Introduction to Comparative Politics

“Without comparisons to make, the mind does not know how to proceed”

-- Alexis de Tocqueville

This course is designed to provide you with an introduction to the main concepts and theories of Comparative Politics. By comparing across a range of developed and developing countries we will examine a number of recurring patterns and differences between the organization of modern states and economies. Questions we will consider include:

- Why are countries’ political systems and economies organized so differently throughout the world?
- How do relations between states and societies vary across countries?
- How can we account for institutional variation in the design of political systems?
- Why do institutions create tendencies of “path dependence” in political and economic development?
- Do countries have identities? Where do national identities come from and how do they change?
- Are there different “pathways” of development for countries to choose from?
- Is national diversity diminishing in an era of “globalization”? Is there increasing “convergence” and institutional isomorphism?
- Do liberal capitalism and democracy represent the “end of history”?
- How/why do states deal with international challenges and crises differently?

Readings:

Required Text:


Recommended:

Read a daily newspaper that has good international coverage, such as the New York Times or Financial Times. The weekly Economist is excellent as well.
Office Hours and Contact Information

Office Hours: MW 8:30-10:00 a.m., and by appointment

Office: RT 1755
Phone: (216) 687-4678
Email: j.lewis07@csuohio.edu

Course Requirements:

You are responsible for all readings listed on the syllabus. Attendance is mandatory. It is important to keep up with the weekly reading assignments since lectures and class discussion will assume familiarity with them. I will periodically call on people to answer questions, so coming to class prepared and ready to discuss comparative politics will be a benefit to you.

There are two regular in-class exams and a cumulative final exam. The exams will consist of essays and short answer questions. In addition, each of you will choose from a set of “case study” questions interspersed throughout the semester (see below) to write four short analysis reports. The reports should be concise (approximately 750-1000 words, typed, double-spaced) and focus on the key question or theme of the case study. Each analysis will be graded for analytical clarity and detail, and the deadlines for each case are listed in the course outline.

Exam 1 25%
Exam 2 25%
Final Exam 30%
Short Analysis Reports 20% (5% each)

Important dates:

Exam 1 Oct. 6
Exam 2 Nov. 14
Short Analysis Reports Various deadlines (see below), you choose 4
Sept. 5, 15, 29
Oct. 10, 20
Nov. 3, 17
Dec. 1
Final Exam            Dec. 10, 10:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Last Day To Withdraw  Oct. 31

**Final grades will be based on the following scale:**

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*Please check these dates carefully.* If you cannot make any of these exam dates or paper deadlines, I recommend you do not take this course. No “early” exams will be given under any circumstances. Make-up exams will only be given in exceptional circumstances; in all cases, students must have a valid excuse and written documentation (doctor’s note, etc.) AND I should be notified PRIOR to the exam. Make-up exams will be given at my convenience and any missed exam must be taken within ONE WEEK of the original exam or a zero for that exam will be recorded. An essay format will be used for all make-up exams.

Early/late paper policy: Early papers are always welcome. **Late papers will be accepted, but late penalties apply; for each calendar date late, deduct 15 points out of 100;** if you consider this late assessment severe, I agree, so please be sure to turn your papers in on time or early. To be considered “on time,” papers are due in typed, hard copy form in class the day of the deadline. **No e-mail papers will be accepted.**

Please note, I do not provide information about grades by e-mail or phone.

Finally, my policy on academic dishonesty is simple: zero tolerance. Cheating on exams or plagiarizing material (regardless of source -- this means internet sources too!) will result in a zero for that assignment. The University’s policy on academic dishonesty can be found in the student code of conduct; a particularly relevant passage you should be familiar with reads as follows:

Academic honesty is essential to maintain the integrity of the University as an institution and to foster an environment conducive to the pursuit of knowledge. The Cleveland State University Academic Community values honesty and integrity and holds its members to high standards of ethical conduct. Academic dishonesty is, therefore, unacceptable, and students must be prepared to accept the appropriate sanctions for any dishonest academic behavior. Academic misconduct refers to any fraudulent actions or behaviors that affect the evaluation of a student's academic performance or record of academic progress. It includes:

**Cheating** -- Fraudulent acquisition and/or submission of another's intellectual property. This includes but is
not limited to the unauthorized giving or receiving of a copy of examination questions, the use of unauthorized or fabricated sources in carrying out assignments, and copying the examination answers of others.

**Plagiarism** -- Stealing and/or using the ideas or writings of another in a paper or report and claiming them as your own. This includes but is not limited to the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment.

Please read the definition of plagiarism carefully. “I didn’t know how to cite things” is not a valid defense for failing to give full and clear acknowledgment of the ideas or writings of someone else.

**Course Outline:**

I. Introduction to Comparative Politics

1. **How Do We Study Comparative Politics?** The idea of a “comparative method.” What to look for: material versus nonmaterial comparisons. CP’s three “I’s”: interests, identities, institutions. Theories, hypotheses, and evidence – what separates the good from the bad? How to study “the state.” The logic of development “pathways” and what this means for later developers.

Dickovick and Eastwood, ch’s 1-3

**CASE STUDY – OPTION 1:** Compare the theories for why states emerge. Focus on chapter 3, and pp. 60-77 especially. Which “Insights” author’s argument do you find most convincing in this section (pp. 60-77), and why? **DUE DATE** for analysis: SEPT. 5

II. Industrialized Democracies

2. **The United Kingdom.** “Early industrializer” and pioneer of parliamentary democracy. Why doesn’t the UK have a constitution and what difference does that make? From a world-wide empire to a “middle tier” power – the notorious “British disease.”

Dickovick and Eastwood, ch. 4 and pp. 410-425
CASE STUDY – OPTION 2: Using a “new institutionalism” perspective (see pp. 97-98), analyze the relationship between early industrialization and democratization in the case of Britain’s path dependent development. Especially useful text includes, ch. 4 and pp. 91, 121, 417-24. DUE DATE for analysis: SEPT. 15

3. France. The “stalemate society” and a revolutionary institutional trajectory. The dirigisme tradition. The innovations of the Fifth Republic. Who are the true inheritors of Gaullism? Why are the French so adverse to “globalization”?

Dickovick and Eastwood, ch. 5 and pp. 426-440

CASE STUDY – OPTION 3: Is democracy really the ‘end of history”? What does a persistent authoritarian system like China tell us about the forms of democratization? Is there an “ideal-type” for modern, liberal democracy? Especially useful text includes, ch. 5 and pp. 124, 132-36, 540-43. DUE DATE for analysis: SEPT. 29

Exam 1, Mon., Oct. 6

4. Germany. The invention of the “social market economy” and the creation of the German state – two sides of the same coin. Rapid industrialization and the proto-type of “catch-up” modernization. How Germany reinvented their national identity after 1945. The new East-West divide.

Dickovick and Eastwood, ch’s 6-7 and pp. 441-454

CASE STUDY – OPTION 4: What difference do federal constitutions make? Are they good for social stability, democratic rights, and economic development? Explore the pro-con views and cite some country specific examples to support your points. Especially useful text includes, ch. 7 and pp. 181-87. DUE DATE for analysis: OCT. 10

5. Japan. The development of “managed capitalism” and the postwar economic miracle. Japan as the modern exemplar of a “strong state.” The end of Japan, Inc.? Japan as a regional leader?
CASE STUDY – OPTION 5: Compare and contrast the types of executive structures known as “presidentialism” and “parliamentarianism.” What are the major differences and is one type better? Focus on chapter 9, and pp. 227-34 especially. DUE DATE for analysis: OCT. 20

III. Transition and Developing Countries


Dickovick and Eastwood, ch’s 11-12 and pp. 503-516

CASE STUDY – OPTION 6: What are the major theories about why revolutions happen and why are there such persistent differences between structuralist and culturalist accounts? Especially useful text includes ch. 11, and pp. 290-302. DUE DATE for analysis: NOV. 3

Exam 2, Fri., Nov. 14


Dickovick and Eastwood, ch’s 13-14 and pp. 531-547

CASE STUDY – OPTION 7: Are “quota system” for female representation in politics fair? Why does Japan have such low female political participation rates and does this
mean the quality of Japan’s democracy is lower? Especially useful text includes, ch. 13, and pp. 349-53, 340, 467-68. DUE DATE for analysis: NOV. 17


Dickovick and Eastwood, ch’s 15 and pp. 562-577

CASE STUDY – OPTION 8: Does globalization threaten “national” culture? Is the French case a new norm or a hyper-sensitive exception? Especially useful text includes ch. 15, and pp. 389-94, 439-40. DUE DATE for analysis: DEC. 1

FINAL EXAM, Wed., Dec. 10, 10:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.