INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS
GOVT105-01, SPRING 2016

MW 12:50–2:20 PM, Hepburn 19

Dr. Grace Huang
Hepburn 207
Office Hours: Mon. & Wed. 2:30–3:30 or by appointment
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Thinking without comparison is unthinkable. And, in the absence of comparison, so is all scientific thought and scientific research – Guy Swanson (1971:145)

COURSE OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

Welcome to Comparative Politics! This course examines the theories underpinning the formation of the modern state and considers whether factors such as wars, institution building, culture, and ideas, enhance or undermine a state’s effectiveness. The course also examines the geography, political history, current political system, society, and economy of selected countries including, the United Kingdom, Japan, China, and Iran.

By the end of this semester, you will be able to:
1. Describe why certain events in history helped to produce strong or weak states and explain why there might be different interpretations on the impact of those events.
2. Describe and compare how different political systems operate, focusing on historical formation, political institutions, and political behavior.
3. Identify and discuss the major challenges facing rich and poor countries by themselves and in global interdependence.

In attaining these objectives, each of you will also come away with a set of critical tools to move from big ideas to particular cases and vice versa and to appreciate (and challenge) assumptions underlying hypotheses regarding policymaking or political outcomes. My ultimate hope is that by analyzing and comparing other political systems, you will reflect more deeply on the nature of your own.
COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Please ask questions! Remember, there are no stupid questions. I often find that a “stupid” question often is a step toward a conceptual breakthrough.

All readings must be done before class. They constitute a uniform starting point for class lectures and discussions. The quality of the class suffers in proportion to your neglect in preparation. If you have trouble with the readings, please see me.

Please show respect by not leaving in the middle of class (take care of your business before or after!). Refrain from talking outside of discussion. Turn your cell-phone off. Pay active attention! I promise to do the same. We each make an important difference in contributing positively or negatively to the classroom environment.

Finally, be sure to understand St. Lawrence’s Constitution of the Academic Honor Council. Please consult me if you have any questions. All suspected violations of the academic honor code will be reported to the Academic Honor Council.

READINGS

◊ Please acquire the following at the bookstore:

(Note that you get a discount by buying the two O’Neil books together).

◊ Please print a hard copy of all SAKAI readings. This allows you to refer to the readings in class. Open computers are not permitted in this class.

◊ Current Events: Suggested websites for current events:
  1. BBC  http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/default.stm
  2. CNN  http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES

◊ Essays (30%): Three 2–3 page essays on a reading of your choice that is marked with *. Essays are due at 4 pm in my mailbox (Hepburn 102) on the assigned days. No late papers are accepted.

◊ Midterm exams (35%): Two midterm exams, 2/21 and 3/28, will be given in class and will be based on readings, class lectures, and discussions. Each exam is worth 17.5%.

◊ Final Exam (25%): The final exam (5/10) is cumulative with an emphasis on materials 3/30 and onwards. The exam will not be moved for any reasons.

◊ Class Participation (10%): You are expected to be prepared (graded and ungraded pop quizzes will be given in class (5%)), participate actively,
intelligently, and positively, and share three current events based on the
criteria discussed in class (5%).

- **Attendance Policy:** If you have more than two absences, your class participation grade will automatically drop by ten points from the third missed class and onwards. For example, if you have an 85 for a participation grade and three absences, your participation grade drops to an 75.

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### FINAL GRADE STRUCTURE

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### CLASS SCHEDULE

**NOTE**

Text (black book) = *Essentials of Comparative Politics*

Cases (gold book) = *Cases in Comparative Politics*

W. 1/20: *Introduction*

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**WEEK 1**

**PART I: CONCEPTS & FRAMEWORKS**

M. 1/25: *Part One: What is comparative politics?*


*Text:* Chapter 1 (black book with gold lettering)
Presenting current events

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT
- Complete current events exercise. Will discuss in class and turn in assignment.

Read syllabus. Ask questions if something is unclear.

W. 1/27:

Part Two: What is comparative politics? Examples by Hamilton, Weber, Durkheim

WEEK 2
THE STATE

M. 2/1:

What is the state and why use it as a unit of analysis?
Text: Chapter 2

W. 2/3:

State-Making & War

WEEK 3
NATION, IDENTITY, & CULTURE

M. 2/8:

Nations & Identities
Text: Chapter 3
Will view in class: Video clip (Jewish/Arab perspectives)

W. 2/10:

Missing Girls

Writing critical essays
SAKAI: Rationale, Guidelines, Writing Advice, and Sample Critical Essays.
- Please read through these materials carefully
- WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT: Provide a grade and give a rationale for each of the three sample essays. These are essays written by former GOVT105 students based on “Missing Girls” reading.

WEEK 4
POLITICAL ECONOMY & FORMATION OF LIBERTY

M. 2/15:

Political Economy
**GOV 105-01, SPRING 2016**
**COMPARATIVE POLITICS**

Text: Chapter 4.

W. 2/17: *A Brief History of Human Liberty*


### WEEK 5
**DEMOCRATIC REGIMES**

M. 2/21: **EXAM #1**

W. 2/23: *Building Stable Democracies*

**Text**: Chapter 5


### WEEK 6
**DEVELOPED DEMOCRACIES**

M. 2/29: *Challenges Facing Developed Democracies*

**Text**: Chapter 8


*ESSAY #1 DUE* *Due 4 pm in my mailbox Hepburn 102.*

W. 3/1: *Comparing Regimes in Rich Countries: Sweden, U.S., & Germany*


### WEEK 7
**UNITED KINGDOM**

**PART II: CASE STUDIES**

M. 3/7: *Case Study: United Kingdom I*

**Cases**: Chapter 2, pp. 34–68. (gold book)

W. 3/9: *Case Study: United Kingdom II*

**Cases**: Chapter 2, pp. 68–91.


### WEEK 8
**JAPAN**

M. 3/14: *Case Study: Japan I*

**Cases**: Chapter 6, pp. 270–306.
W. 3/16:  
Case Study: Japan II  
Cases: Chapter 6, pp. 306–329.  

**WEEK 9**  
**SPRING BREAK MARCH 19-27**

**WEEK 10**  
**NON-DEMOCRATIC REGIMES**

M. 3/28:  
EXAM #2  
This midterm exam will not be moved for any reason. Please make travel plans accordingly.

W. 3/30:  
Non-Democratic Regimes (clips from documentary about N. Korea)  
Text: Chapter 6

**WEEK 11**  
**TYPES OF AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES**

M. 4/4:  
Is it Time to Stop Thinking about Democratic Transitions?  

W. 4/6:  
Communism and Postcommunism  
Text: Chapter 9  
*ESSAY #2 DUE* Due 4 pm in my mailbox Hepburn 102.

**WEEK 12**  
**CHINA**

M. 4/11:  
Case Study: China I  
Cases: Chapter 8, pp. 380–419.

W. 4/13:  
Case Study: China II  
Cases: Chapter 8, pp. 419–439.  

**WEEK 13**  
**DEVELOPING COUNTRIES & AFRICA**

M. 4/18:  
Developing Countries  
➢ Text: Chapter 10
W. 4/20:  *Case Study: Africa*


**WEEK 14**

**IRAN**

M. 4/25:  *ISIS in the Middle East*


W. 4/27:  *Case Study: Iran I*

Cases: Chapter 10; 502–531

**WEEK 15**

**IRAN & CONCLUSION**

M. 5/2  *Case Study: Iran II & CONCLUSION*

Cases: Chapter 10; 531–553


W. 5/4  *No class. A quirk in the spring schedule is that the MW timeslot has one extra scheduled W class. Instead of meeting, please spend the extra time on your last essay.*

[*ESSAY #3 DUE*] Due 4 pm in my mailbox Hepburn 102.

**FINALS WEEK**

T. 5/10:  FINAL EXAM 8:30–11:30 a.m. Hepburn 19.

NOTE: The final exam will not be moved for any reason.