

POLS 225: COMPARATIVE POLITICS

NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, FALL 2016, 3 CREDITS

Basic Information

Professor: Dan Pemstein
Email: daniel.pemstein@ndsu.edu
Office: 109 CJPP

Class Location: Minard 210
Class Time: TuTh 2:00-3:15
Office Hours: TuTh 3:30-4:30

Course Description

Summary

Comparative analysis of contemporary political systems, practices, institutions, and actors.

Overview

POLS 225 is an introduction to the field of comparative politics that is grounded in how political scientists organize theory and data to inform and persuade other scholars and policymakers. While this course will acquaint students with the politics of countries around the globe, the purpose of this class is not to provide a tour of the political world, but rather to introduce students to core concepts and methods that underpin the study of political behavior and institutions within states. That is, we will focus on general patterns across countries, rather than particular nations' peculiarities. Therefore, this course is organized around a small number of 'big' questions in comparative politics, such as why some countries have democratized while others have not, what determines the size and structure of political party systems, and how political institutions affect economic outcomes.

Objectives

After completing POLS 225, students should be able to understand, criticize, and produce both abstract and empirically based arguments about how politics works within states. They should also have a basic grounding in the structure of the modern state, various forms of democratic and authoritarian government, electoral and party systems, and the relationships between national politics and economic outcomes.

Texts

The following required textbooks are available for purchase at the University bookstore:

- William Clark, Matt Golder, and Sona Nadenichek Golder. 2012. *Principles of Comparative Politics, 2nd Ed.* Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Bates, Robert. 2001. *Prosperity and Violence: The Political Economy of Development.* New York: W.W. Norton.

These books are on reserve in the main library. You are expected to read all of the assigned material before the class meeting for which it is assigned!

Evaluation

Summary

Midterm Exam	30%
Final Exam	30%
Pop Quizzes	20% (4 × 5%)
Participation	20%

Exams

The midterm and final exams will each count for 30% of your total grade. Each exam will contain a mixture of multiple choice and short answer/essay questions. The final exam is non-cumulative and each exam covers about half of the course material.

Pop Quizzes

We will have five pop quizzes throughout the semester, each consisting of a few short essay questions. Students' grades will be based on their four highest quiz scores, with each quiz accounting for 5% of the total course grade. Quizzes will deal with information contained in the reading assigned for the day on which the quiz occurs.

Participation

You are expected to attend every class and to participate in class activities and discussions. Participation is worth 20 percent of your final grade and will reflect your engagement in and contribution to class discussion, not simple attendance (which should be a given, although lack of attendance will negatively impact your grade). Participation can take many forms, including—but not limited to—asking questions, answering my queries, engaging in class debate, organizing or participating in study groups, and taking an active role in group activities. Towards the end of the semester, each student will write a short (1-2 page) paper making an evidence-based case for the participation grade that she feels she deserves. These papers, and the persuasiveness of their arguments, will form the basis for students' participation grades. Although you have substantial leeway in how you make your case for your participation grade, your self-evaluation should follow this rough rubric:

- A Strong attendance, frequent and thoughtful verbal participation, active participation in group work
- B Strong attendance, regular and thoughtful verbal participation, active participation in group work
- C Strong attendance, some verbal participation, satisfactory participation in group work
- D Missed more than 3-4 classes, little to no verbal participation in class, lack of engagement in group work
- F Frequently miss class, no verbal participation, leave your group members hanging

Class Policies

Grades

I use a flat grade scale: A=90–100, B=80–89, C=70–79, D=60–69, F=59 or lower. If you have a complaint about an exam or quiz grade you must type a formal appeal describing the problem. Your appeal should clearly explain why you believe that your original work correctly answered the exam/quiz question and make a cogent argument for improving your grade. Attach a copy of the original exam or quiz to your appeal.

Make-Up Exams and Assignments

I will allow make-up exams only in extreme circumstances and only by prior arrangement or given a valid excuse. I will not accept excuses after the fact if you could have reasonably notified me ahead of time. You may not make up missed quizzes (remember, you will drop one quiz, so you have some leeway) or turn in late class participation papers.

Academic Honesty

The academic community operates on the basis of honesty, integrity, and fair play. NDSU Policy 335: Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct applies to cases in which cheating, plagiarism, or other academic misconduct have occurred in an instructional context. Students found guilty of academic misconduct are subject to penalties, up to and possibly including suspension and/or expulsion. Student academic misconduct records are maintained by the Office of Registration and Records. Please do make sure that you understand common standards of academic integrity and plagiarism. You can find information about academic honesty at www.ndsu.edu/academichonesty. I will deal with academic dishonesty and plagiarism *harshly*.

Electronic Devices

You may never use a cell phone in class. I discourage using a laptop for note-taking because research shows that students retain information better when they take notes by hand. While I am unlikely to bother to publicly shame you for using social media or playing games in my class, such behavior is likely to color my reading of your participation paper . . .

Students with Disabilities

Any students with disabilities or other special needs who need special accommodations in this course are invited to share these concerns or requests with the instructor and contact the Disability Services Office (<http://www.ndsu.edu/disabilityservices/>) as soon as possible.

Veterans

Veterans and student soldiers with special circumstances or who are activated are encouraged to notify the instructor in advance.

Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading
8/23	What is Comparative Politics?	CGG Ch. 1
8/25, 8/30	Studying Comparative Politics	CGG Ch. 2
9/1	Library Research Skills	
9/6, 9/8	Politics & Games	CGG Ch. 3
9/13	The State	CGG Ch. 4
9/15	Democracy & Dictatorship	CGG Ch. 5
9/20	Forms of Authoritarianism	CGG Ch. 10
9/22, 9/27	Democracy & Development	CGG Ch. 6
9/29	Democracy & Culture	CGG Ch. 7
10/4, 10/6	Democratic Transitions	CGG Ch. 8
10/11, 10/13	Tiananmen & Tahrir	
10/18	Review & Catch-Up	
10/20	Midterm Exam	
10/25, 10/27	Prosperity and Violence	Bates (2001)
11/1, 11/3	Democratic Government	CGG Ch. 12
11/8, 11/10	Electoral Systems	CGG Ch. 13
11/15	Institutions and Social Choice	CGG Ch. 11
11/17	Party Systems	CGG Ch. 14
11/22	No Class	
11/24	Thanksgiving	
11/29	Party Systems	CGG Ch. 14
12/1	Veto Players & Constitutions	CGG Ch. 15
12/6	Ethnic Conflict	CGG Ch. 16
12/8	Review & Catch-Up, Participation Paper Due	
12/15	Final Exam (3:30PM)	