

PSC101 Introduction to Comparative Politics

Professor: Bing Powell (Email: gb.powell@rochester.edu) MWF 10:00-10:50 GRGEN 101
Spring 2011

Objective. This course is an introduction to the study of political science and comparative politics. We focus on how citizens may be able to control public policies in different modern democracies. We begin by briefly applying some of these ideas to the American political system. We then turn explicitly to the politics of contemporary Britain, Russia and Germany. We shall be comparing these systems with each other, with the United States and, occasionally, with other countries.

Organization. The course meets three times a week. Mondays and Wednesdays will be devoted primarily to lectures and Fridays usually to discussion--of both lectures and reading. You should sign up for a specific discussion section. (One discussion section meets on Thursday afternoon; the other two, on Friday at the regular class time.) The syllabus indicates the main themes of the two lectures each week and the required readings for that week. **A midterm examination on March 2 covers lectures and required reading to that point, including all of Britain and Northern Ireland.** In the period after the midterm we shall turn to Russia and Germany. **There is an optional quiz after the six lectures on each of these countries.** The final examination covers all lectures and required reading; it is scheduled by the Registrar on May ? at ??. This date cannot be changed. Do not arrange to leave for summer vacation before taking the examination on this date.

Grades. Grades will be based on the midterm examination (20%), two brief optional quizzes (10 % each,) class discussion (10%,) and the final examination (50%). Skipping a quiz increases the midterm and final weights by 5% each. Students interested in writing an optional paper (for 25% of final course grade), about ten pages in length, applying the concept of citizen control/influence on policymaking in democracies to another country, should talk with the instructor. Only papers on this topic are acceptable. It is acceptable, but not required, to use other democracies in the main text. Papers are due on Wednesday, April 27.

Assigned Readings: The assigned readings are important part of the course and will be discussed in the Friday conversations.

Purchase: Most of the required readings in the course are from Gabriel A. Almond, G. Bingham Powell, Jr., Kaare Strom and Russell Dalton, *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*, Updated 9th ed., 2010, Ch. 1-8, 10, 12, 19. (The text is called *CPT* in the syllabus.) The readings each week are not long, but they are dense. The country chapters in particular will repay careful rereading and the syllabus is designed to allow for this rereading.

ALSO: Various websites are shown in the syllabus; these may be updated in lecture.

Reserve: Optional: if you wish to learn more about Britain, Northern Ireland, Germany and Russia, it may be helpful to supplement the *CPT* chapters by reading Anthony Birch, *The British System of Government*, on Britain; O'Leary and McGarry, *The Politics of Antagonism* or McKittrick and McVea, *Making Sense of the Troubles*, on Northern Ireland; David Conradt, *The German Polity*; M. Steven Fish, *Democracy Derailed in Russia* or Thomas Remington, *Politics in Russia*. All of the books are on Reserve in Rush Rhees Library. The electronic book by Dalton, *Politics in Germany* on line <http://www.socsci.uci.edu/~rdalton/Pgermany.htm> is also recommended.

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<u>Week</u>	<u>Lecture Themes</u>	<u>Assigned Reading</u>
NO CLASSES WEEK OF JANUARY 12-14		
Jan. 17	NO CLASS: MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY	
Jan. 19	Democratic Systems Today	Syllabus; CPT Ch.1, all; CPT, Ch.2, skim;
Jan. 21	Comparing Democracies	CPT, Ch.3, 43-51; Ch.6, 101-110.
Jan. 24	Controlling Public Policy	CPT Ch. 5, 81-90.
Jan. 26	U.S.A. in Comparative Perspective	CPT Ch. 19: Ranney: "US", esp. 712-723, 727-738, 742-745
Jan. 28	<u>Section meetings begin.</u>	Discuss: why gov?, concepts, citizen control, US democracy
Jan. 31	Britain as Majoritarian Democracy	CPT, Ch. 8: Rose, "Britain," esp. 160-173, 185-190. (Ch.6, 101-110)
Feb. 2	British Political Culture	CPT, Ch. 8, esp. 153-160, 173-182, 197. (Reread Ch.3)
Feb. 4	Discuss: British political system	(Compare to US)
Feb. 7	Britain: Party Competition	CPT, Ch. 8, "Britain," esp. 160-63, 185-190.
Feb. 9	Britain: Issues, Voters, 1983, 1997, 2010 elections	CPT, Ch. 5, 81-92.
Feb. 11	Discuss: British party competition;	interest aggregation & competitive parties
Feb. 14	Britain: Consensual Style -Majoritarian System	CPT, Ch. 8, "Britain," esp.172-73, 182-185, 190-197.
Feb. 16	Britain & US: Elections and Policy Control	CPT, Ch. 4, 60-74; Ch. 7, 127-138.
Feb. 18	Discuss: Interest groups;	policymaking and citizen control--US and Britain
Feb. 21	Majoritarian Failure: Tragedy in Northern Ireland	http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/ (CAIN project), 1 st 3
Feb. 23	NI: Search for Accommodation	background essays
Feb. 25	Discuss: Northern Ireland	(Darby, Darby, Fitzduff)
Feb. 28	Review for midterm exam	No Additional Reading
Mar. 2	MIDTERM EXAM	Exam covers all lectures
Mar. 4	NO CLASS TODAY	and required reading.

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<u>Date</u>	<u>Lecture Themes</u>	<u>Assigned Reading</u>
SPRING BREAK MARCH 7-11 NO CLASSES		
Mar. 14	Russia: Transition from Dictatorship to Democracy?	CPT, Ch. 12: Remington, "Russia" 355-362.
Mar. 16	Russia: Constitutional Arrangements	CPT, Ch. 12:362-369,391-394. (Also, Ch. 2, 35-38).
Mar. 18	Discuss: Russian "transition" & current constitution	
Mar. 21	Russian Political Culture	CPT, Ch.12, Russia,370-377.
Mar. 23	Russia: Parties, Voters, Elections	CPT, Ch. 12, 381-386. Website TBA
Mar. 25	Discuss: Russian culture, party competition, elections	
*Mar. 28	Russia: Presidential Domination of Policy-making	CPT, Ch.12, 377-381, 381-388.
	*LECTURE MOVED TO Lower Strong THIS DAY ONLY	
Mar. 30	Russia: Elections and Limits of Citizen Control	Schliefer "Normal Country?" <u>Foreign Affairs</u> M-Apr 2004
Apr. 1	Discuss: Russian Democracy	Optional Quiz on Russia
Apr. 4	Germany: Development of a Democratic Culture	CPT, Ch. 10, Dalton: "Germany," 253-263,267-276.
Apr. 6	Germany: Constitution	CPT, Ch. 10, 263-267, 280-293; CPT, Ch. 6:113-120 (& 101-110)
Apr. 8	Discuss: German history, culture, constitution	
Apr. 11	Germany: Party Competition	Reread CPT: Ch 5,81-92.
Apr. 13	Germany: Issues and Voters, 2009 election	CPT, Ch. 10: "Germany" 280-289. (Website TBA)
Apr. 15	Discuss: German party system, elections, government	
Apr. 18	Germany: Consensual Style, Mixed System	CPT, Ch. 10, 276-280,289-300; Reread CPT, Ch. 4, 60-74.
Apr. 20	Germany: Elections and Citizen Control	
Apr. 22	Discuss: German Democracy	Optional Quiz on Germany
Apr. 25	Elections and Citizen Control: 4 Countries	CPT, Ch 7, skim, but esp. 147-51.
Apr. 27	Democratic Systems Optional paper due.	No additional reading.

The examination on May ? at ?? covers all lectures and readings.