**Political Science 120, Comparative Political Regimes**  
Winter 2000

**SYLLABUS**

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**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  
- Kesselman, et al., INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS, 2 ed.  
- Soe, COMPARATIVE POLITICS 99/00  
- Solzhenitsyn, ONE DAY IN THE LIFE OF IVAN DENISOVICH

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**

1. **INTRODUCTION: STUDYING COMPARATIVE POLITICS**

   A. Studying Comparative Politics  
      
      W Jan 5 Introductory meeting  
      
      F Jan 7 Comparative political theory - Kesselman, pp. 3-25  

   B. Development of Political Regimes  
      
      M Jan 10 No class
W Jan 12 America v. Europe - Vig & Stiefbold , 147-78
F Jan 14 Modernization and authoritarian regimes - Vig & Stiefbold, 203-32
M Jan 17 Totalitarian regimes - Eckstein & Apter, 440-448, 464-468
W Jan 19 The transformation of Western European politics -Vig & Stiefbold, 328-58
F Jan 21 Contemporary democratic politics Soe, 89-113

II. POLITICS IN POSTINDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACIES

A. Great Britain

M Jan 24 British political development - Kesselman, 28-50
*first paper due in class*

W Jan 26 British constitutional system - Kesselman, 50-70; Soe, 114-117
F Jan 28 The Blair revolution - Kesselman, 70-77; Soe, 15-36

B. France

M Jan 31 French society and political traditions - Kesselman, 90-104; Vig & Stiefbold, 79-202

W Feb 2 The current regime - Kesselman, 104-126
F Feb 4 Current French politics - Kesselman, 126-32; Soe, 62-73

M Feb 7 Mid-term break - No class

C. Germany

W Feb 9 German political regimes - Kesselman, 134-70; Soe, 37-43
F Feb 11 Current German politics - Kesselman, 170-86; Soe, 44-61

M Feb 14 *Mid-term exam* * all of above

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

W Feb 16 Russian and Soviet political development - Kesselman, 426-451

F Feb 18 The Soviet system - Kesselman, 451-53; Solzhenitsyn, One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich (entire)

M Feb 21 Gorbachev's revolution handout

W Feb 23 The new Russian regime - Kesselman, 453-72
F Feb 25 The current crisis - Kesselman, 472-83; Soe, 147-59

IV. COLONIALISM, AUTHORITARIANISM, AND DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

M Feb 28 Nigerian political development - Kesselman, 546-55
W Mar 1 The failure of the First and Second Republics - Kesselman, 555-87

F Mar 3 Nigerian political culture - Achebe, *Man of the People* (entire)

M Mar 6 The Third Republic - Kesselman, 587-606; handouts

V. GLOBALIZATION AND DEMOCRACY

W Mar 8 The future of democracy - Soe, 205-18

F Mar 10 Globalization and cultures - Soe, 231-40

Final exam (covers primarily Parts III-V of the course)