

2053-2: Introduction to Comparative Politics
12:00 – 1:20pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays
Location: 232 Lockett

Professor: Dr. Yann Kerevel
Office: 230 Stubbs Hall

Office Hours: W/Th: 1:30pm – 2:30pm, or by appt.
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Course overview:

Comparative politics is more than just the study of foreign countries, it is an approach designed to answer interesting questions about the world. By studying and comparing nations, we can better understand how governments function and how to develop useful generalizations about complex political phenomena. At the same time, comparison also helps us understand our own political system better, and helps us evaluate other potential political arrangements. The bulk of the course is dedicated to the study of democracies, dictatorships and the transitions between these two types of regimes. The final part of course will ask you to then apply the material learned throughout the course as you develop a new constitution for an authoritarian country undergoing a transition to democracy. This course helps fulfill LSU's general education requirements and supports LSU's learning competency goal that LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the informing factors of global interdependence, including economic forces, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic difference.

Required Materials:

You will need a USB drive for class sessions in the computer lab.

All readings will be provided in PDF format on Moodle.

Components	Points	Grading Scale	
Class Participation/Homework	80	485-500	A+
Exam 1	75	465 - 484	A
Exam 2	75	450 - 464	A-
World Values Survey Assignments	120	435 - 449	B+
Final Paper & Simulation	150	415 - 434	B
Total	500	400 - 414	B-
		385 - 399	C+
		365 - 384	C
		350 - 364	C-
		335 - 349	D+
		315 - 334	D
		300 - 314	D-
		0 - 299	F

Attendance: I expect students to attend all classes as part of the normal learning process. If you miss a class, please contact one of your classmates to find out what you missed. Please do not email me asking what you missed in class, I will not respond.

Participation: In-class participation is a major part of this course and will be taken into

consideration in the calculation of your final grade. For in-class simulations and other activities, I will take attendance to record your participation. I may also ask you to complete short assignments based on class activities. If you fail to attend a class and you miss one of these assignments, you cannot make it up.

Exams: There will be two exams throughout the semester that relate to the readings, lectures and videos. The exams are not cumulative. Prior to each exam I will provide you with a study guide. All exams must be taken on the specified date. If you have a DOCUMENTED illness, emergency or excused absence on the date of an exam, you may take an alternate exam during the scheduled final exam period.

Final Paper and Constitutional Convention Simulation: At the end of the course you will be provided with a prompt to develop a 4-5 page proposal for a new constitution for an imaginary country. The paper should draw on the material learned in the course along with outside readings to defend your proposal. The proposal is due on April 25th. During the final week of the course we will then simulate a constitutional convention as the entire class then attempts to agree on a single constitution. Students who do not come to class with a proposal on 4/25 will not be able to participate in the simulation. After the simulation is completed, you will be expected to write a 3-4 page reflection on the simulation experience. The reflection is due on the specified day and time of the final exam period.

World Values Survey Assignments: Throughout the course you will have the opportunity to examine how the attitudes and behaviors of people in the United States compare to those of other countries. At the beginning of the course I will introduce you to a public opinion data set with survey data from over 50 countries. I will teach you some very basic skills that will allow you to draw information from this very large data set using STATA. I will also show you how to create some tables and graphs within Excel to present this information. For each assignment you will be given a general question. To answer the question you must compare 3 different countries of your choice to the United States and present your answer in tables and graphs. There will be 3 assignments like this throughout the semester. We will be able to work on these assignments in class, but if you do not finish in the time allotted, you will have to complete them outside of class.

Students requiring special accommodation: Louisiana State University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments is requested to speak with the Disability Services and the instructor, as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. This publication/material is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact the Disability Services, 115 Johnston Hall, (225)578-5919.

General Statement on Academic Integrity: Louisiana State University adopted the Commitment to Community in 1995 to set forth guidelines for student behavior both inside and outside of the classroom. The Commitment to Community charges students to maintain high standards of academic and personal integrity. All students are expected to read and be familiar with the LSU Code of Student Conduct and Commitment to Community, found online at www.lsu.edu/saa. It is your responsibility as a student at LSU to know and understand the academic standards for our community.

Students who are suspected of violating the Code of Conduct will be referred to the Office of

Student Advocacy and Accountability. For undergraduate students, a first academic violation could result in a zero grade on the assignment or failing the class and disciplinary probation until graduation. For a second academic violation, the result could be suspension from LSU. For graduate students, suspension is the appropriate outcome for the first offense.

Plagiarism and Citation Method: As a student at LSU, it is your responsibility to refrain from plagiarizing the academic property of another and to utilize appropriate citation methods for all coursework. Ignorance of the citation method is not an excuse for academic misconduct. Remember there is a difference between paraphrasing and quoting and how to properly cite each respectively. If you have questions regarding what is appropriate, please consult with the library's tutorials on avoiding plagiarism and proper citation formats (links are also provided on the course Moodle page).

Lectures and Readings:

All assigned readings MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE ATTENDING CLASS. I reserve the right to alter specific readings or the timing of certain lectures, but I will announce any changes in class or through email with sufficient advance notice.

Week 1: Introduction

1/12 (Th): no readings

Week 2: Democratic Regimes

1/17 (T): Samuels. 2013. "Democratic Political Regimes"

1/19 (Th): No Class

Week 3: Models of Democracy

1/24(T): Lijphart. 2012. *Patterns of Democracy*, Chapters 2-3.

1/26(Th): Pereira, Power, and Raile. 2008. "Coalitional Presidentialism and side payments: explaining the Mensalão Scandal in Brazil."

Week 4: Models of Democracy

1/31 (T): Mainwaring. 1993. "Presidentialism, Multipartism, and Democracy: the Difficult Combination."

2/2 (Th): Bleich. 2013. France case study

Week 5: Electoral Systems

2/7 (T): Denemark. 2001. "Choosing MMP in New Zealand."

2/9 (Th): Carey and Reynolds. 2011. "The Impact of Election Systems"

Week 6: Lab/Exam

2/14 (T): World Values Survey lab day (meet in Stubbs 102)

BRING A USB DRIVE TO SAVE YOUR WORK

2/16 (Th): Exam #1

Week 7: Lab

2/21 (T): World Values Survey lab day (meet in Stubbs 102)

BRING A USB DRIVE TO SAVE YOUR WORK

2/23 (Th): World Values Survey lab day (meet in Stubbs 102)

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Week 8: Mardi Gras/Lab

2/28 (T): Mardi Gras, No Class

3/2 (Th): World Values Survey lab day (meet in Stubbs 102)

BRING A USB DRIVE TO SAVE YOUR WORK

Week 9: Federalism and Group Representation

3/7 (T): Stepan. 1999. "Federalism and Democracy: Beyond the U.S. Model."

Stuligross and Varshney. 2002. "Ethnic Diversities, Constitutional Designs, and Public Policies in India."

3/9 (Th): Htun, Mala. 2004. "Is Gender Like Ethnicity? The Political Representation of Identity Groups." Perspectives on Politics 2(3): 439-458.

Week 10: Authoritarian Regimes

3/14 (T): Mertha. 2013. China case study

3/16 (Th): World Values Survey lab day (meet in Stubbs 102)

BRING A USB DRIVE TO SAVE YOUR WORK

Week 11: Authoritarian Regimes & Regime Change

3/21 (T): World Values Survey lab day (meet in Stubbs 102)

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3/23 (Th): Shehata. 2011. "The Fall of the Pharaoh."

Week 12: Regime Change

3/28 (T): World Values Survey lab day (meet in Stubbs 102)

BRING A USB DRIVE TO SAVE YOUR WORK

3/30 (Th): Mexico Case Study Reading.

Week 13: Exam #2

4/4 (T): Exam #2

4/6 (Th): No Class

Week 14: Spring Break

4/11 – 4/13: No Class

Week 15: Constitutional Engineering/Simulation Preparation

4/18 (T): Lijphart. 2004. "Constitutional Design for Divided Societies."

4/20 (Th): Dawisha and Dawisha. 2003. "How to Build a Democratic Iraq"

Week 16: Constitutional Convention Simulation

4/25 (T): in-class simulation

4/27 (Th): in-class simulation

Final Exam Week

No final exam.

Final reflection papers due Thursday, May 4th at 5pm.