

**POLI 2053: Introduction to Comparative Politics**  
**T/R: 12:00-1:20pm**  
**Location: Stubbs 116**

**Professor:** Austin S. Matthews  
**Office:** Stubbs 320

**Office Hours:** Thursday 1:30-2:30 or by appt.  
**Email:** amatt18@lsu.edu

**Overview**

This course introduces students to the comparative study of nation and governments throughout the world. The goal is to better understand how governments are organized, what roles they play for their citizens, and how they differ across borders. This will include study of a wide range of government types including democracies, anocracies, autocracies, and failed states. We will explore how governance and freedoms are defined, measured, and applied in differing contexts. This will include in-depth studies of various national governments across continents and throughout history.

**Required Readings**

All readings for this course are open source online or available for download through the LSU Library's website. Due to this class meeting often and not for long periods of time, I will attempt to space out readings to provide you enough time to prepare before their discussion date. It is up to you to make sure you plan accordingly by starting readings prior to the day before they are discussed. All required readings are listed under the day in which they will be discussed.

**Graded Course Requirements**

***Quizzes: 20%***

Unannounced quizzes will be distributed throughout the semester at either the beginning or end of class.

***Participation: 20%***

Includes discussion of assigned readings, contributions to classroom discussion, and general willingness to engage in academic effort.

***Mid-term examination: 30%:***

This will be a timed, multiple-choice examination testing you on subject matter from the first half of the course.

***Final examination: 30%***

This will be a timed, multiple-choice examination testing you on subject matter from the second half of the course. It is non-cumulative.

### **Grading Scale:**

Final grades will be determined in accordance with the current plus/minus system of alphabetical grading utilized by LSU. Below are the possible grades and their numerical range.

<b>Score</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Score</b>
97-100	A+	94-96	A	90-93	A-
87-89	B+	84-86	B	80-83	B-
77-79	C+	74-76	C	70-73	C-
67-69	D+	64-66	D	60-63	D-
		<60	F		

### **Course Policies:**

#### ***LSU Learning Competency Statement for the Social Sciences:***

LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the informing factors of global interdependence, including economic force, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic difference.

#### ***Participation:***

This course is designed to be a mix of instructor-guided lecturing and student discussion. Considering my generous policy on reading assignments, I expect all students to come to class ready to critique the week's assigned reading and core concepts. This is a small class, so attendance and participation will be noted.

#### ***Special Accommodations:***

Please speak with Disability Services and the instructor as early as possible in the semester if you have a documented need for accommodation. I will of course keep this information in confidence and do everything I can to facilitate the course's learning objectives for you. Disability Services is located in 115 Johnson Hall and can be contacted at 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](http://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 & 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:***

As a student at LSU, it is your responsibility to refrain from plagiarizing the academic property of another and to utilize appropriate citation method for all coursework. In this class, it is recommended that you use the APSA citation style. 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.

One tool available to assist you in correct citations is the “References” function in Microsoft Word. This program automatically formats the information you input according to the citation method you select for the document. This program also has the ability to generate a reference or works cited page for your document. The version of Microsoft Word with the “References” function is available in most University computer labs. A demonstration of how to use this tool is available online at [www.lsu.edu/saa](http://www.lsu.edu/saa).

***Late Work:***

I will not accept any late work unless under extraordinary circumstances. This includes deaths in the immediate family and dire illness. To qualify for an extension, you must inform me of the situation and provide some proof of the issue (doctor’s note, etc.) within a day of the due date. Otherwise, your work will be considered late and not accepted for credit. Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date.

***Technology:***

Laptop use for notes-taking and research purposes is contingently permitted. Cell phone use is not allowed under any circumstance. Any technology privileges may be collectively or individually revoked during the semester at the discretion of the professor. Continued abuse of technology privileges may result in punitive adjustments to a student’s grade.

***Extra Credit:***

Extra credit may be offered collectively at the instructor’s discretion. I will not allow individual students to earn extra credit that is not available to the entire class.

**Course Schedule and Reading Assignments:**

***Week 1, Aug 22 – 26: Social Science, Political Science, and Comparative Politics***

Read: Syllabus. “Learn it; know it; live it.” – Brad Hamilton

***Week 2, Aug 29 – Sept 2: Comparative Governments in Ancient History***

Read: Ostrom, Vincent. 1980. “Hobbes, Covenant, and Constitution.” *Publius* 10 (4): 83-100. Available on JSTOR through the LSU Library website.

***Week 3, Sept 5-9: Constitutions and Constitutional Systems***

Read: Lijphart, Arend. 2004. “Constitutional Design for Divided Societies.” *Journal of Democracy* 15 (2): 96-109. Available at:  
[https://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Acrobat/stm103%20articles/lijphart%20Constitutional\\_Design.pdf](https://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Acrobat/stm103%20articles/lijphart%20Constitutional_Design.pdf)

***Week 4, Sept 12-16: Democratic Elections and Candidate Selection***

Read: Abramowitz, Alan. 1989. “Viability, Electability, and Candidate Choice in a Presidential Primary Election: A Test of Competing Models.” *Journal of Politics* 51 (4): 977-992. Available at:  
<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.544.810&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

***Week 5, Sept 19-23: A Survey of Political Ideologies and Parties***

Read: Bakker, Ryan, et al. 2015. "Measuring Party Positions in Europe: The Chapel Hill Expert Survey Trend File, 1999-2010." 21 (1): 143-152. Available at: [http://www.chesdata.eu/Papers/PP\\_2015.pdf](http://www.chesdata.eu/Papers/PP_2015.pdf).

***Week 6, Sept 26-30: Authoritarianism: Single Party Systems***

Read: Gandhi, Jennifer, and Adam Przeworski. 2007. "Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats." *Comparative Political Studies* 40 (11): 1279-1301. Available at: [http://politics.as.nyu.edu/docs/IO/2800/cps\\_2007.pdf](http://politics.as.nyu.edu/docs/IO/2800/cps_2007.pdf)

***Week 7, Oct 3 – 7: Authoritarianism: Military and Monarchical Systems***

Read: Fjelde, Hanne. 2010. "Generals, Dictators, and Kings: Authoritarian Regimes and Civil Conflict, 1973-2004." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 27 (3): 195-218. Available through the LSU Library website.

***Week 8, Oct 10-14: Mid-semester review and midterm examination***

Oct. 11 will be a review day. Bring questions. Oct 13 is the midterm exam.

***Week 9, Oct 17 – 21: Anocracies and Hybrid Regimes***

Read: Diamond, Larry. 2002. "Thinking about Hybrid Regimes." *Journal of Democracy* 13 (2): 21-35. Available at: [http://is.muni.cz/el/1423/jaro2005/MVZ150/um/Diamond-Thinking\\_about\\_Hybrid\\_Regimes.pdf](http://is.muni.cz/el/1423/jaro2005/MVZ150/um/Diamond-Thinking_about_Hybrid_Regimes.pdf).

***Week 10, Oct 24 – 28: Failed States***

Read: Helman, Gerald B., and Steven R. Ratner. 1992. "Saving Failed States." *Foreign Policy* 89 (Winter, 1992-1993): 3-20. Available on JSTOR through the LSU Library website.

***Week 11, Oct 31 – Nov 4: Regime Change and Democratization***

Read: Haass, Richard N. 2005. "Regime Change and Its Limits." *Foreign Affairs* 84 (4): 66-78. Available on JSTOR through the LSU Library website.

***Week 12, Nov 7 – 11: Comparative Political Economy***

Read: Krueger, Anne O. 1974. "The Political Economy of the Rent-Seeking Society." *The American Economic Review* 64 (3): 291-303. Available at: [http://lib.cufe.edu.cn/upload\\_files/other/4\\_20140523031503\\_36%20Krueger%201974.pdf](http://lib.cufe.edu.cn/upload_files/other/4_20140523031503_36%20Krueger%201974.pdf)

***Week 13, Nov 14 – 18: The Resource Curse***

Read: Basedau, Matthias, and Jann Lay. 2009. "Resource Curse or Rentier Peace? The Ambiguous Effects of Oil Wealth and Oil Dependence on Violent Conflict." *Journal of Peace Research* 46 (6): 757-776. Available at:  
<http://ejournal.narotama.ac.id/files/The%20Ambiguous.pdf>

***Week 14, Nov 21 – 25: Political Corruption***

Read: Brooks, Robert C. 1909. "The Nature of Political Corruption." *Political Science Quarterly* 24 (1): 1-22. Available on JSTOR through the LSU Library website.

***Week 15, Nov 28 – Dec 2: Special Topic: Survey of World Governments***

Read: Mearsheimer, JJ. 2014. "Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusions that Provoked Putin." *Foreign Affairs* Sept/Oct 2014: 1-12. Available at:  
<http://johnmearsheimer.uchicago.edu/pdfs/Ukraine%20Article%20in%20Foreign%20Affairs.pdf>

***Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 3:00-5:00PM: Final Examination, Stubbs 116.***

Please bring a scantron and pencil.