INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL SCIENCE: COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Objectives and Approach
This course is an introduction to comparative politics, which involves the study of politics in other countries as well as cross-national comparisons. The course will examine issues of democracy and political development and has two major objectives: (1) promoting systematic and comparative thinking about politics, and (2) fostering knowledge and understanding of the politics of three countries that reflect different aspects of the contemporary world: Great Britain, Russia, and Nigeria. The readings, lectures, and sections will in large part focus on these countries. We shall examine each country’s social background and political history, the behavior of citizens and groups, the impact of political institutions, and public policy challenges.

Course Assignments and Grading
Assignments include a brief quiz, an in-class midterm, a relatively short paper on a topic given by the instructor (you will have some choice), and a comprehensive final examination. Class and section attendance is required, and you will be responsible for all lecture materials. In-class tests will include both objective and essay questions. For students whose final exam grades are better than their average for the midterm and paper, the final will count 50% and each of the other two assignments 25%, before adjustment for participation (see below). In the opposite case, each major assignment will count one-third. The quiz will count as part of the midterm. Finally, grades may be adjusted, upward or downward, for section participation and contributions (up to 10% of the final course grade). Students who fail to complete the midterm, the paper, and/or the final examination will not pass the course. Late papers will be penalized. Incompletes or special exams will be given only in situations of emergency or recognized disability in accordance with UCSD policy. Petitions must be timely and properly documented.

Academic Honesty
Fair and effective education requires academic honesty, which is a fundamental norm in the learning process. UCSD rules concerning academic dishonesty are spelled out in the General Catalog. Note the strict prohibition against plagiarism: submitting as your own or without proper attribution work done wholly or in part by another person. Plagiarism includes unauthorized collaboration on course assignments. Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments in this course will be individual, and no collaboration with any other person permitted. In-class tests will be closed-book, with no aids allowed. These rules will be strictly enforced, and any case of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office.

Books and Materials
The following books have been ordered by the UCSD bookstore. All readings below are required and will be placed on Library reserve. Avoid old editions of Powell.


Sections
Generally, you will be expected to attend two lectures per week and one section, led by one of the teaching assistants. The TAs will announce their respective office hours and contact information. Please make sure to attend the section for which you are registered.

Calendar
Tentatively, the quiz has been scheduled for October 17, the midterm for November 2, and the paper is due on November 18. The final exam will be given between 8:00 and 10:59 am on Wednesday, December 7. All dates and assignments are subject to change by announcement in class.
COURSE OUTLINE

September 26 – October 12: THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF POLITICS


Class Schedule:
September 26: Comparative Politics: What and Why? (Powell, chs. 1-2)
September 28: States and Nations (Powell, chs. 1 and 3)
October 3: Government: Blessing or Pest? Public Policy (Powell, ch. 7)
October 5: The Ideal Government? Constitutions and Political Institutions (Powell, ch. 6)
October 10: Elections and Political Parties (Powell, ch. 5)
October 12: Citizen Participation and Interest Groups (Powell, ch. 4)

October 17 – November 2: THE UNITED KINGDOM

Readings: Powell, ch. 8; Berlinski, chs. 1, 3, 5, 7, 10, and Conclusion.

Class Schedule:
October 17: The United Kingdom: Introduction (Powell, pp. 151-60); QUIZ
October 19: The Old-Fashioned British (Powell, pp. 160-62; Berlinski, ch. 1)
October 24: The Westminster Model: Winner Takes All (Powell, pp. 162-72, 185-90)
October 26: Class Politics and Beyond (Powell, pp. 173-85; Berlinski, chs. 3, 5, 7)
October 31: Britain from Thatcher to Cameron (Powell, pp. 190-95; Berlinski, chs. 10 and Conclusion)

November 2: MIDTERM EXAMINATION

November 7 - 18: RUSSIA

Readings: Powell, ch. 12; Kotkin, entire; Berlinski, ch. 9.

Class Schedule:
November 7: Russia and the Totalitarian Experience (Powell, pp. 335-40; Kotkin, Introduction and ch. 1)
November 9: How Soviet Communism Died (Powell, pp. 340-42; Kotkin, chs. 2-4; Berlinski, ch. 9)
November 14: Yeltsin: Democracy and Crony Capitalism (Powell, pp. 342-55; Kotkin, chs. 5-7 and Epilogue)
November 16: Putin and Medvedev: Nationalism and a Return to Autocracy? (Powell, pp. 355-79)

November 18: PAPER DUE

November 21 – 30: NIGERIA

Readings: Powell, ch. 18; Guest, Introduction, chs. 2-8, and Conclusion.

Class Schedule:
November 21: Nigeria: An African Giant (Powell, pp. 617-26; Guest, Introduction)
November 23: Social Fractures and the Resource Curse (Powell, pp. 626-37; Guest, ch. 5)
November 28: Between Military Rule and a Fragile Democracy (Powell, pp. 637-51; Guest, chs. 2, 6, and 7)
November 30: The Trouble with Nigeria (Powell, pp. 651-63; Guest, chs. 3-4, 8, and Conclusion)

December 7: FINAL EXAMINATION