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PSC 120S.01: Introduction to Comparative Government

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INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT

Instructor: Professor Paul Haber 243-4862

Political Science Department, course #120

Summer 1999

Meets: MTWRF 10:50 – 12:20

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

Required text available for purchase in UC Bookstore

John Nagle. (1998) *Introduction to Comparative Politics: Challenges of Conflict and Change in a New Era*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers

Course Description

This course introduces students to the study of comparative politics. Our text asserts that we are in the process of transition to a post-cold war world. Our challenge will be to think intelligently about how this "politics of great change" is occurring in different regions of the world. Following the text, we will study this changing global politics with reference to three systems in transition: 1) the politics of postindustrialism in liberal democracies; 2) the politics of postcommunism, and 3) the politics of poorer countries of the Southern Hemisphere. The following themes will be investigated in each of the three systems:

- 1) Economic growth
- 2) social inequality
- 3) personal liberty
- 4) quality of life

Each student will be provided the opportunity and assume the responsibility of exploring some combination of these themes in relationship to a specific country.

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.
4. have strengthened research skills.

Course Format and Requirements

Your grade will be based on three in-class exams (combined for 1/2 of total grade), class attendance, in-class assignments, and participation (1/4), and an individual or 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 come to each class with at least one comment or question concerning the reading. Students may miss three classes without explanation. After that, students must bring a typed statement explaining their absence. Make a serious effort to get to class on time. If you have a good reason for being late, convey it to me after class.

Country Focus: Each student will be responsible for a class presentation that explores questions of comparative politics in relationship to a particular country. Students are strongly encouraged to begin

research early so that they can contribute knowledge of their country in class discussions over the length of the course. This is an excellent way to contribute to your participation grade.

Each student is required to hand in a typed, annotated bibliography on the outside readings. This is due on the day of your project presentation. The annotation should first summarize each reading's main arguments and methodology and then evaluate its strengths and/or weaknesses. Students should expect to refer to *at least* three scholarly articles or one book. Scholarly articles are found in scholarly journals, not news report articles such as are found in journals such as Time, Newsweek, The Economist, and newspapers. Reports by journalists can be extremely useful in helping you to develop knowledge of the country and may prove useful to reference in the presentation, but they are not acceptable for use in the annotated bibliography. While there is no required length for each annotation, it is unlikely that a good job is possible in less than one or two typed pages. In most cases, the annotation will count for half of the project grade.

It may become necessary, over the course of the class, to rearrange assignments or alter the schedule. Any changes in scheduling will be announced in class. If you miss class, you are responsible for checking with another student for lecture notes and any announcements that may have been made regarding scheduling or assignments.

READING AND PROJECT ASSIGNMENTS

Technological innovations have transformed the way we use the library and gain access to publications and data. We have come a ways since the days of card catalogues and searching through back issues of journals to find articles relevant to our research interests. Class will be held in the Mansfield Library on June 30th where you will be introduced to computer access available here at the University of Montana. You should find this very useful not only in your group projects for this class, but in future classes and research projects as well.

June 29 Chapter 1

June 30 Introduction to Mansfield Library data bases. Meet Bill Elison, Social Science Librarian, in the computer lab adjacent to the Reference Desk promptly at 8:00am.

July 1 Chapter 2

July 2 Chapter 3

July 5 Holiday

July 6 Chapter 4

July 7 Chapter 5

July 8 Chapter 6 and Essay

July 9 Exam #1

July 12 Chapter 7

July 13 Chapter 8

July 14 Chapter 9

July 15 Chapter 10

July 16 Chapter 11 and essay

July 20 Exam #2

July 21 Chapter 12

July 22 Chapter 13

July 23 Chapter 14

July 26 Chapter 15

July 27 Chapter 16 and essay

July 28 Exam #3

July 29 Group projects

July 30 Group projects