Political Science 120

COMPARATIVE POLITICAL REGIMES

Fall 1999

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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 99/00

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 & Stiefbold, 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

I. INTRODUCTION: STUDYING COMPARATIVE POLITICS

A. Studying Comparative Politics

M Sep 13 Introductory meeting

W Sep 15 Comparative political theory - Mayer, chap. 1

F Sep 17 Democratic political systems - Soe, pp. 105-111; Mayer, pp. 29-36

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

A. Great Britain
M Oct 4 British political culture - Mayer, pp. 82-100; Soe, 22-29

*first paper due in class*

W Oct 6 British constitutional system - Mayer, 110-127; Soe, 114-117, 18-21
F Oct 8 The Blair revolution - Mayer, pp. 100-110, 127-38; Soe, 15-17, 30-36

B. France
M Oct 11 French society and political traditions - Mayer, pp. 141-157; Soe, 62-65
W Oct 13 The current regime - Mayer, 157-180; Soe, 66-73

C. Germany
F Oct 15 German political traditions and political culture - Mayer, 181-198; Soe, 37-43
M Oct 18 No class Mid-term break
W Oct 20 German democracy and the 1998 elections - Mayer, 198-215; Soe, 44-61
F Oct 22 *Mid-term exam* - all of above

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

M Oct 25 Russian political culture and traditions - Mayer, pp. 242-263; DeBardeleben, 1-23
W Oct 27 The Stalinist party state - Mayer, 263-270; DeBardeleben, 24-40
F Oct 29 Modern authoritarianism v. totalitarianism - Mayer, chap. 6
M Nov 1 The failure of the Soviet system - DeBardeleben, chap. 2
W Nov 3 Gorbachev's revolution - DeBardeleben, chap. 3; Mayer, 270-282
F Nov 5 The new Russian regime - Mayer, 282-295; DeBardeleben, chaps. 4-5
M Nov 8 The current crisis - DeBardeleben, chaps. 6-7; Soe, 147-159

*second paper due in class*

IV. COLONIALISM, AUTHORITARIANISM, AND DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

W Nov 10 Nigerian political traditions and development - Mayer, 356-368

F Nov 12 The failure of the First and Second Republics - Mayer, 368-378; Soe, 181; handouts

M Nov 15 Nigerian political culture - Achebe, *Man of the People* (entire)

W Mar 17 The future of democracy - Mayer, 407-18; Soe, 236-240

Final exam (covers primarily Parts III and IV of the course)