

## Introduction to Comparative Politics

Political Science 2200 – Spring 2017

### Course Objectives

When the Soviet empire collapsed in 1991, it seemed to confirm Americans' faith in the superiority and inevitable triumph of democratic government. Hopes were further raised by the popular uprisings of the Arab Spring in 2011 and 2012. However, the Arab uprising has faltered, and authoritarian governments have regrouped and become more aggressive. Economic crisis and political dysfunction in the US and Europe raise questions about democracy's sustainability and effectiveness. China seems poised to overtake the U.S. economically, leading some to claim that China, despite its authoritarian government (or even because of it), is a better model.

In this course, we will try to answer the following questions:

- Is government necessary?
- What conditions foster the rise of populism?
- Is there a best system of government, applicable to all peoples, at all times?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of liberal democracy when compared to the alternatives?
- Why did the so-called Arab Spring fail? Are Islam and liberal democracy compatible?
- Does the success of the "China model" pose a serious challenge to liberal democracy?
- Are all democracies essentially the same, or do different systems of representation make a significant difference?
- What is the proper role for government in the economy?
- Can democracy and economic development be exported?

*Class attendance and participation is required to earn full credit.*

**Office:** Old Main 326A

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**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 3:00-4:00. *I'm happy to meet with you at other times.* Please make arrangements by email.

**Teaching Assistant: Alean Hunt** <[aleankay@yahoo.com](mailto:aleankay@yahoo.com)>

**Final exam:** Thursday, May 4, 1:30 - 3:20, Main 115

**Required Readings & Quizzes:** There is no required textbook for this class. Required readings and quizzes on the reading will be posted most weeks in Canvas. *You are responsible to check* after class to see if there is a required reading.

*An iClicker is required in every class.* If you already have an iClicker for another class, you do not need to purchase another. Either an iClicker or an iClicker2 will work and can be purchased in the bookstore. *The iClicker app will not work.* You need to register your iClicker (your name and USU A#) at [www.iClicker.com](http://www.iClicker.com). You will need an iClicker starting the second day of class, or you will lose points.

**Electronic Devices Not Allowed in Class** Laptops, netbooks, iPads, smart phones, cell phones, and other similar **electronic devices distract from class discussion. Unfortunately, this means their use is not allowed in class, even for taking notes.**

**Grading Attendance and participation is required.** 10% of your grade is earned during class periods. Using the iClicker, you will answer questions related to the reading and pertaining to class discussion. Questions can be at the beginning or end of the class, so being late or leaving early could cause you to lose participation points. Participation points will be logged into Canvas by Friday afternoon each week. *You are responsible for monitoring your points on Canvas. If your iClicker is not registering your responses, speak to me immediately after class; otherwise you may lose the credit you deserve.*

*If you don't come to class, you will miss information vital to the exams. Material covered in class may not be covered in the reading, and terms you may think you know are frequently defined differently in political science. If you do miss class for whatever reason, you are responsible to get notes from a classmate.*

**Extra Credit:** There is no extra credit in the course. Please do not ask at the end of the semester if there is something you can do to raise your grade. You will be graded on work that every student is assigned during the semester.

**Basis of Course Grade:**

class participation	10%
online quizzes	20%
country profiles	5%
research essays (3)	35%
midterm exam	20%
final exam	10%

**Grade scale:**

A	=	94-100%
A-	=	90-93%
B+	=	87-89%
B	=	84-86%
B-	=	80-83%
C+	=	77-79%
C	=	74-76%
C-	=	70-73%
D+	=	67-69%
D	=	60-66%
F	=	0-59%

**Rounding policy:**

When it comes to the final grade, simple arithmetic rounding to two decimal places will be used. Grades are crude approximations of your performance. The difference between 89.4% (rounded to 89%) and 89.5% (rounded to 90%) is only 0.1%, but that's the difference between a B+ and A- on your transcript. Unfortunately, the university requires us to draw a line somewhere; appeals that you are "so close" to a better grade will not raise it.

**Exams:** (A study guide will be available one week before each exam.)

- midterm exam worth 20% of your class grade (The midterm exam will only be given at the regularly scheduled times unless there is prior arrangement with me.)
- final exam worth 10% of your class grade (The final exam will only be given at the regularly scheduled times unless there is prior arrangement with me.)

**Online Quizzes** are taken on the Canvas system (canvas.usu.edu). Check Canvas after each class for details. The objective of the quizzes is to have you become familiar with the readings. Quizzes are generally due **before midnight** (11:59 pm) on the due date.

**Research Essays:** Detailed requirements and deadlines will be posted on Canvas (canvas.usu.edu).

**Late Submission of Assignments and Quizzes:**

Please pay close attention to the deadlines posted in Canvas. Except in the case of documented emergencies, due dates are enforced. Late work is subject to an automatic 30% reduction, so **the best you can expect on a late assignment or quiz is a C-**. You may complete assignments early to avoid last minute problems.

**Make-up Exams and Missing Quiz Deadlines:**

To be fair to all students, make-up exams will not be given, except by prior arrangement, or in documented, extraordinary cases, such as hospitalization or death in the immediate family.

**Attendance/Cheating:** Attendance is required. Class participation is monitored in part by your feedback on issues using an iClicker. Since this is part of your grade, you may only use your own clicker. Participating with another student's clicker for them is **cheating**. Anyone who does so, or allows another student to use their clicker, will lose all their participation points (10% reduction in points for final grade).

**Accommodation for Disabilities**

Special accommodation can be made for students with documented disability. Please discuss your needs with me early (preferably during the first week of class). See [www.usu.edu/drc](http://www.usu.edu/drc) for details on USU's accommodation policy and procedures.