Political Science 120, Comparative Political Regimes

Professor Norm Vig
Office: Science Annex 116A
Email: nvig@carleton.edu

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Office Hours SCIX 116A: 2:00-4:00 p.m. T & Th
and Willis 414: 11:00-12:00 M & W

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; European integration; 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
Caporaso, THE EUROPEAN UNION
Kesselman, et al., INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS, 2 ed.
Soe, COMPARATIVE POLITICS 2000/01
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 3 Introductory meeting

F Jan 5 Approaches to comparative politics - Kesselman, pp. 3-25

B. Development of Political Regimes

M Jan 8 America v. Europe - Vig & Stiefbold, 147-78

W Jan 10 Modernization and authoritarian regimes - Vig & Stiefbold, 203-32
F Jan 12 Totalitarian regimes - Eckstein & Apter, 440-448, 464-468
M Jan 15 Case study: the Soviet Union - Solzhenitsyn, entire
W Jan 17 The transformation of Western European politics - Vig & Stiefbold, 328-58

II. POLITICS IN POSTINDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACIES

A. Great Britain

M Jan 22 British political development - Kesselman, 28-50

*first paper due in class*

W Jan 24 British constitutional system - Kesselman, 50-70; Soe, 23-28, 40-41

F Jan 26 The Blair revolution - Kesselman, 70-77; Soe, 18-22, 29-36

B. France

M Jan 29 The French state and political economy - Kesselman, 80-104; Vig and Stiefbold, 178-202

W Jan 31 The current regime - Kesselman, 104-126

F Feb 2 French politics and society - Kesselman, 126-32; Soe, 51-62

M Feb 5 Mid-term break - No class

C. Germany

W Feb 7 German political regimes - Kesselman, 134-70

F Feb 9 Current German politics - Kesselman, 170-86; Soe, 42-50

M Feb 12 * Mid-term exam * all of above

III. THE END OF NATIONALISM? THE EUROPEAN UNION

W Feb 14 The problem of social integration - Caporaso, chaps. 1-2, Soe, 141-48

F Feb 16 The problem of democracy - Caporaso, chaps 3-5; Soe, 149-54

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

M Feb 19 Russian and Soviet political development - Kesselman, 426-436

W Feb 21 The Soviet breakdown - Kesselman, 436-51

F Feb 23 The new Russian regime - Kesselman, 452-72

M Feb 26 The current crisis - Kesselman, 472-83; Soe, 166-73

*second paper due in class*

V. COLONIALISM, AUTHORITARIANISM, AND DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA
W Feb 28 Nigerian state building - Kesselman, 545-574

F Mar 2 From the First to the Third Republics - Kesselman, 574-605

M Mar 5 Nigerian political culture - Achebe, Man of the People (entire)

VI. GLOBALIZATION, CAPITALISM, AND DEMOCRACY

W Mar 8 Democracy and capitalism - Soe, 211-231

F Mar 10 Globalization and cultures - Soe, 232-40

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