GOVERNMENT 370: COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Alex Jakubow Email: ajakubow@nmsu.edu
Spring 2015 Skype: dr.jakubow
M W F 11:30-12:20 Office: Breland Hall 341
Breland Hall 179 Office Hours: T W 17:00-18:30, and by appointment

OVERVIEW

Why are some states more stable than others? Why does ethnic conflict occur? What do we mean by “democracy” and what causes states to (de)democratize? Why do dictatorships bother with elections, political parties, and other trappings of modern democracy? Does state intervention into the economy undermine economic growth? Can we talk of “states” in an era of globalization? These kinds of questions lie within the domain of comparative politics.

The rich and diverse field of comparative politics is devoted to the study of the different political institutions and behavior around the world, including the effects and implications of these differences as well as their underlying causes. As an introduction to comparative politics, this course’s objective is to provide an overview of the major approaches, theories, as well as substantive issues and controversies of this particular subfield of political science. In order to enhance the analytical approach to substantive issues, this course also emphasizes different research methods and tools used by comparativists.

The substantive topics the course covers include different approaches to the state and to ethnic conflict, political regimes, democratization, classification of political institutions and consequences of institutional choice in both democratic and authoritarian regimes, political economic systems, political economy of reform and development, and globalization.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Understand and engage major theoretical and substantive issues in the field of comparative politics
- Understand and apply different comparative research methodologies
- Create a solid theoretical and conceptual foundation for higher-level courses in comparative politics
- Improve skills in communication and critical consumption of information
COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA

Discussion (20%)

In addition to faithful attendance, each student is expected to complete all assigned readings and contribute to class discussions.

Reading Quizzes (10%)

15 reading quizzes will be randomly given throughout the course of the semester. Students will be allowed to use written or printed notes on these quizzes. All quizzes will be graded pass/fail. Missed quizzes cannot be retaken. Students may miss/fail up to three quizzes without penalty. Each additional pass beyond the minimum required 12 will be awarded a small amount of extra credit.

Papers (30%)

Students will be required to write two short papers. These papers will require students to reflect on specific course themes in greater detail. Instructions for the written assignments will be provided at a later date.

Midterm (20%)

The midterm exam will be a hand-written, in-class exam on March 13. It will test student knowledge of key course concepts and themes through a series of short answer and essay questions. A study guide will be provided.

Final (20%)

The format of the exam will be similar to that of the midterm. The final exam will be cumulative.
Grading Scale

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**Required Texts**

There are no required textbooks for this course. All materials will be made available online and/or placed on reserve at the NMSU Library.

**Other Policies**

**Late Work**

As a general principle, late work will not be accepted and missed exams cannot be made up at a later date. Exceptions can be made in the case of valid, extenuating circumstances.

**Computer Use**

Computers are to be used *solely* for the purpose of taking notes and actively participating in class discussion. I reserve the right to ask you not to use your computer if I have reasons to suspect that you are using it to surf the web, check email or engage in other non-course-related activities.

**Academic Conduct**

All students are bound by the Student Code of Conduct as detailed in the *NMSU Student Code of Conduct*. The Student Code of Conduct is found on the NMSU web site at...
http://deanofstudents.nmsu.edu/student-handbook/1-student-code-of-conduct/. It is recognized by New Mexico State University that students are adults and expected to obey the law and take personal responsibility for their conduct. Academic misconduct and nonacademic misconduct can result in disciplinary procedures being instituted against the student. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct for more detailed information.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using another person’s work without acknowledgment, making it appear to be one’s own. Intentional and unintentional instances of plagiarism are considered instances of academic misconduct and are subject to disciplinary action such as failure on the assignment, failure of the course or dismissal from the university. The NMSU Library has more information and help on how to avoid plagiarism at http://lib.nmsu.edu/plagiarism/

Students with Disabilities

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) covers issues relating to disability and accommodations. If a student has questions or needs an accommodation in the classroom (all medical information is treated confidentially), contact:

Trudy Luken, Director
Student Accessibility Services (SAS)
Corbett Center, Rm. 244
Phone: (575) 646-6840
E-mail: sas@nmsu.edu
Website: www.nmsu.edu/~ssd/

NMSU policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, retaliation, serious medical condition, sex, sexual orientation, spousal affiliation and protected veterans status. Furthermore, Title IX prohibits sex discrimination to include sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment and retaliation. For more information on discrimination issues, Title IX or NMSU’s complaint process contact:

Gerard Nevarez, Executive Director or Agustin Diaz, Associate Director
Office of Institutional Equity (OIE)
O’Loughlin House
Phone: (575) 646-3635
E-mail: equity@nmsu.edu
Website: http://www.nmsu.edu/~eeo/
Email Communications

Your NMSU email account is the official means of communicating with the university. Information critical to your success at NMSU is delivered to you via this account, and you are expected to follow rules and policies provided to you via this communication method. Any email from you to the instructor should be sent either through the CANVAS course management system or through your official NMSU email account. Please be advised that due to privacy and security concerns, we are unable to respond to emails from or about students that do not originate from an official NMSU email address.

Important Dates

The last day to withdraw from this class with a “W” is Monday, March 16. The last day to withdraw from the University is Friday, April 17. The midterm exam is in class on Friday, March 13. The final exam is Wednesday, May 6, 10:30-12:30.

Adaptability

Please note that this syllabus is a working document. The course schedule and reading list are subject to change.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READING LIST

I. INTRODUCTION

Monday, January 12th: No Class

Wednesday, January 14th: No Class

Friday, January 16th: Course Introduction

Monday, January 19th: No Class

Wednesday, January 21st: What is Comparative Politics?

Friday, January 23rd: Ways of Knowing in Comparative Politics

• Clark et al. 2009, Chapter 2

Monday, January 26th: Qualitative vs. Quantitative Methods


Wednesday, January 28th: Mapping Causes in Comparative Politics


Friday, January 30th: No Class

II. STATES, NATIONS, AND IDENTITIES

Monday, February 2nd: No Class

Wednesday, February 4th: Origins of the State

• Clark et al. 2009, pages 92–95
• Drogus and Orvis 2012, pages 39–45

Friday, February 6th: Why States?


Monday, February 9th: Nations and Identities

• Drogus and Orvis 2012, pages 146–154
• Hechter 2004, Chapters 1-2
Wednesday, February 11th: Nationalism: Good or Bad?


Friday, February 13th: Strong, Weak, and “Failed” States

- Drogus and Orvis 2012, pages 51–60

Monday, February 16th: Will the State Survive?


Wednesday, February 18th: Clash of Civilizations?


III. REGIMES

Friday, February 20th: Democracy

- Clark et al. 2009, Chapter 5

Monday, February 23rd: Authoritarianism(s)
• Drogus and Orvis 2012, pages 110–127; 132–136
• **Paper 1 Due**

**Wednesday, February 25th:**  Semi-Authoritarianism


IV. DEMOCRATIZATION

**Friday, February 27th:**  Economic Growth and Resource Curses

• Clark et al. 2009, pages 169–195; 198–201

**Monday, March 2nd:**  Inequality and Democratization

• Clark et al. 2009, pages 195–198

**Wednesday, March 4th:**  Democracy and the Civic Culture

• Clark et al. 2009, pages 208–221

**Friday, March 6th:**  Cultural Incompatibilities with Democracy?

• Clark et al. 2009, pages 221–239

**Monday, March 9th:**  Democratic Transitions
• Ukraine Crisis (newspaper articles)

**Wednesday, March 11th:** Transition vs. Consolidation


**Friday, March 13th:** Midterm Exam

V. **INSIDE DEMOCRACIES**

**Monday, March 16th:** Parliamentary vs. Presidential Systems


**Wednesday, March 18th:** Electoral Systems...

• Clark et al. 2009, Chapter 12

**Friday, March 20th:** ...And Their Consequences


**Monday, March 23rd:** Spring Break

**Wednesday, March 25th:** Spring Break

**Friday, March 27th:** Spring Break

**Monday, March 30th:** Federalism, Decentralization, Devolution
Wednesday, April 1st:  Why Federalize?


Friday, April 3rd:  No Class

VI. INSIDE AUTOCRACIES

Monday, April 6th:  Authoritarian Institutions

- Drogus and Orvis 2012, Chapter 8

Wednesday, April 8th:  Political Parties & Judicial Politics


Friday, April 10th:  Case Study: North Korea

- Film Screening: *Secret State of North Korea*

VII. POLITICAL ECONOMY

Monday, April 13th:  It’s the Economy, Stupid
• Drogus and Orvis 2012, Chapter 5

Wednesday, April 15th: Regulating Market Failures: Social Welfare Policy

• Drogus and Orvis 2012, pages 539–564
• Paper 2 Due

Friday, April 17th: No Class

Monday, April 20th: Regulating Market Failures: Health and Environmental Policy

• Drogus and Orvis 2012, pages 564–596

Wednesday, April 22nd: How Much Market Intervention?


VIII. ISSUES, TRENDS, DEBATES

Friday, April 24th: Advanced Industrial Societies

• O’Neil 2010, Chapter 7

Monday, April 27th: After Communism

• O’Neil 2010, Chapter 8

Wednesday, April 29th: Less Developed Countries and Post-Colonialism

• O’Neil 2010, Chapter 9
Friday, May 1st: Development and Stability in Latin America


FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, May 6, 10:30-12:30

REFERENCES


