

University of West Georgia
Fall 2009
Comparative Politics
POLS 3401 – Section 1
Meets: MWF 11:00 – 11:50 am, Pafford 105

Dr. J. Salvador Peralta
Office: Pafford 138
Office Hours: T-TR 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
Office Phone: 678-839-4993
Email: jperalta@westga.edu

Course Description and Objectives

This is an introductory course to the field of Comparative Politics. It is not a typical introductory course in that it does not include general descriptions of different political systems. Instead, it aims to push students toward a theoretical and methodological understanding of the main concepts and puzzles in the field. Theoretically, students will be introduced to some of the most important concepts and theories in Comparative Politics. Methodologically, the goal is to introduce students to the basic tools comparativists employ in their research. In combination, theory and methods will help students find answers, though not definitive, to comparative puzzles. At the end of the semester – assuming hard work and dedication – students will be able to formulate researchable comparative questions, and design appropriate research strategies to answer them effectively. Thus, the ultimate goal of the course is to prepare the student to describe and explain cross-national differences effectively.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance: You cannot participate, contribute, and learn if you are not in class. Therefore, students are allowed 4 absences ONLY. **Students who miss more than 4 lectures will incur a penalty worth 10% of their Final Grade.** Please be aware that I make no distinction between excused and unexcused absences.

Participation: The structure of weekly class sessions will include a mixture of lectures, discussions, small group activities, and in-class debates. So please come to class prepared and ready to participate in whatever activities are planned for the session. **Class participation will be worth 10% of the Final Grade.** Participation entails writing five (5) 2-page article summaries, attending class, joining in-class debates, and being prepared with questions and comments about the material. The two-page summaries may be turned anytime during the week.

Exams: There will be two exams during the semester, **each worth 20% of the Final Grade.**

Make up Exams: All make-up exams will be in the format of three essay questions. To receive full credit on a make-up exam ALL students must provide written documentation of the illness or emergency that precluded their attendance on the exam date. Anyone unable to provide written documentation will receive half credit.

Research Paper: You are required to write a research paper for this course. **The research paper is worth 50% of the Final Grade.** To ease anxiety over completion of this requirement, it is divided into several steps, which are detailed below. Since at this stage your ability to gather and analyze empirical evidence is limited, this research paper will be designed to help you summarize, synthesize, and evaluate existing research. That is, you will ask a relevant question and review the theoretical and empirical evidence that others have produced to answer it.

Grade Calculation – Grades will be calculated as follows:

No.	Requirements	Page Count	Due Date	% Grade Value
1	Summaries (5)	2 each	Weekly	10
2	First Exam	5	Friday, September 11	20
3	Research Question Proposal	2	Friday, September 25	10
4	Annotated Bibliography	5	Friday, October 16	5
5	Peer Review	2	Monday, November 9	5
6	First Draft	10	Friday, November 13	10
7	Final Draft	15	Friday, December 4	20
8	Final Exam	5	Monday, December 7	20

Please note that **NO curves** or adjustment of scores will be made. Extra credit will be awarded for attendance to special events such as lectures, films, community events, etc.

Additional information about the exams, summaries, bibliography, and other coursework will be discussed as the semester progresses.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

There are no required texts for this course. Instead, all reading materials are available online, through the library's databases (JSTOR, etc.), course reserves, or CourseDen.

E-MAIL COMMUNICATION:

The only official method of communication via e-mail is through your campus e-mail account (MyUWG). Please do not send me email from other email clients (e.g. hotmail, yahoo, etc) because I will not answer email messages not communicated through MyUWG.

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC HONESTY:

All assignments for this course must be your own original work. Research sources must be properly cited and acknowledged. The University of West Georgia has a Code of Academic Honor that will be followed in this course. Suspected violations of the Code will be subject to disciplinary action according to the University policy.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

1. Please turn off all electronic devices (cell phones, etc.) prior to entering class.
2. Please arrive on time.
3. Please do not read newspapers, sleep, or work on material for other courses during class.
4. Since we will deal with controversial issues, it is vital to the success of this class to maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect. Thus, personal attacks will not be tolerated.
5. **Students who have learning disabilities or other documented issues should see me immediately so that we can make appropriate arrangements to help them meet the course requirements.**

CLASS SCHEDULE

Aug. 10 – 14: Introduction to the course and each other –

Aug. 17 – 21: How to read? (...and you thought you already knew that)

1. Van Evera, Stephen. 1999. "Hypotheses, Laws, and Theories: A User's Guide." In *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, pp. 7-27.
2. Posner, Daniel. 2004. "The Political Salience of Cultural Differences: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi." *American Political Science Review* 98:529-46.

Aug. 24 – 28: Cultural and Institutional Theories

1. Almond, Gabriel, and Sidney Verba. 1963. *The Civic Culture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 1-44.
2. Geddes, Barbara. 2003. *Paradigms and Sandcastles. Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp. 175-121.
3. Carey John M. 1998. *Term Limits and Legislative Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 3-25.

Aug. 31 – Sep. 04: How to Compare?

1. Lave, Charles A., and James G. March. 1975. *An Introduction to Models in the Social Sciences*. New York: Harper Collins.
2. Sartori, Giovanni. 1970. "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics." *American Political Science Review* 64(4): 1033-53.
3. Sartori, Giovanni. 1991. "Comparing and Miscomparing." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 3(3): 243-257.

Sep. 07 – 11: How to Compare?

1. Lijphart, Arend. 1971. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method" *American Political Science Review* 65(3): 682-93.
2. Geddes, Barbara. 1990. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." *Political Analysis* 2: 131-150.
3. Carey John M. 1998. *Term Limits and Legislative Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 3-21 (Reread pp. 9-21).
4. **Friday, September 11, 2009 – First Exam Due**

Sep. 14 – 18: Electoral Systems: Part I

Comparative Study of Electoral Systems

1. Lijphart, Arend. 1984. *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries*. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 150-168.
2. Golder, Matt. 2005. "[Democratic Electoral Systems Around the World, 1946–2000.](#)" *Electoral Studies* 24(1): 103-121.

Sep. 21 – 25: Electoral Systems: Part II

1. Lijphart, Arend. 1990 "The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws, 1945-85." *American Political Science Review* 84(3): 481-96.
2. Reilly, Ben. 2002. "Electoral Systems for Divided Societies." *Journal of Democracy* 13(2): 156-170.
3. Jones, Mark P., Sebastian Saiegh, Pablo T. Spiller, and Mariano Tommasi. 2002. "Amateur Legislators-Professional Politicians: The Consequences of Party-Centered Electoral Rules in a Federal System." *American Journal of Political Science* 46(3): 656-669.
4. **Friday, September 25, 2009 – Research Question Proposal Due**

Sep. 28 – Oct. 02: Parties and Party Systems:

1. Duverger, Maurice. 1954. *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*. New York: Wiley, pp. 217-28.
2. Lijphart, Arend. 1999. *Patterns of Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 62-89.
3. Scott P. Mainwaring, *Rethinking Party Systems in the Third Wave of Democratization: The Case of Brazil*. Standord: Stanford University Press, pp. 21-60.

Oct. 05 – 09: Presidents

1. Shugart, Matthew Soberg, and John M. Carey. 1992. *Presidents and Assemblies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-26.
2. Shugart, Matthew and Scott Mainwaring. *Presidentialism and Democracy in Latin America*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 12-54, 440-60.

Oct. 12 – 16: ...And Assemblies

1. Lijphart, Arend. 1999. *Patterns of Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 200-215.
2. Mayhew, David R. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. New Haven: Yale U. Press, pp. 11-77.
3. Taylor, Michelle M. 1992. "Formal versus Informal Incentive Structures and Legislator Behavior: Evidence from Costa Rica" *Journal of Politics* 54(4): 1055-1073.
4. **Tuesday, October 6, 2009 – Last day to withdraw with a grade of W**

Oct. 19 – 23: Research Paper Discussion

1. **Friday, October 16, 2009 – Annotated Bibliography Due**

Oct. 26 – 30: Why are parliamentary systems more stable than presidential systems?

1. Linz, Juan J. 1990. "The Perils of Presidentialism." *Journal of Democracy* 1(1): 51-69.
2. Mainwaring, Scott, and Matthew S. Shugart. 1997. "Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy - A Critical Appraisal." *Comparative Politics* 29(4): 449-471.

Nov. 02 – 06: Why are some countries more representative than others?

1. Norris, Pippa and Ronald Inglehart. ["Cultural Barriers to Women's Leadership: A Worldwide Comparison."](#)
2. Jones, Mark P. 1996. Increasing Women's Representation via Gender Quotas: The Argentine Ley de Cupos. *Women & Politics* 16(4):75-96.
3. Jones, Mark P. 2004. Quota Legislation and the Election of Women: Learning from the Costa Rican Experience. *Journal of Politics* 66(4):1203-1223.

Nov. 09 – 13: Research Paper Discussion

1. **Monday, November 9, 2009 – Peer Edit Due**
2. **Friday, November 13, 2009 – First Draft Due**

Nov. 16 – 20: Why do some people support democracy but others not?

1. Norris, Pippa. Forthcoming. [Critical Citizens Revisited.](#)

Nov. 23 – 27: Support for Democracy, continued

1. **Thanksgiving recess, No classes Nov. 25-27.**

Nov. 30 – Dec. 04: What is Comparative Politics?

1. **Friday, December 4, 2009 – Last day of Class and Final Draft Due**

FINAL EXAM: Monday, December 7, 2009 – Due by 1 pm.