

COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Global Studies (GS) 161
Spring 2011

Professor **TERRENCE CASEY**

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Office Hours: MTRF, 3rd Hour (9:55-10:45) or drop-in anytime.

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This course is designed to provide you with a basic understanding of how politics and government works in numerous countries. It will also introduce you to the primary concepts and theories of comparative political analysis. Each week we will explore the politics of a different country. We will also undertake discussions and exercises that examine important political questions and demonstrate how to compare cross-nationally.

READING: The majority of reading for this course will come from **Kesselman, Krieger, and Joseph, eds., *Introduction to Comparative Politics, 5th Edition***, which is available for purchase in the RHIT bookstore. You are also ***expected to stay informed about current events***, especially in the country that we are examining in a given week. There are multiple high quality online sources for news (*New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *The Economist*, *Financial Times*, CNN, etc.). What you read is up to you as long as you stay informed.

ASSIGNMENTS: Your grade in the course will be based on the following:

A. Weekly Country Tests (5% each; 50% total): We will be covering a different country each week, so we will start class on each FRIDAY with a test on the lectures and reading for that week, focusing on the history, key actors, and institutions of these respective politics systems – the ‘nuts and bolts’, as it were. Tests will consist of assorted objective questions -- multiple choice, short answer, fill-in-the-blank, and true-false.

B. Two Comparative Essay Exams (25% each; 50% total): The midterm exam will be given on Monday, April 11th **in the evening** (Time and Room TBA). The Final Exam date will be determined by the Registrar. As the weekly tests will focus more on objective questions, the exams will deal more with conceptual issues and essays which require you to analyze, compare, and contrast the countries covered in the course.

COURSE POLICIES: The following policies apply unless otherwise stated.

Attendance and Participation: Regular attendance and active participation in class discussion is expected. In order to do this effectively, you need to keep up with the reading and stay informed about current events. You are also responsible for all material presented in class and the exams will be based in part on material that will only be presented in lecture. If you desire a good grade in the course, come to class, pay attention, and take notes!

Academic Misconduct: All cases of academic misconduct, including plagiarism (taking another’s words or ideas and presenting them as your own) or cheating (making use of assistance on an assignment beyond that

authorized by the professor) will be punished appropriately. Penalties for academic misconduct are at the discretion of the professor and can range from the loss of all credit on an assignment to a formal hearing before the Institute's Rules and Discipline Committee. It is incumbent upon you to know what constitutes academic misconduct and make sure to avoid it. If you are in any way unsure about what constitutes a violation, please ask me. Claiming ignorance after the fact is not a valid excuse. Think rationally; the risks outweigh the gains.

Late Assignments: Extensions for exams or assignments will only be given if you have a legitimate excuse and you contact me in advance. *All late assignments will receive a letter grade reduction for each day (including weekend days) that they are late. This especially applies to the weekly quizzes!* You can reach me via e-mail, voicemail, or by dropping a note in either my campus or HSS mailbox. Short of being in a coma, you should be able to reach me if there is a problem. I am very accommodating to those who alert me to a problem in advance; I will be far less friendly if you approach me after the fact.

Ideological Perspectives: I have no intention of trying to indoctrinate you with my beliefs. The issues we will be exploring are contentious and there are often not right or wrong answers per se. That being said, there are good and bad arguments. You may hold any opinion you wish, but your arguments must be logically sound and supported by the available evidence.

More importantly, I can only facilitate the learning process; I cannot force knowledge into your heads. You are all adults fully capable of being responsible students and active learners. That means that if you do not understand something you need to take the initiative to find out the answer -- raise your hand, talk to me after class, come to my office. I cannot read minds, so it is up to you to try to seek clarity when it is lacking!

TOPICS AND READINGS: Assigned readings are from Kesselman, Krieger, and Joseph, eds. *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, 5th ed. unless otherwise noted. Other readings may be added during the course of the term.

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	READING	TESTS & EXAMS
1	March 7-11	Comparative Politics: Approach and Concepts	Chapter 1; Lim, Chapter 1 (Handout).	Test #1: CP
2	March 14-18	America as the Baseline	Chapter 7	Test #2: US
3	March 21-25	Great Britain	Chapter 2	Test #3: Great Britain
4	March 28- April 1	France	Chapter 3	Test #4: France
5	April 4-8	Germany	Chapter 4	Test #5: Germany
	Mon., April 11	Midterm Exam		Room/Time TBA
6	April 11-15 <i>April 18-22</i>	Japan <i>SPRING BREAK</i>	Chapter 5	Test #6: Japan
7	April 25-29	India	Chapter 6	Test #7: India
8	May 2-6	Russia	Chapter 8	Test #8: Russia
9	May 9-13	China	Chapter 13	Test #9: China
10	May 16-20	Iran	Chapter 12	Test #10: Iran
		Final Exam		Time & Date TBA