Political Science 120, Comparative Political Regimes Winter 1999

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

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 & 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 Jan 4 Introductory meeting

W Jan 6 Comparative political theory: Mayer, chap. 1

F Jan 8 Democratic political systems: Soe, pp. 107-115; Mayer, pp. 29-36

B. Development of Political Regimes

M Jan 11 America v. Europe: Vig & Stiefbold , 147-78

W Jan 13 Modernization and authoritarian regimes: Vig & Stiefbold, 203-32

F Jan 15 Totalitarian regimes: Eckstein & Apter, 440-448, 464-468

M Jan 18 The transformation of Western European politics: Vig & Stiefbold, 328-58

W Jan 20 Postindustrial democracy: Mayer, pp. 36-81; Soe, 14-20

II. POLITICS IN POSTINDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACIES

A. Great Britain

F Jan 22 British political culture: Mayer, pp. 82-100

M Jan 25 British constitutional system: Mayer, 110-127; 118-21

W Jan 27 The British party system: Mayer, pp. 100-110; Soe, pp. 21-33, 42-45

F Jan 29 The need for reform: Mayer, 127-138; Soe, 34-41

B. France

M Feb 1 French society and political traditions: Mayer, pp. 141-157

***first paper due in class ***

W Feb 3 The current regime: Mayer, 157-180; Soe, 65-79

C. Germany

F Feb 5 German political traditions and political culture: Mayer, 181-198

M Feb 8 No class - Mid-term break

W Feb 10 German democracy and the 1998 elections: Mayer, 198-215; Soe, 47-53, 58-64

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

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

M Feb 15 Modern authoritarianism v. totalitarianism: Mayer, chap. 6

W Feb 17 Russian political culture and traditions: Mayer, pp. 242-263; DeBardeleben, 1-23

F Feb 19 The Stalinist party state: Mayer, 263-270; DeBardeleben, 24-40

M Feb 22 The failure of the Soviet system: DeBardeleben, chap. 2

W Feb 24 Gorbachev's revolution: DeBardeleben, chap. 3; Mayer, 270-282

F Feb 26 The new Russian regime: Mayer, 282-295; DeBardeleben, chaps. 4-5

M Mar 1 The descent into crisis: DeBardeleben, chaps. 6-7 Soe, 162-173

second paper due in class

IV. COLONIALISM, AUTHORITARIANISM, AND DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA

W Mar 3 Political development in the "third world": Mayer, chap. 9; Soe, 178-180, 215-221

F Mar 5 Nigerian political traditions and development: Mayer, 356-370; handouts

M Mar 8 Nigerian political culture: Achebe, entire

W Mar 10 The future of democracy: Mayer, 370-78, 407-418