

Comparative Politics
PS 5301-W01
Fall 2016
Sul Ross State University
SYLLABUS

Professor: Dr. Tiffiny Vincent
Office Hours: Via email.
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed with a focus on institutions; individual and collective actors; culture; and the political process. Understanding how these dynamics are similar and different across regions is the primary goal of this course. The impact of globalization across geographic regions will also be discussed.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The graduating student will be able to:

1. Evaluate historic and contemporary comparative theory
Method of Assessment: Weekly discussion response, question creation, and Exam 1
2. Identify various regime types and institutional frameworks
Method of Assessment: Weekly discussion response, question creation, and Exam 2
3. Describe the role of political processes and mobilization
Method of Assessment: Weekly discussion response, question creation, and Exam 2
4. Demonstrate the ability to apply appropriate statistical tools for quantitative analysis.
Method of Assessment: Weekly discussion response, question creation, and Exam 3
5. Identify strengths and weaknesses of contemporary comparative studies
Method of Assessment: Weekly discussion response, question creation, and Exam 3

COURSE FORMAT & EXPECTATIONS:

This is an online distance education course. As such, it is open throughout the semester but there are assigned due dates for submitting assignments and exams (see class schedule below; **NOTE: some assignments/due dates will be announced via our Blackboard homepage throughout the semester or via email*). This course is designed to allow for a more peer-led learning vs. instructor-led lecture environment. The role of the instructor will be to guide the students through the process of understanding the course subject matter. The role of the student will be to read the required materials each week and participate in the online class discussion forums. Specifically, it is required that each student:

1. Read and be prepared to discuss the assigned materials online.
2. Raise relevant questions and contribute relevant observations to the topic at hand.
3. Fully participate in online discussion forums.
4. Demonstrate appropriate and respectful communication with classmates and the instructor.

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

Without full participation and being prepared for each weekly activity, students shall find themselves at a severe disadvantage for achieving success in this course. *Keep in mind that your computer problems are NOT an excuse for any lack of completion of course material. YOU will need to maintain access to a reliable Internet connection (keep in mind there are computers available for your use in the Sul Ross Library). I am not responsible for any technological glitches that may occur in the online environment.* Sul Ross State University does not tolerate cheating, plagiarism, or collusion. Procedures for dealing with these acts are outlined in the Scholastic Dishonesty Policy.

DISTANCE EDUCATION STATEMENT:

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as Smarthinking, library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login information to verify students' identities and to protect students' information. The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the student handbook. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website.

CIVILITY STATEMENT:

In the classroom environment I hold each of you accountable for both your actions and words. Therefore, you should commit yourself to behave in a manner that recognizes personal respect and demonstrates concern for the personal dignity, rights, and freedoms of every individual in the classroom, including respect for University property and the physical and intellectual property of others. If a student is asked to leave the classroom because of uncivil behavior, the student may not return to that class until he or she arranges a conference with the professor, it is the student's responsibility to arrange for this conference. —*Note: This *DOES* apply to this online course.

DISABILITY POLICY:

In order to receive accommodations on exams or assignments, proper documentation must first be provided to the Office of Counseling and Accessibility Services. Contact Mary Schwartz (Office: 112 Ferguson Hall) to set up an accommodations meeting, or call (432) 837-8203. Students must then present this documentation to the instructor as soon as possible so that accommodations may be arranged.

TEXTBOOK (Required):

Caramani, Daniele. *Comparative Politics*, 3rd Edition. Oxford Press, 2013. ISBN: 9780199665990

GRADING SCALE:

- 60% Exams (3 exams worth 20% each)
- 30% Chapter Reflections/Discussion Board Posts
- 10% Participation/Attendance

*There is NO EXTRA CREDIT for this course, so please do not ask.

This course follows the traditional percentage based grading system below.

- A: 100-90
- B: 89-80
- C: 79-70
- D: 69-60
- F: 59 & below.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

EXAMS- Each student will complete three exams in this course. At the graduate level, this course will consist of written essay responses to question(s) that I will create to determine your ability to think critically about the assigned material. Exams (and directions) will be emailed to your sulross.edu email address (*each exam is worth 20% of your overall final course grade*) and will be due on the date specified in the course outline below. I will email you the exams the week before they are due (see course schedule on the next page), this means that you will have 1 week to complete the exam and submit it to me. **Missed exams will result in a grade of zero. Exam deadlines are inflexible and absolute – no excuses.**

CHAPTER REFLECTIONS/DISCUSSION BOARD POSTS- As an online graduate course, your active engagement, participation, and demonstration of reading comprehension is vital to your success in this class. In the discussion section of Blackboard each week, I will pose a discussion question or two over the assigned reading(s). Discussion post(s) will appear every Monday and will be due on Sunday @ 11: 55 p.m. of the same week, so you will have 7 days to think about and construct your answers. Each week you are required to respond to my question, create a question of your own, and respond to a classmate's question. *For each week then, a total of 3 discussion posts are required.* The questions/answers should be analytical (theoretical) over the topic at hand and/or an attempt to develop a closely related line of inquiry. The purpose is to generate productive classroom discussion and demonstrate critical thinking ability with regard to the assigned reading(s). The questions/answers are meant to be evaluative/analytical for the sake of discussion rather than trivia questions from the readings. Failure to be respectful and civil in your responses/questions with classmates or with the instructor will result in no credit—and potential removal from the course. At the end of the semester, I will take the average of your grade on these weekly submissions and that grade will be worth 30% of your overall final course grade.

PARTICIPATION- Worth 10% of the overall course grade, your active and productive participation in this course is expected and required.

Class Schedule

WEEK	ASSIGNED READINGS
SECTION 1 THEME: Comparative political theory and definitions	
Week 1 (8/23)	Course introduction and syllabus
Week 2 (8/30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to comparative politics (pgs. 1-14) • Chapter 2: Approaches in comparative politics (pgs. 35-45) • Click on the link below (or cut and paste it into your web browser), and read the article titled, "Evaluating Research Methods of Comparative Politics." <p>http://www.e-ir.info/2013/05/09/evaluating-research-methods-of-comparative-politics/</p>
Week 3 (9/6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Click on the link below (or cut and paste it into your web browser), and watch the short video titled, "Nations, States, & Nation States" <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sa-41DBGHfw</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 4: The nation-state (pgs. 64-76) • Click on the link below (or cut and paste it into your web browser), and read the article titled, "The Three Reasons Countries Get Rich: Location, Location and Location" <p>http://www.pbs.org/newshour/making-sense/why-countries-get-rich-location-location-location/</p>
Week 4 (9/13)	EXAM 1
SECTION 2 THEME: Regime type & institutions	
Week 5 (9/20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 5: Democracies (pgs. 80-93) • Chapter 6: Authoritarian regimes (pgs. 97-108) • Click on the link below (or cut and paste it into your web browser), and read the article titled, "Autocracy or Democracy?" <p>http://www.economist.com/blogs/freeexchange/2013/03/growth-0</p>
Week 6 (9/27)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 7: Legislatures (pgs. 114-129) • Chapter 8: Governments and bureaucracies (pgs. 132-148) • Click on the link below (or cut and paste it into your web browser), and LISTEN to the NPR piece (by clicking on the blue button on the right hand side of the page) titled, "Would the U.S. be better off with a parliament?" <p>http://www.npr.org/sections/itsallpolitics/2013/10/12/232270289/would-the-u-s-be-better-off-with-a-parliament</p>
Week 7 (10/4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 9: Constitutions and judicial power (pgs. 151-164) • Chapter 12: Political parties (pgs. 200-213) • Click on the link below (or cut and paste it into your web browser), and read the article titled, "Is the Party Over? Spreading Antipathy Toward Political Parties" <p>http://www.cses.org/resources/results/POP_May2005.htm</p>
Week 8 (10/11)	EXAM 2

SECTION 3 THEME: Political process and outcomes	
Week 9 (10/18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 13: Party systems (pgs. 217-235) • Chapter 14: Interest groups (pgs. 238-249) • Click on the link below (or cut and paste it into your web browser), and watch the short video titled, “How and why other countries have ended the 2-party system” http://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2012/09/10/how_why_othe_r_countries_have_ended_the_2-party_system.html
Week 10 (10/25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 15: Regions (pgs. 252-264) • Chapter 16: Social Movements (pgs. 267-281) • Click on the link below (or cut and paste it into your web browser), and watch the short video titled, “Social Movements” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7YPTD7QwR4
Week 11 (11/1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 17: Political Culture (pgs. 284-300) • Chapter 18: Political Participation (pgs. 302-316) • Click on the link below (or cut and paste it into your web browser), and read the article titled, “Political Power Follows Economic Power” http://www.economist.com/blogs/buttonwood/2016/02/economics-and-democracy
Week 12 (11/8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 21: The welfare state (pgs. 349-364) • Chapter 22: The impact of public policies (pgs. 366-382) • Chapter 23: The EU as a new political system (pgs. 387-404) • Click on the link below (or cut and paste it into your web browser), and read the article titled, “Brexit Will Fundamentally Change the Future of Europe” http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/brexit-break-up-europe_us_576da41ee4b017b379f60450
Week 13 (11/15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 24: Globalization and the nation-state (pgs. 407-418) • Chapter 25: Supporting democracy (pgs. 421-434)
Week 15 (11/29)	EXAM 3

***NOTE:** This schedule is tentative and therefore subject to change at my discretion.