

PLSC 113

Introduction to Comparative Politics ¹

Instructor: Evgeny Sedashov LNG 273 esedash1@binghamton.edu Office hours: Monday 11-1, Wednesday 11-12.30, and by appointment	Lectures: Monday & Wednesday Discussion Section: Friday 9:40 a.m. - 10:40 a.m. SW206 Binghamton University Fall 2016
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Course Description

In this course, we will explore the rich diversity of political life that exists around the globe by examining both how and why governments and politics differ from country to country. In order to give students the tools needed to understand and evaluate arguments about the political world, we will begin with a brief introduction to some of the methods used by political scientists. We will then examine cross-national differences in political regimes, dictatorships, democracies, political institutions, voting systems, political parties, and political behavior. Some of the questions we will address are as follows. Under what conditions are transitions to democracy most likely to succeed? What makes some states more stable than others? Why do some countries have many political parties while others have few? Why does turnout at elections vary so greatly across countries?

Although the course is organized topically, we will use specific countries as examples of the concepts discussed in class. At the end of the course students should have developed: (1) the ability to evaluate and analyze arguments that apply to politics; (2) a general knowledge of the variety of political systems that exist around the world; and (3) more specific knowledge about politics in some countries.

Course Requirements

General Requirements: Students are expected to attend all classes having completed the assigned readings. Each week will include two lectures (Monday and Wednesday) and discussion section (Friday). There will be material in the lectures that is not in the textbook, and vice versa, so it is imperative that students both attend the lectures and complete the assigned readings. Discussion sections are intended to be a more interactive learning environment where students should demonstrate their knowledge of assigned

¹This syllabus is based on the syllabus prepared by Professor Robin Best for PLSC 113 Fall 2016 class

material and analytic abilities. Students are expected to be active participants in all discussion sessions. Attendance and participation in discussion sections will constitute 20% of the course grade. Student may miss two lectures and one discussion section without receiving a grade deduction. Some discussion sections will include additional reading assignments which will be posted at the blackboard a week prior to the section for which these readings are assigned.

Exams: There will be three, non-cumulative exams that consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. Each exam will constitute 20% of the course grade. The first two exam dates are listed in the course schedule. The last exam will be held during the scheduled final-exam time for this course. Students are responsible for making sure they are able to be present on the day of an exam. Make-up exams will be given only in the case of an emergency situation, such as an injury or severe illness, for which the student can provide documentation. It is up to the instructor to decide what constitutes an emergency situation.

Two papers: Students will be required to submit two short (3 double-spaced pages max) papers, each of them provides an analysis of an academic article published in one of the leading political science journals. There will be an option to select an article out of several alternatives that will be posted on the blackboard. Good papers a) elaborate the core argument in the article and the main assumptions (explicit or implicit) that are made in the article, b) discuss theoretical alternatives and/or extensions of the argument presented in the article, c) describe what kind of evidence is needed to test these alternative arguments and/or extensions. Deadline for the first paper is October, 31. Deadline for the second paper is December, 8. You are required to submit paper to turnitin link at the blackboard and to the instructor by 11:59 p.m. on the deadline day. Late submissions will be penalized. Each paper constitutes 10% of the final grade.

Grading Scale: A (93-100), A- (90-92), B+ (87-89), B (83-86), B- (80-82), C+ (77-79), C (73-76), C- (70-72), D (60-69), F(0-59).

Readings

The following textbook is required and available for purchase at the bookstore.

- Clark, William Roberts, Matt Golder and Sona Nadenichek Golder. 2013. *Principles of Comparative Politics, 2nd Edition*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

You may also rent an electronic version of the textbook via CourseSmart at <http://www.coursesmart.com/principles-of-comparative-politics-second/william-clark-matthew-golder-sona-golder/dp/9781608716791>

Learning Objectives

Political Science Department Learning Objectives. As one of the introductory lecture courses in Political Science, this course is intended to contribute to Political Science majors' achievement of the following objectives:

1. Awareness of the main overall elements of the discipline, incorporating knowledge of three of the four principal subfields of political science (American Politics, International Relationship, Comparative Politics, Political Theory).
2. Basic knowledge of theories and methods of interpreting information for political science purposes.
3. The ability to engage in critical thinking and critical discourse.

Completion of this course will also satisfy the following learning outcomes for general education requirements.

- G requirement - Global Interdependencies: Students will demonstrate knowledge of how two or more distinctive world regions have influenced and interacted with one another and how such interactions have been informed by their respective cultures or civilizations.
- N requirement - Social Sciences: Students will demonstrate (1) knowledge of major concepts, models, and issues (and their interrelationships) in political science, and (2) an understanding of the methods used by social scientists to explore social phenomena, including, when appropriate to the discipline, observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, and analysis by mathematics or other interpretive frameworks.

Other Requirements

Blackboard. I will be using the Blackboard website for the course to post announcements, grades, and other course materials. It is your responsibility to make sure you have access to the Blackboard course website.

Student Conduct. Students are expected to behave in a respectful manner and to refrain from disruptive behavior such as talking, whispering, or making offensive remarks. Any student engaging in inappropriate or disruptive behavior may be asked to leave the classroom. Students are expected to arrive on time for lectures and discussion sections. Students who arrive late to class may be asked to leave the classroom.

Electronics Policy

Cell phones: Cell phone use is not allowed under any circumstances. Cell phones must be turned off and stored so that they are not visible. Any student caught talking on the phone or texting will be asked to leave the classroom. If your phone rings in class you will be given a warning. If it happens again you will be asked to leave the classroom.

Laptops: Laptop use is strongly discouraged in the classroom during lectures. Laptops and other electronic devices often distract your attention from the class and prevent you from being fully engaged. See, for example, <http://www.npr.org/2016/04/17/474525392/attention-students-put-your-laptops-away>. If you must use your laptop, it may be used for note-taking purposes only. Laptop use is allowed during discussion sections if notes or other class-related materials are stored in it. If I find you using your laptop for other purposes (social media, email, etc.) you will be asked to put it away.

Other Devices: No other electronic devices are to be used in the classroom; lectures and discussion sections may not be recorded.

Grade Appeals. If you wish to appeal a grade you have received, you must submit a one-page statement to the instructor at least 24 hours after receiving the grade. The statement must clearly and thoroughly explain the reasons why your work deserved a higher grade. Your assignment will then be re-graded, taking your statement into consideration. **The revised grade may be higher, lower, or the same as the initial grade.**

Disability-Related Equal Access Accommodations. Students wishing to request academic accommodations to insure their equitable access and participation in this course should notify the instructor by the second week of class. Authorizations from Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) are generally required. Please contact SSD at (607)777-2686 to schedule an appointment with the Director or Learning Disabilities Specialist. Their website (www.binghamton.edu/ssd) includes information regarding their Disability Documentation Guidelines. The office is located in UU-119.

Academic Honesty. Students should review university guidelines regarding academic honesty and ensure that the work they complete for this course is theirs and theirs alone. Cases of academic dishonesty will be taken very seriously and may result in a failing grade for the course in addition to any penalty imposed by the university. If you have any doubt about what constitutes plagiarism or a violation of academic honesty, please consult the university code and/or contact the instructor. Information on plagiarism can be found at

<http://www2.binghamton.edu/watson/about/academic-honesty.html>.

Tutorials on academic honesty can be found at

<http://library.binghamton.edu/research/tutorials/WebTutorials/web/index.html>.

Resources for Students in Distress. If you are experiencing undue personal or academic stress at any

time during the semester or need to talk with someone about a personal problem or situation, I encourage you to seek support as soon as possible. Significant stress, mood changes, excessive worry, or problems with eating and/or sleeping can interfere with optimal academic performance. The source of symptoms might be related to your course work; if so, I invite you to speak with me (or your other professors) directly. However, problems with relationships, family worries, loss, or a personal struggle or crisis can also contribute to decreased academic performance, and may require additional professional support. Binghamton University provides a variety of support resources: the Dean of Students Office and University Counseling Center offer coaching on ways to reduce the impact to your grades. Numbers for these and other available resources are provided below.

1. Dean of Students Office: 607-777-2804
2. Decker Student Health Services Center: 607-777-2221
3. University Police: On campus emergency, 911
4. University Counseling Center: 607-777-2772
5. Interpersonal Violence Prevention: 607-777-3062
6. Harpur Advising: 607-777-6305
7. Office of International Student & Scholar Services: 607-777-2510

Schedule

Week 1: Aug.26	Introduction
Week 2: Aug.29 and Aug.31 <u>Readings:</u> Clark, Golder, and Golder. Chapters 1 & 2 No discussion section on Sep.2-APSA	The Scientific Study of Politics I
Week 3: Sep.7 <u>Readings:</u> Clark, Golder, and Golder. Chapter 3 Discussion section Sep.9 homework due: Chapter 2, questions 1-7, 9 & 11	The Scientific Study of Politics II
Week 4: Sep.12 & Sep.14 <u>Readings:</u> Clark, Golder, and Golder. Chapter 4 Discussion section Sep.16 homework due: Chapter 3, questions 1-3 & 5	The Modern Nation-State
Week 5: Sep.19 & Sep.21 <u>Readings:</u> Clark, Golder, and Golder. Chapter 5 Discussion section Sep.23 homework due: Chapter 4, questions 1-3 & 5-7	Democracy and Dictatorship
Week 6: Sep.26 & Sep.28 <u>Readings:</u> None Discussion section Sep.30 homework due: Chapter 5, questions 1-5, 8-10	Review (Sept. 26) and Exam 1 (Sept. 28)
Week 7: Oct. 5 <u>Readings:</u> Clark, Golder, and Golder. Chapter 6 Discussion section Oct.7 homework due: None	Determinants of Democracy
Week 8: Oct. 10 <u>Readings:</u> Clark, Golder, and Golder. Chapters 7 & 8 Discussion section Oct.14 homework due: Chapter 6 questions 1-5	Transitions to Democracy
Week 9: Oct.17 & Oct. 19 <u>Readings:</u> Clark, Golder, and Golder. Chapter 10 Discussion section Oct.21 homework due: Chapter 7 questions 1 & 2, Chapter 8 questions 1 & 2	Varieties of Dictatorship

Week 10: Oct.24 & Oct. 26**Electoral Systems**

Readings: Clark, Golder, and Golder. Chapter 13

Discussion section **Oct.28** homework due: Chapter 10 questions 1, 3(choose 3 from a-i), 4, & 7

Week 11: Oct.31 & Nov. 2**Review (Oct. 31) and Exam 2 (Nov. 2)**

Readings: None

Discussion section **Nov.4** homework due: Chapter 13 questions 1-3

Week 12: Nov.7 & Nov. 9**Group Decision-Making**

Readings: Clark, Golder, and Golder. Chapter 11

Discussion section **Nov.11** homework due: None - Election Game 1

Week 13: Nov.14 & Nov. 16**Parties & Party Systems**

Readings: Clark, Golder, and Golder. Chapter 14

Discussion section **Nov.18** homework due: None - Election Game 2

Week 14: Nov.21 & Nov. 23**Presidents and Parliaments**

Readings: Clark, Golder, and Golder. Chapter 12

No discussion section on **Nov.25** - Thanksgiving

Week 15: Nov.28 & Nov. 30**Democracy & the Role of Institutions**

Readings: Clark, Golder, and Golder. Chapters 15 & 16

Discussion section **Dec.2** homework due: Chapter 12 questions 1-9, 11-12

Week 16: Dec.5 & Dec.7**Review**

Readings: None

No discussion section on **Dec.9** - Reading Days

Exam 3 - TBD