POLI 11: INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Course Objectives: This course is designed to expose students to major thematic concepts within the field of comparative politics while providing students with the tools needed to compare and analyze political systems. In particular, we will examine how economics, institutional structure, and political culture shape politics. We will pay particular attention to how these factors shape prospects for democracy in developed and developing states.

Student Objectives: At the end of this course, students should be able to:

1) Show familiarity with major theoretical concepts in the field of comparative politics.
2) Apply theoretical material to explain political realities in a variety of cases.
3) Draw connections between theoretical material and current events.
4) Improve their written and oral communication skills.

Course Assignments/Grading:

Section: 20%
Midterm Examination: 40%
Final Examination: 40%

Course Participation: Students are expected to not only attend lecture prepared to actively engage course materials but to attend lecture and section meetings having completed the assigned reading and able to actively participate in course activities. In both settings, the goal is to 1) convey theoretical material, 2) apply this material to specific cases, and 3) provide opportunities to connect theoretical material to modern political phenomenon. Subsequently, you are strongly encouraged to follow the news as familiarity with current events will prove useful in lecture and section discussions. The following (non-exhaustive) list of news organization links may prove useful in ensuring you are up to date on current political phenomenon:

Los Angeles Times Online (http://www.latimes.com)
Economist Online (http://www.economist.com)
BBC News (http://news.bbc.co.uk)
Financial Times (http://www.ft.com)
CNN (http://www.cnn.com)

Section Grading: Grades for each individual section will be calculated according to the rules set by the teaching assistant in charge of that section. Your TA’s for the course are Kathleen Blackwell (kblackwe@ucsd.edu) and Nathan Combes (ncombes@ucsd.edu). Please direct any questions regarding section grading to your respective teaching assistants.
**Midterm and Final Examinations:** The midterm and final examinations will be approximately 5-7 pages in length and will require students to formulate an argument in response to a prompt. Further guidelines will be announced in lecture.

**Late Papers:** Barring documented emergencies, no late papers will be accepted. Additionally, a hard copy of each paper is required; e-mail attachments will not be accepted. If you fail to turn in class assignments, you will not pass the course, so please plan accordingly.

**Academic Integrity:** While issues of plagiarism are not expected, course assignments are to be completed on an individual basis. Incidents of plagiarism will be dealt with according to college procedures. Under no circumstances will students receive credit for any assignment deemed to violate the college’s academic integrity standards.

**Books (required):**
Wood, Elisabeth Jean. *Forging Democracy from Below*
Crnobrnja, Mihailo. *The Yugoslav Drama.*

**Reading Schedule:** Students should attend lecture prepared to actively discuss the course readings. I realize that you all have many commitments, but you cannot pass this course without doing the assigned readings. Readings not included in the assigned textbooks can be accessed via electronic reserves. Those readings designated with a * are reserve readings and will be available electronically. Strategies for tackling academic readings can be found at: [http://pne.people.si.umich.edu/PDF/howtoread.pdf](http://pne.people.si.umich.edu/PDF/howtoread.pdf).

**Textbooks:** Copies of each of the main textbooks will be available on hard reserves at the Geisel Library and new and used copies of the textbooks are available at the Student Bookstore and at various websites including Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Textbooks.com, etc. Although the decision to whether or not to purchase the textbooks is entirely yours, the decision not to purchase the textbooks does not preclude you from being responsible for the material covered and an inability to access reserve materials does not constitute a valid excuse for not participating in course activities and/or submitting course examinations at the required time.

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

**WEEK 1**

**UNIT ONE: Democracy Defined**

6 January: Course Logistics

8 January: What Is Democracy?
WEEK 2

UNIT TWO: Explaining Democratization

13 January: Structural Theories of Democratization
Wood pgs. 6-10

15 January: Voluntarist Theories of Democratization
Di Palma (On Diffusion pgs. 1-9, 16-23 and 27-43)*

WEEK 3

20 January: No Lecture Martin Luther King Jr. Day

22 January: Case Studies in Democratic Transition
Wood pgs. 25-144 and 150-193

WEEK 4

UNIT THREE: Ethnicity, Civil Conflict and Democracy

27 January: Defining Ethnicity
Bates (Ethnic Competition and Modernization)*

27/29 January: Defining (and Explaining) Civil Conflict
Berkeley (Excerpt: The Graves Are Not Yet Full): http://nyti.ms/194AelG
Skocpol (France, Russia, China…pgs. 178-192): http://bit.ly/1bJRAlc

WEEK 5

3-5 February: Case Study in Civil Conflict: the Former Yugoslavia
Crnobrnja: 15-34, 65-114, 141-188

MIDTERM DISTRIBUTED

WEEK 6

UNIT FOUR: Political Institutions and Democracy

10 February: Political Institutions: Presidentialism and Parliamentarism
Lijphart (Patterns of Democracy pgs. 117-129)
Mainwaring and Shugart (Juan Linz, Presidentialism…): http://bit.ly/16YhH6J

PRIME MINISTER’S QUESTIONS
12 February: Political Institutions: Electoral Systems and Party Systems
Cox*

WEEKS 7/8

17 February: No Lecture: Presidents Day (17 February)

UNIT FIVE: Democracy and Political Culture

19 February: Does Culture Really Matter?
Zakaria (Why Do They Hate Us?): http://bit.ly/14sMiFu

MIDTERM DUE

19/24 February: Civic Culture and Democracy
Putnam CH 1, 4 and 6
Lemann (Kicking in Groups): http://bit.ly/19sqw9t
FRIEND OR FOE

24/26 February: The Downsides of Civic Culture
Fiorina (Extreme Voices: A Dark Side of Civic...): http://stanford.io/12hthrY

FINAL DISTRIBUTED

WEEK 9

3-5 March: Case Study in Political Culture: Weimar Germany
Allen 1-167 and 183-200
Berman (Civil Society and the Collapse...): http://bit.ly/1c883R7

WEEK 10

UNIT SIX: Evaluating Democracy

10-12 March: “Fixing” Democracy?
Thaler and Sunstein (Nudge): http://bit.ly/1dbff01

FINAL: 8:00-10:59am 21 March

Disclaimer: This syllabus is intended to provide an overview of the course. You cannot claim any rights from it. While the information included within the syllabus should be a reliable guide for the course, scheduling and dates may change. Official announcements are always those made in lecture. Please be aware that it is your responsibility to obtain all information relayed in lecture.