

Introduction to Comparative Politics

Tuesdays and Thursdays

2:30pm – 3:50pm

SMT – 245

Instructor: Deborah Morrison-Santana

Contact Information: deborah.morrison@rutgers.edu

Office Hours: Mondays 3-4pm (Hill 720) or appointments available upon request

Course Description:

This course provides a basic introduction to comparative politics by focusing on different types of governments and then looking at them in terms of conflicts in the 20th century. It is imperative to view conflicts through different lenses including all participants of the conflict, outside spectators, and even individual accounts. Thinking comparatively within political science requires one to ask two fundamental questions: How can we use a comparison of regimes (democratic, authoritarian, hybrid regimes) and cases (countries, regions, time periods, and culture) to derive general claims about how politics occurs? How can we apply general hypotheses to explain particular cases? For the sake of the future, an analysis of past conflicts is necessary.

Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Attain a general understanding of the main themes, concepts, and methods within Comparative politics
- Understand the basic differences of political structures/regimes
- Apply understanding to historical and current episodes of conflict
- Develop and strengthen critical thinking and writing skills

Readings: *** All available on Blackboard ***

Please make sure you have access to the course on Blackboard as soon as possible so that you are able to get the materials needed to successfully complete the course.

Pop Quizzes:

There will be 3 pop quizzes randomly during the semester. The quizzes will be on the readings due that day to make sure that students are doing the required readings as they are designed to supplement class lectures. They will be given at the beginning of class. **Students cannot make up a missed pop quiz for any reason.**

Grading:

Attendance/Participation – 15% (150 points)

Newspaper Article Assignments – 20% (100 points each – 200 points total)

Pop Quizzes – 15% (50 points each – 150 points total)

Tests – 20% (150 points each – 300 points total)

Final Exam – 25% (300 points)

----- 100% - 1000 points total

A = 930 – 1000

B+ = 890 – 929

B = 850-889

C+ = 800 – 849

C = 750 – 799

D = 700 – 749

F = 699 - below

COURSE POLICIES:

- 1. Attendance** is mandatory for this course and will be taken each class. Missing classes without proper documentation (i.e. a doctor's note) will affect your participation grade. Any student who misses **eight** or more sessions through any combination of **excused** and **unexcused** absences will have missed more than a quarter of the class time and will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw from the course to avoid an F. If you do miss a class, it is your responsibility to get notes from a fellow student on what you missed (do not email me asking what you missed). Excessive lateness will also affect your grade.
- 2. No personal technology devices allowed in class.** This means no cell phones, iPads, laptops, or any other kinds of electronic devices (unless needed for medical reasons, with the proper documentation). If you are caught using your phone or another device, you will lose participation credit for the day. Continuous use of these technologies will result in being asked to leave the classroom and lose participation credit for the day.
- 3. Academic Dishonesty:** Taking the words and ideas of another and presenting them as your own without proper use of citation constitutes plagiarism and it is considered grounds for receiving an "F" for the course and suspension/expulsion from the university. All students are required to uphold the honor code. Please see Rutgers' Academic Integrity Policy.
- 4.** Students should present official medical or legal documentation if they cannot fulfill any part of the course requirements. Exceptions will only be made under extraordinary circumstances such as serious illness and/or legal obligations.
- 5. Open Communication:** I am always available to help you succeed in this course. You may see me during my office hours or reach me through email. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.
- 6. Your grade** is your responsibility and is non-negotiable. If you need a specific grade for your GPA, financial aid, academic standing, personal reasons, etc., you need to earn that grade by following the guidelines presented in this syllabus. Please do not contact me after the semester asking/begging for a better grade.
- 7.** All students are required to sign the **Rutgers Honor Code Pledge**. To receive credit, every assignment must have your signature under the following phrase: "On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this assignment."
- 8.** Please be **respectful** of everyone in the class, including me. If you are being disrespectful, you will be asked to leave.

Newspaper Article Assignment:

There are many critical international issues happening in the world today that are directly related to historical events or eras we've discussed in this class. For this assignment you must find a recent news article (from a credible source – email me if you are unsure of a source) about a current event (written within the last year) and write a paper about how the article relates to an event or era discussed in this class. This is not an informative paper, but rather you must use critical thinking to discuss how the current event is related to the history we've discussed and how it differs. Compare and contrast the present with the past using course readings, lectures, and outside sources if necessary to supplement your paper. Any supplemental sources should not be the main focus of your paper; your analysis of the newspaper article chosen is.

Cite everything with **footnotes** (with full bibliographic information in them).

*** Your answer must be about 5 pages (no more, no less), typed, DOUBLE SPACED, and 12-point Times New Roman font, one inch margins. You will be graded on content, grammar, punctuation, and following directions. Remember, these two papers are 20% of your final grade; they should be well-thought out responses with a beginning, middle, and end in each. ***

These papers are due on Thursday, March 1st & Tuesday, April 17th (by midnight)

LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED for any reason. No exception.

Guidelines:

- Be specific. I want you to really think about your articles and your responses to them and how they fit into our course.
- Avoid replacing arguments with examples. Use examples to illustrate a general claim, not as a replacement for them. Examples by themselves tend toward selection bias and hasty generalizations.
- I am interested in content, not clever rhetorical flourish. Thus, avoid filler material... DO NOT USE BLOCK QUOTES FROM THE ARTICLES OR READINGS. Direct quotes should be no longer than 2 sentences, MAXIMUM.
- **IF YOU DO NOT CITE, EVEN WHEN YOU PARAPHRASE, IT WILL BE CONSIDERED PLAGIARISM. PLAGIARIZED PAPERS WILL BE PENALIZED EITHER BY AN F ON THE PAPER OR THE COURSE AND WILL BE REPORTED TO THE DEAN.**
- PROOFREAD YOUR PAPER. You will be marked off for typos, punctuation errors, and/or major disorganization.
- The heading of your paper should be your name ONLY.
- 1-inch margins all around
- The paper is to be 5 pages long. Not less, not more. (No cover page).

***** SUBMIT YOUR PAPER THROUGH TURN-IT-IN ON BLACKBOARD *****
(I will not accept it any other way)

Course Schedule (subject to change):

	Topic	Reading(s) Due
T 1/16	Introduction	
TH 1/18	Part One: Who are the actors?	What is Comparative Politics?
T 1/23	Democracy	"What Democracy is... and is not"
TH 1/25	Authoritarian Regimes	"The Authoritarian Society"
T 1/30	Hybrid Regimes	"Thinking about Hybrid Regimes"
TH 2/1	International Organizations	(Various links to read and explore in Course Documents)
T 2/6	Regional Organizations	(Various links to read and explore in Course Documents)
TH 2/8	Non-governmental Organizations (NGOS)	(Various links to read and explore in Course Documents)
T 2/13	Social Movements	Social Movements article (Link in Course Documents)
TH 2/15	Test #1	
T 2/20	Part Two: What are the issues? (pt. 1 - interstate wars)	"International & Non-International Armed Conflicts"
TH 2/22	Antecedents to WWI	"The Origins of World War I"
T 2/27	World War I	"Live-and-Let-Live System of Trench Warfare"
TH 3/1	Aftermath of WWI & Interwar period	"Treaty of Versailles" Summary & "The Hitler Myth" *** Newspaper Article Essay #1 Due ***
T 3/6	The Rise of the Nazis and World War II	USHMM Timeline and "This Way to the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen" excerpt
TH 3/8	WWII in the Pacific	"Decision to Drop the Bomb" article
3/10-3/18	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
T 3/20	Aftermath of WWII	UNGC
TH 3/22	The Cold War	"The Cold War and Its Aftermath"
T 3/27	Test #2	
TH 3/29	Part Three: What are the issues? (pt. 2 - how conflicts have changed)	"Regular vs. Irregular War"
T 4/3	Vietnam vs. Soviet-Afghan War	"America and Vietnam" article
TH 4/5	Iraq (1991) vs. Iraq (2003)	"Operation Desert Storm"
T 4/10	The Bloody 1990s	Dallaire Chapter
TH 4/12	9/11 & The War on Terror	"Authorization for the Use of Military Force in Response to the 9/11 Attacks"
T 4/17	The Ethics of Drone Warfare	"Drone Wars" - *** Newspaper Article Essay #2 Due ***
TH 4/19	Arab Spring (2011)	"Arab Spring at Five"
T 4/24	Syrian War	"Syria: The Story of the Conflict"
TH 4/26	Last Day of Class/Final Exam Review	