INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL SCIENCE: COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Objectives and Approach
Comparative politics includes the study of politics in other countries as well as cross-national comparisons. This introductory 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 contemporary politics in three countries: 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. If your final exam grade is better than the average of your midterm grade and your paper grade, 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 on course assignments includes unauthorized collaboration as well as reliance on unattributed sources (including work you may have done for other courses). 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 16, the midterm for November 4, and the paper will be due on November 21. The final exam will be given between 8:00 and 10:59 am on Wednesday, December 11, at a location to be announced. All dates and assignments are subject to change.
COURSE OUTLINE

September 30 - October 14: THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF POLITICS


Class Schedule:
September 30: Comparative Politics: What and Why? (Powell, chs. 1-2)
October 2: States and Nations (Powell, chs. 1 and 3)
October 7: Why governments, or why not to have them (Powell, ch. 7)
October 9: The Ideal Government? Constitutions and Political Institutions (Powell, ch. 6)
October 14: Elections, Political Parties, and Interest Groups (Powell, chs. 4-5)

October 16 – 30: THE UNITED KINGDOM

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

Class Schedule:
October 16: The United Kingdom: Introduction (Powell, pp. 151-60); QUIZ
October 21: The Old-Fashioned British (Powell, pp. 160-62; Berlinski, ch. 1)
October 23: The Westminster Model: Winner Takes All (Powell, pp. 162-72, 185-90)
October 28: Class Politics and Beyond (Powell, pp. 173-85; Berlinski, chs. 3, 5, 7)
October 30: Britain from Thatcher to Cameron (Powell, pp. 190-95; Berlinski, chs. 10 and Conclusion)

November 4: MIDTERM EXAMINATION

November 6 - 20: RUSSIA

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

Class Schedule:
November 6: Russia and Autocracy (Powell, pp. 335-40; Kotkin, Introduction and ch. 1)
November 13: How Soviet Communism Died (Powell, pp. 340-42; Kotkin, chs. 2-4; Berlinski, ch. 9)
November 18: Yeltsin: Democracy and Crony Capitalism (Powell, pp. 342-55; Kotkin, chs. 5-7)
November 20: The Putin Years: Nationalism and Autocracy (Powell, pp. 355-79; Kotkin, Epilogue)

November 21: PAPER DUE

November 25 – December 4: NIGERIA

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

Class Schedule:
November 25: Nigeria: An African Giant (Powell, pp. 617-26; Guest, Introduction)
November 27: Social Fractures and the Resource Curse (Powell, pp. 626-37; Guest, ch. 5)
December 2: Between Military Rule and a Fragile Democracy (Powell, pp. 637-51; Guest, chs. 2, 6-7)
December 4: The Trouble with Nigeria (Powell, pp. 651-63; Guest, chs. 3-4, 8, and Conclusion)

December 11: FINAL EXAMINATION