POSC 120
Comparative Political Regimes
Spring 2003

The purpose of this course is to help students develop the tools necessary to engage in comparative political analysis. As such, our two main tasks this term are to learn substantive facts about a select number of political regimes and, more importantly, to learn how to systematically compare and analyze the workings of these regimes.

To accomplish these tasks, we will be studying how institutions, culture, ideas, economics, history and individuals shape states and the political lives of diverse societies. Although designed to be a broad survey course, it is only possible to introduce a limited number of country cases in ten weeks time. What you see on this syllabus is obviously a small sampling of what is out there. This particular sample has been chosen to give students a feel for the range of regimes that exist and in no way should be taken as some sort of ranking of importance. The ultimate goal of this course is to give each student the analytical tools they need to independently explore the political systems that interest them most.

Course Objectives:

Course Requirements:

- 3 Analytical Papers (together 60% of your final grade)
- Final Exam (30% of your final grade)
- Class Participation (10% of your final grade)

Papers

There will be three major paper writing assignments in this course. As outlined below, the difficulty level of these assignments is designed to increase over time. The length of the papers will vary accordingly. All papers are to be double-spaced, typed and use normal margins and font. Except in extreme cases, the details of which are to be presented to me BEFORE the due date, no late papers will be accepted. The basics of the three assignments are sketched out below. You will receive more detailed guidance on what is expected approximately three weeks before each due date.

First Writing Assignment (3-5 pages / 10%):

Each student will select ONE article from a group of five that I have put on reserve at the library. After carefully reading (and mostly likely re-reading, perhaps even re-reading etc) their particular selection, students will be asked to analyze the main argument contained within the article. In particular, students are to identify the independent, dependent and any intervening variables, how and if these variables do indeed vary, what kinds of evidence are used in making the article’s argument and how the author attempts to link this argument to larger theoretical issues.

Second Writing Assignment: (5-7 pages / 20%):

Having spent some time analyzing the development and workings of two well-established democracies, students will be asked to write a critique of a well-known study about successful democracies; Robert Putnam's Making Democracy Work. Similar to the first assignment, students will be asked to outline Putnam’s argument by identifying the main variables, indicators of variance and type of evidence used. Additionally, they will be asked to identify what they feel is a major weakness in the argument (even very good work has weaknesses). Students then will be asked to evaluate the ultimate usefulness of the book in light of the weakness they have identified.

Third Writing Assignment: (7-10 pages / 30%)

Students will be given a list of approximately five research questions. Their task is to choose one of these questions and create a research design to address it. In other words students will write about HOW they would go about answering the research puzzle, rather than answering it per se. The research design should include a working hypothesis (or set of related hypotheses) in which the independent and dependent variable are clearly stated, the logic they would use to test their hypothesis, the evidence they would gather to do this testing and how they would test their own hypothesis against existing alternative hypotheses.

Final Exam

The final exam will be an in-class exam. It will be comprehensive and based on the course readings and class discussions. You will have two and a half hours to answer id, short and long essay questions. A study guide will be distributed during the last week of the term to help structure your preparation.

Class Participation

Although I will do some lectures on core concepts, in-class discussion is an important part of this course. Students are expected to come to class having done the reading and prepared to discuss the day’s material. In addition to participating in regular class discussions, students will also be evaluated on their participation in several group exercises throughout the term and the submission of discussion questions for discussion days (see below).

Course Readings:
The following required texts are available for purchase at the bookstore:

Michael Sodaro, *Comparative Politics: A Global Introduction*
Christian Soe, *Comparative Politics 02/03*
Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*

Additionally a number of articles and excerpts from books have been put on reserve at the library. Reserve status is listed on the reading schedule below.

This class involves substantial reading. Your ability to take part in class discussions in large part will depend on your having done the assigned reading before you come to class. Throughout the course of the term extra readings occasionally will be assigned. These assignments are not meant to add substantially to your reading load but rather are intended to keep you informed about new developments taking place in the countries we are studying. Finally, students are expected to read a national or an international newspaper on a daily basis (*Financial Times, New York Times, Washington Post*). All three of these newspapers are available online and should be easily accessible from the web.

**Section I. How and What to Compare**

3/31

Introduction

4/2

Political Analysis: Why Would You Want to Call This a Science?

   Sodaro, Chapter 3

4/4

Political Analysis cont:

   Sodaro, Chapter 4

4/7

The Comparative Method

   Scarre, *Mill on Induction and Scientific Method* (handout)
   Collier, *The Comparative Method* (handout)

4/9

Research Traditions in Comparative Politics

   Sodaro, Chapter 2
   Lichbach and Zuckerman, *Research Traditions and Theory in Comparative Politics: An Introduction* (handout)

**Section II. Advanced Industrial Democracies**

4/11

Democratic Theory: The Worst Form of Government Except All Others?

   Sodaro, Chapter 6 pp. 121-128; Chapter 8 (skip hypothesis testing section)

4/14

The United Kingdom: The Oldest Parliamentary Democracy in Need of New Institutions?

   Sodaro, Chapter 16 pp. 371-397

4/16

The UK cont.

   Sodaro, Chapter 16 pp. 398-416

4/18

The UK cont.

   Discussion Day: Soe Readings, pp. 10-23
   **FIRST PAPER DUE**

4/21

Germany: A Tamed Power?

   German Election Simulation Readings (handout)
   Sodaro, Chapter 18 pp. 505-531.

4/23

Germany cont.

   Sodaro, Chapter 18 pp. 485-505 and pp. 531-536

4/25

Germany cont.

   Discussion Day: Soe Readings pp. 24-35

**Section III. Societies in Transition**

4/28

Democratization and Democratic Consolidation: Is the Third Wave Reversible?

   Samuel Huntington *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* Chapter 1 pp. 3-30 and Chapter 2 pp. 31-46. (on reserve)

4/30

Russia: Is This Democracy? A Market Economy?

   Sodaro, Chapter 21 pp. 633-668

5/2

Russia cont.

   Sodaro, Chapter 21 pp. 669-691

5/7

Russia cont.

   Discussion Day: Soe Readings, pp. 112-123
   **SECOND PAPER DUE**

Political Cinema: Prisoner of the Mountains

5/9

China: Is Democracy Possible Here? Is it Inevitable?

**https://acad.carleton.edu/curricular/POSC/classes/Posc120/S03/index.htm**
Sodaro, Chapter 226 pp. 697-722

5/12 China cont.

Sodaro, Ch. 22 pp. 722-743

5/14 China cont.

Discussion Day: Soe Readings, pp. 159-167

Section IV. Politics and Late Development

5/16 Theories of Development: Does a Non-Western Model Exist?

Daniel Yergin and Joseph Stanislaw The Commanding Heights: The Battle for the World Economy, Chapter 3 pp. 49-73 and Chapter 6 pp.139-144. (on reserve)

5/19 Nigeria

Sodaro, Chapter 24 pp. 809-822

5/21 Nigeria cont.

Sodaro, Chapter 24 pp.822-827

5/23 Nigeria Simulation Exercise

Manby, Shell in Nigeria: Corporate Social Responsibility and the Ogoni Crisis

Political Cinema: Lumumba (time and place TBA)

Section V. Theory Building in Comparative Politics Variable by Variable

5/26 Cultural Approaches

Almond and Verba, Civic Culture, Chapter 1 An Approach to Political Culture (on reserve)

Critiques (on reserve)

Barrington Moore, Epilogue: Reactionary and Revolutionary Imagery (on reserve)

5/28 Interest Based / Rational Choice Approaches

Bates, Essays on the Political Economy of Rural Africa. Introduction and Conclusion (on reserve)

Critiques (on reserve)

5/30 Structural Approaches I: State Institutions

Skocpol, France, Russia and China: A Structural Analysis of Social Revolutions (on reserve)

Critiques (on reserve)

6/2 Structural Approaches II: Societal Structures

Lipset, Political Man, Chapter 2. Economic Development and Democracy (on reserve)

Critiques (on reserve)

Future Issues and Summing Up

6/ The Globalization Challenge: Wither Comparative Politics?

Soe, Jihad vs. McWorld pp. 20-209

Soe, Will the Nation-State Survive Globalization? Wolf pp. 194-199

THIRD PAPER DUE