Exercise
Week 15	
Monday, 4/24	Case Study: Mexico Mahler, Chapter 14
Wednesday, 4/26	Quiz 4 Case Study: Nigeria Mahler, Chapter 15
Week 16	
Monday, 5/1	Case Study: Russia Mahler, Chapters 16
Wednesday, 5/3	Review for the Final Exam Please bring a scantron to class for Departmental assessment purposes.
Week 17	
Wednesday May 10 8:00 AM	FINAL EXAMINATION