Political Science 120

COMPARATIVE POLITICAL REGIMES

Fall 1998

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Office hours: 2-4, Tu, Th

Purpose

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to political science by studying the basic nature of political regimes. What is the difference between democratic and authoritarian systems of government? What variations are there within each category? How do political systems change or "develop" over time? What are the problems in making transitions from authoritarian to democratic regimes? What social, economic or cultural conditions are necessary for stable democracy? The course will examine the following topics in detail: differences between European and American systems of constitutionalism and representative democracy; the development and breakdown of communist regimes; and the search for democracy in Russia and Nigeria.

Readings and Requirements

The following texts are available for purchase in the bookstore and should also be on closed reserve in the library:

- Achebe, A MAN OF THE PEOPLE
- DeBardeleben, RUSSIAN POLITICS IN TRANSITION, 2 ed.
- Mayer, Burnett & Ogden, COMPARATIVE POLITICS, 2 ed.
- Soe, COMPARATIVE POLITICS 98/99

Other assigned readings are also on closed reserve or handed out in class. The following are on reserve:

- Eckstein & Apter, COMPARATIVE POLITICS: A READER
- Vig & Stiebold, POLITICS IN ADVANCED NATIONS

Students are expected to read assignments before class and may be called upon for discussion. There will be two short papers, a mid-term exam, and a two-hour final exam. The papers will count 30%, the mid-term 30%, the final exam 30%, and class participation 10% of the grade.

Assignments

1. INTRODUCTION: STUDYING COMPARATIVE POLITICS

A. Studying Comparative Politics

W Sep 9 Introductory meeting

F Sep 11 Comparative political theory - Mayer, chap. 1

M Sep 14 Democratic political systems - Soe, pp. 107-121

B. Development of Political Regimes
II. POLITICS IN POSTINDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACIES

A. Great Britain

M Sep 28 British political culture - Mayer, pp. 82-100
W Sep 30 British constitutional system - Mayer, 110-127

B. France

W Oct 7 French society and political traditions - Mayer, pp. 141-157

C. Germany

W Oct 14 German political traditions and political culture - Mayer, 181-198
F Oct 16 German democracy and the 1998 elections - Mayer, 198-215; Soe, 47-53, 58-64

III. TRANSITIONS FROM COMMUNISM TO DEMOCRACY: RUSSIA TO THE SOVIET UNION AND BACK

W Oct 21 Modern authoritarianism - Mayer, chap. 6
F Oct 23 Russian political culture and traditions - Mayer, pp. 242-263; DeBardeleben, 1-23
M Oct 26 The Stalinist party state - Mayer, 263-270; DeBardeleben, 24-40
W Oct 28 The failure of the Soviet system - DeBardeleben, chap. 2
F Oct 30 Gorbachev's revolution - DeBardeleben, chap. 3; Mayer, 270-282
M Nov 2 The new Russian regime - Mayer, 282-295; DeBardeleben, chaps. 4-5
W Nov 4 The descent into crisis - DeBardeleben, chaps. 6-7; Soe, 162-173
IV. COLONIALISM, AUTHORITARIANISM, AND DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA

F Nov 6 Political development in the "third world" - Mayer, chap. 9; Soe, 178-180, 215-221

*second paper due in class*

M Nov 9 Nigerian political traditions and development - Mayer, 356-370; handouts

W Nov 11 Nigerian political culture - Achebe, entire

F Nov 13 The future of democracy - Mayer, 370-78, 407-418