Overview

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to comparative politics, a subdivision of political science. In order to understand the structure of this course you need to understand the content and the framework.

**Content:** This course is divided into three parts. 1) Western Democracies: The first section of this course focuses on the two main styles of democracy, the presidential system and the parliamentary system. In this section, we will focus on the US, the UK and France. 2) Post-Communist States: Communism was the main competing ideology to liberal democracy. In this section, we will look at two Communist inspired countries, Russia and China. 3) Theocracies: A theocracy is a government based on religious principles. In this section, we will focus on Israel and Iran.

**Framework:** In this course, there is an emphasis on comparing the executive branch, legislative branch, policy-making process and electoral system of each country.

**Navigation Tabs:** There are six navigation tabs located on the Canvas homepage. The following provides a summary of the content under each of the tabs:

- **About the Course:** Under this tab you will find a detailed description of the course, including the required textbook, an explanation of exams and assignments, the grade scale and other important information.
- **Western Democracies:** In the first section of this course we will focus on the US, the UK and France. Under this tab, you will find the lecture outline and a link to the multiple choice exam. As the course progresses, you may find a page of links relevant to the material, World Factbook pages for the country covered, and links to the essay questions.
- **Post-Communist Countries:** In the second section of this course we will focus on Russia and China. Under this tab, you will find the lecture outline and a link to the multiple choice exam. As the course progresses, you may find a page of links relevant to the material, World Factbook pages for the country covered, and links to the essay questions.
Theocracies: For the least section of this course, we will focus on Iran and Israel. Under this tab, you will find the lecture outline and a link to the multiple choice exam. As the course progresses, you may find a page of links relevant to the material, World Factbook pages for the country covered, and links to the essay questions. The study guide will indicate which chapters to read and which terms and sections to focus on. There is also a tips page for preparing your study guide.

Study Guides: Under this tab you will find the textbook study guides and tips for preparing the study guide.

Other Material: This is a catch all tab. Currently, at the beginning of the course, there is the first chapter of the textbook and supplemental reading for various countries.

Reading: There is a textbook for this course which will provide you with information about the basic terms, theories and frameworks used within comparative politics. We will also be reading journal articles, specifically articles from Foreign Affairs. We will be watching documentaries and media clips.

Objectives

Objectives are the things I hope to convey, or teach, in this course. Here are some of the things I hope you get out of the course:

- A basic understanding of what comparative politics is, and how it fits into the discipline of political science
- The ability to approach any country and be able to gain an understanding of policy-making within that country
- The ability to identify critical junctures in the development of political institutions and the policy-making process
- A basic knowledge of some of the critical junctures and current events within our focus countries
- Development of a personal values and curiosity about the world

Textbook


The first chapter of this book are available under the "Other Material" tab on the Canvas homepage.

Discussion

Discussion (150 points or 26%): Discussion is an important part of this course. You will be given 150 points at the start of the course. There will be a five point deduction for every class missed. Everyone gets one free absence. Please let me know if you anticipate an extended absence during this course.
Exams

There are three exams in this course, one per module. There is a multiple choice section and there are essay questions to complete. Carefully read the following information:

**Multiple Choice Exam**: (Approximately 120 points or 21%) There are three multiple choice exams. There are 20-30 multiple choice questions, worth 2 points per question. The content for the multiple choice questions comes from the textbook. There is a study guide located under the "Study Guide" tab on the Canvas homepage. The study guide will tell you which chapters to read, and which concepts and chapter sections make up the content of the questions.

The multiple choice exam can be found under the navigation tab or under the "Assignments" tab on the left hand side of Canvas. You will be taking the exam from your home computer. You will have access to the textbook during the exam, but the exam is timed. Once you open the exam, you have 60 minutes to complete it. I recommend that you read the chapters and use the study guide to take notes. Late exams may be turned in for up to half credit until December 5th.

**Essay Questions** (Approximately 300 points or 53%): This course is divided into three parts. Each part will have 3-4 essay questions worth 20 to 40 points each. As we go through each part, the essay questions will be gradually introduced. In other words, you will not have a big essay exam presented to you at the end of each section. Essay questions will be added, approximately, every 7-10 days.

Because you have extra time to work on the questions, and our class size is small, I will accept revisions. You may complete a question. I will grade it with a tentative score. You may keep that score, or use the suggestions I provide and resubmit your answer. When you receive a tentative score, this means that the score you receive will not be lower. It may actually increase by a couple of points upon final grading. I will need at least five days to provide tentative scores and suggestions.

**Grading Scale**

Here is the grade scale for this course:

93-100% = A; 90-92% = A-
87-89%=B+; 83-86%=B; 80-82%=B-
77-79%=C+; 73-76=C; 70-72%=C-
67-69%=D+; 63-66%=D; 62%>=F

Notice that you need at least a 63% to pass the class. Anyone who is .5 or higher will automatically have their grade rounded up to the next higher grade. For example, a final grade of 86.5% or 86.6% will be entered as an 87% B+. As the professor, I reserve the right to round a grade up .5% for effort shown. For example, let's say a student has a
final grade of 86.3%. Their grades have continuously improved, they took advantage of extra credit and they took the optional comprehensive exam to replace a low test grade. This student's grade would be entered as an 87% B+. Under no circumstances will I raise a grade more than .5%.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism will result in 1) a written form submitted to Logan's ethics board, 2) an failing grade on the assignment for which the plagiarism occurred. If plagiarism occurs again, this will result in 1) a second notification to Logan's ethics board which may result in a dismissal from the university, 2) a failing grade in the course.

Plagiarism most often occurs in one of two ways. It occurs when students are using another student's notes, word for word, to answer an exam essay question. It also occurs when students use online material from the internet (often sources like wikipedia or sparknotes). Students often cut and paste sections of the text and insert it into their essays. I do grade a lot of exams, but duplicate answers and answers in which the concepts and description are way above an entry level student's knowledge does stick out.

I urge you to come see me if concepts in the book or lecture are unclear. Learning takes time and effort. Please don't mistakenly think a source online will clear up all your answers. I guarantee I can do it better! we can email or set up a Zoom conference.

If I suspect you of plagiarism we will sit down and talk about it before any action is taken. You may have access to your written answer and you will be asked to explain certain parts of it. I will do my best to provide questions that are reasonable.

ADA

Classroom Accommodation For Students With Disabilities: USU welcomes students with disabilities. If you have, or suspect you may have, a physical, mental health, or learning disability that may require accommodations in this course, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) as early in the semester as possible (435-797-2444, drc@usu.edu). All disability related accommodations must be approved by the DRC. Once approved, the DRC will coordinate with faculty to provide accommodations.