Introduction to Comparative Politics

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Office Hours: Mondays 1-3pm or by appointment

Teaching Assistants:
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Course Description
This course will introduce students to comparative politics – the study of domestic political institutions, processes, and outcomes across and within countries. These important themes and concepts of contemporary comparative politics include the vibrancy of democracy, the centrality of political and electoral institutions, the possibility of revolution and the power of ethnicity. Cases will be drawn from different countries and historical periods to give students a grounding in the method of comparative analysis. This course is recommended for those thinking about a major, minor, or cluster in political science or international relations and others who are simply interested in learning more about the politics of developed and developing countries.

Course Requirements
Students are expected to attend lectures every Monday and Wednesday and keep up with the readings. All students will be assigned to a section which meets once a week (most likely on Thursday or Friday) during course time. Attendance is mandatory. Sections will serve as an opportunity to discuss the readings and thus, regular and active participation is expected. Participation in section will count for 20% of the final grade. An in-class midterm examination will be worth 35% and a final examination will count for 45% of the final grade. According to the Registrar’s website (http://www.rochester.edu/registrar/examschedule.html), the final exam will tentatively be held Wednesday, December 21 at 7:15pm. However, because exam schedules can change, do not arrange to leave for break before the end of the exam period. Barring extraordinary circumstances, there will be no make-up midterm or final exams.

An optional 5-7 page paper on the Institutions weeks’ readings can be written for extra credit. The paper topic will be handed out November 14 and due by noon on November 23 (hard copy only, no email submissions accepted). If interested, please contact Professor Meguid.
Readings
In this course, we will read a combination of books, book chapters and journal articles. The books are available for purchase at the Bookstore or, alternatively, are on reserve at Rush Rhees Library. Journal articles and chapters in edited volumes are accessible through the Library’s electronic reserves on Blackboard.

Texts available for purchase at the Bookstore


No class on Wednesday, August 31st, Friday, September 2nd or Monday, September 5th

Wednesday, September 7: Course Introduction and What is Democracy?

September 9: What is Democracy? (continued)


September 12, 14, and 16: How does Democracy Come About? Theories of Democratization


**September 19 and 21: Democracy and Democratization: Cases**


**September 26 and 28: Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict: Theories**


**October 3 and 5: Ethnic Conflict: The Case of Yugoslavia**


*No class Monday, October 10: Fall Break*

**October 12 and 17: Revolutions**


**October 19 and 24: Revolutions around the World: Cases**


**October 26: In-class midterm**

**October 31 and November 2: Do Institutions Matter? Presidentialism versus Parliamentarism**


**November 7 and 9: Do Institutions Matter? Electoral Systems**


Quentin Quade, “PR and Democratic Statecraft,” in Diamond and Plattner (eds), The Global Resurgence of Democracy, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. 181-186


**November 14: Do Institutions Matter? Political Party Systems**


**November 16 and 21: Political Participation: How and Why?**


*No class November 23*

**November 28 and 30: Politics and Culture: From Civic Culture to Social Capital**


December 5 and 7: Politics and Culture: From Civic Culture to Social Capital (cases)


December 12: What Have We Learned? Review of the Course

**Note: There is a cumulative final exam. See Registrar’s website for date and time.**