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. The course will be supported by a Ted (Blackboard) account, which can be accessed at ted.ucsd.edu.

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. 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 5, and the paper is due on November 21. The final exam will be given between 8:00 and 10:59 am on Wednesday, December 12, at a location to be announced. All dates and assignments are subject to change.
COURSE OUTLINE

October 1 - 15: THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF POLITICS


Class Schedule:
October 1: Comparative Politics: What and Why? (Powell, chs. 1-2)
October 3: States and Nations (Powell, chs. 1 and 3)
October 8: Why governments, or why not to have them (Powell, ch. 7)
October 10: The Ideal Government? Constitutions and Political Institutions (Powell, ch. 6)
October 15: Elections, Political Parties, and Interest Groups (Powell, chs. 4-5)

October 17 – 31: 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 22: 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 29: 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 5: MIDTERM EXAMINATION

November 7 - 21: RUSSIA

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

Class Schedule:
November 7: Russia and Totalitarianism (Powell, pp. 335-40; Kotkin, Introduction and ch. 1)
November 14: How Soviet Communism Died (Powell, pp. 340-42; Kotkin, chs. 2-4; Berlinski, ch. 9)
November 19: Yeltsin: Democracy and Crony Capitalism (Powell, pp. 342-55; Kotkin, chs. 5-7)
November 21: The Putin Years: Nationalism and Autocracy (Powell, pp. 355-79; Kotkin, Epilogue)

November 21: PAPER DUE

November 26 – December 5: NIGERIA

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

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

December 12: FINAL EXAMINATION