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PSC 195.01: Introduction to Comparative Government

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INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT

Instructor: Professor Paul Haber 243-4862

Political Science Department, course #195

Summer 1998

Meets: MTWRF 7:30 – 9:00

Office Hours: LA 355 A few minutes after each class or by appointment

Required text available for purchase in UC Bookstore:

Thomas Magstadt, *Nations & Governments: Comparative Politics in Regional Perspective*. Third Edition. St. Martins Press, 1998.

Course Description

This course introduces students to the study of comparative politics. Our text focuses equally on six regions of the world: Western Europe, Russia and Slavic Europe, the Middle East, Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America. The reading and class discussion reflects a tripartite structure applied to each region:

1. geography and political history
2. contemporary political institutions and processes, or “patterns of rule”
3. problems and prospects of key nations in each region.

Each student will be provided the opportunity and assume the responsibility of developing a deeper level of expertise in one of the six regions.

Course Objectives

At the end of the course, the successful student should

1. be familiar with patterns of governance in the world, be able to explain similarities and differences among key political systems, and be able to compare and contrast institutions and processes within and across global regions;
2. be able to put current events into larger interregional and international political contexts;
3. be able to apply the new concepts and tools of analysis s/he acquired to the study of any political system, especially those outside his or her own.

Course Format and Requirements

Your grade will be based on two in-class exams (combined for 1/2 of total grade), class attendance, course journal, in-class assignments, and participation (1/4), and a group project (1/4). Students are required to read all assigned readings on time, and to come to class prepared to discuss them. Coming to class prepared means having read the material carefully and thoughtfully. It means having an interpretation or questions concerning the readings' main arguments. Students are required to make journal entries for each class meeting. These entries are reflections (questions, responses, rejoinders, confusions, etc.) on that day's readings. Students should be sure to pay particular attention to the subheadings “key terms” and “study questions” that appear at the end of each chapter, because I will draw on them for the exams. Students may miss three classes without explanation. After that, students must bring a typed