

PSCI 2012: INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Andy Baker
Department of Political Science
University of Colorado at Boulder
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Math 100
MW 10:00AM – 10:50AM

Andy.Baker@Colorado.edu
Office: Ketchum 22
Office hours: W 2-4 and by appointment
303-492-1733



COURSE OBJECTIVES: Comparative politics is the study of politics in multiple, and typically foreign, countries. In this course, students will learn about many of the fundamental questions and themes examined in the field of comparative politics. We will approach these themes by considering the contemporary political histories of four countries: the United Kingdom, Russia, China, and South Africa. After taking this course students will (1) be more familiar with world affairs and be able to follow current events more knowledgeably, (2) be able to identify and engage themselves in solving global political and economic problems, and (3) better understand what is unique about the US political system.



REQUIRED READING: All readings listed on this syllabus are required. Four books are available for purchase at the CU Book Store, and copies of each are also available on course reserve at Norlin Library. They are as follows:

- (1) *Comparative Politics: A Global Introduction, 3rd Edition* by Michael J. Sodaro
- (2) *China Road* by Rob Gifford
- (3) *Putin's Labyrinth* by Steve Levine
- (4) *We Are All the Same* by Jim Wooten

A small number of other required readings are available on course electronic reserves (abbreviated as "E-RES") and through CULearn. Aside from this syllabus, all course "handouts" are emailed to students and posted to CULearn; they are not printed, copied, and handed out.



GRADES: Overall, the final grade will be allocated in the following manner:

- 1) Examinations 45%
 - o Quiz: 10%
 - o Midterm: 15%
 - o Final: 20%
- 2) Research Paper: 20%
- 3) Recitation Section: 20%
 - o Attendance: 10%
 - o Performance: 10%
- 4) Simulation: 10%
 - o Short Paper: 9%
 - o Game Result: 1%
- 5) Clickers: 5%

First, 45% of the overall grade is based on three closed-book, in-class examinations: a Quiz (10%), a Midterm (15%), and a Final (20%). The Quiz will cover Unit 1 material, the Midterm will cover Unit 2 material, and the Final will cover all material. Examinations will not be given to anyone at a day and time other than that already specified on this syllabus, unless students have discussed with the instructor IN ADVANCE special arrangements due to disability or final exam conflict. Students with disabilities must show Professor Baker *within the first two weeks of class* authorization from the Office of Services to Disabled Students and must take the examination at the specified time.

Second, twenty percent of the final grade is based on a 1000-word research paper (4-5 pages). Research papers handed in after the specified time will have ten percentage points subtracted from their final score each business day they are late. Students must also submit papers to turnitin.com, and *the same late penalty applies to these electronic submissions.* Information on the research paper question and topic will be distributed after the Quiz.

Third, students will be graded for their attendance (10%) and performance (10%) in recitation sections. Regarding the attendance portion, teaching assistants (TAs) will keep track of recitation attendance, and students will be allowed two “freebie” absences. Beyond two recitation absences, the attendance grade will be lowered from 100 by ten percentage points *per absence*. *Students with eight or more recitation absences will either have to drop the class or receive an “F”*. The performance component of the grade is based on student engagement and participation as well as other assignments given at the TA’s discretion.

Fourth, there will be a group-based role-playing simulation exercise carried out in students’ recitation sections. Students will write a short paper (9%) in preparation for the simulation. Again, papers handed in after the specified time will have ten percentage points subtracted from their final score each business day they are late. Students will also be assigned a grade (1%) based on the results of the simulation.

Finally, student scores on the daily “Clickers” questions in lecture will be graded (5%). Students receive four “freebie” clicker days, to be used for absences or poor clicker performance. Clickers are NOT used in recitation sections.

There are no extra credit projects available in this course. Final grades will be determined using the following percentage scale: A=94-100, A-=90-94, B+=87-90, B=84-87, B-=80-84, C+=77-80, C=74-77, C-=70-74, D+=67-70, D=64-67, D-=60-64, F=<60. Please note that these are true cut-offs and there is no rounding.

As always, academic dishonesty is not tolerated. Students engaging in academic dishonesty will receive an “F” in the class and may be expelled. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, passing off the work of others (especially that of current or former students as well as published or on-line text) as your own. Cheating on Clickers entries is also academic dishonesty.

The professor retains the right to change the syllabus at any time.



MISCELLANEOUS GUIDELINES:

Religious holidays, sickness, and other reasons for absence that are “legitimate” DO COUNT against your freebie absences in recitation and lecture. You are strongly advised to use your freebies for these purposes. Please do not send doctors notes or other excuses to your professor or TA.

Powerpoint slides are NOT posted or otherwise made available to students outside of class. If you miss class, you should copy the notes from a classmate; please do not ask your professor or TA what you missed.

In the lecture hall, please turn off your cell phones. Also, please do not read newspapers, bring your dog(s), chat with your neighbor, or use laptops for purposes other than taking notes.



COURSE SCHEDULE:

INTRODUCTION

Weeks 1 and 2
Course Themes

January 18, 23 and 25
• Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 13, and 14 (*Sodaro*)

Suggested recitation topic:

What is politics? What is democracy? Can democracy exist without economic wealth? Which economic system would you prefer living in? Has globalization weakened the nation-state?

UNIT 1: POLITICS IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES: THE UNITED KINGDOM IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Weeks 3 and 4
Britain’s Political Eras and
Prime Ministers

January 30, February 1, 6, and 8
• Chapter 16 (*Sodaro*)

Suggested recitation topic:

What are the pros and cons of collectivism and Thatcherism? What are the pros and cons of the Third Way? What was Brown’s downfall and what will be the future of the current coalition government?

Week 5
Parliamentary Systems and
Electoral Systems

February 13 and 15
• Chapters 7 and 8 (*Sodaro*)

Suggested recitation topic:

Compare and contrast presidential and parliamentary systems. Meet with your simulation “parties.”

Week 6

The US in Comparative
Perspective

February 20 and 22

- Allen, Christopher (2006). "The Case for a Multiparty..." (E-RES)

Recitation:

Simulation of a parliamentary system
SHORT PAPER DUE ON FEBRUARY 20 IN CLASS!

Week 7

Catch-up and Quiz

February 27 and 29

QUIZ IS FEBRUARY 29 IN CLASS!

Recitation:

Quiz Review

**UNIT 2: POLITICS IN THE POST-SOCIALIST DEVELOPING WORLD:
ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL TRANSITIONS IN CHINA AND RUSSIA**

Week 8

Politics and Economics in
Developing Countries

March 5 and 7

- Chapters 3 and 15 (*Sodaro*)

Suggested recitation topic:

Why are some countries richer than others? Why are some countries more democratic than others?

Week 9

Marxism
China: Mao and Deng

March 12 and 14

- Chapter 21 (*Sodaro*)
- Chapters 1-12 (*China Road*)

Suggested recitation topic:

What explains China's economic boom?

Week 10

China: Cultural Pluralism

March 19 and 21

- Chapters 13-23 (*China Road*)

Suggested recitation topic:

Why has China achieved economic growth without democratization? What is the solution to China's Tibet question?

Week 11

Russia: Marxism and the USSR

April 2 and 4

- Chapter 20 (*Sodaro*)
- Chapters 1-3 (*Putin's Labyrinth*)

Suggested recitation topic:

Why did the Soviet Union collapse?

Week 12

Russia's Transitions and Midterm

April 9 and 11

- Chapters 4-10 (*Putin's Labyrinth*)

Suggested recitation topic:

Will Putin ever voluntarily step down from power?

Week 13a

Midterm

April 16

MIDTERM IS APRIL 16 IN CLASS!

**UNIT 3: POLITICS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD:
SOUTH AFRICA AND EPIDEMICS IN AFRICA**

Week 13b

Politics in South Africa

April 18

- Chapter 23, South Africa portion only (*Sodaro*)

Suggested recitation topic:

Why did apartheid begin and end?

Week 14

HIV/AIDS in S. Africa

April 23 and 25

- pp. vii-106 (*We Are All the Same*)

