Outline

This course is designed to get you thinking about comparative political science from a research point of view. While there is no expectation that you will generate independent research, the course will focus throughout on engaging “real” political science research on topics central to the Comparative Politics literature - namely, economic development, democracy, political violence, internal conflict and human rights. The focus will be on understanding the conceptual and theoretical domain of inquiry and considering explanations of the variation in these concepts across space and time. To put it a different way, we are going to focus on really trying to understand what we’re talking about and figuring out why things like democracy or human rights might be different in some places and at some times than in others.

I realize that many of you are not Political Science majors. As such, the course does not assume that everyone has a clear understanding of what Comparative Politics is or what Comparative Political Scientists do, rather I only assume that you are curious about the world around you and interested in how we might go about making systematic comparisons among sets of observations of any type. While we focus on those observations relevant to Comparative Politics, the tools we discuss could be used to make comparisons among any sets of observations on any measurable dimension.

As this is a 300-level course, I am going to shoot for 30-40 pages of reading per week (on average). Readings will primarily come from the textbook for the course and D2L where necessary:


Here are the options for obtaining the textbook:

- Rent an electronic copy from Amazon - $9.61 (60 days)
- Rent an electronic copy from CourseSmart -$14.29 (180 days)
- Buy from the UWM bookstore - New: $52.95, Used: $36.50 [if available]
• Buy from the publisher - $52.95
• Buy from Amazon - $49.78.

There are kindle apps for all manner and types of tablets, computers and smartphones (see here). There will be other readings as well, but those will be made available to use in electronic format as they are required in the “Content” section of the course’s D2L site.

Unusual Features of this Course

• This is an online course and as such, you will be required to have a reliable, high-speed internet connection (cable/DSL or better). The course material, quizzes and exams will only be available online. Failure to complete quizzes or exams for any reason that is not cleared with me prior to the opening of the exam will result in a grade of zero. While I am sensitive to D2L connectivity issues that may arise, as adults you are responsible to give yourself enough time in taking the quizzes and tests to deal with such issues. Putting off the last two quizzes and final until two hours before the course ends, only to encounter D2L problems will be met with little, if any, sympathy.

Grading

You final grade in the course will depend on the following:

Quizzes 30%
Four quizzes will be given to test your understanding of the most recent material. These quizzes may contain multiple choice, true/false, short answer or essay questions, though not each type of question will be on each quiz. Each question will be timed (45 minutes with a 5 minute grace period, after which your quiz will be auto-submitted [i.e., you will be automatically prompted to submit and no further saving can be done]), though you should have plenty of time to answer the question. The quizzes are closed book, closed notes. The “initial quiz”, discussed below in the “Outline” section does not count toward your grade.

Midterm Exam 30%
The midterm exam will test you on roughly the first half of the course material. You will have 120 minutes to complete the midterm with an additional five-minute grace period. Closing the midterm does not stop the clock. These exams may include some objective questions (i.e., multiple choice and true/false) and some short answer questions. While this exam is closed-book, I will allow you to have at your disposal a single (8.5×11-inch) piece of paper with whatever you want written on it.
Final Exam 40%

The final exam will be cumulative, testing you on all of the course material. These exams may include some objective questions (i.e., multiple choice and true/false) and some short answer questions. While this exam is closed-book, I will allow you to have at your disposal a single (8.5 × 11-inch) piece of paper with whatever you want written on it. You will have 120 minutes with a five-minute grace period to answer all of the questions.

Expectations

It should go without saying, but sadly it must not, that even though this is an online course, your work must still be your own. Quizzes are not opportunities to share with friends, the exam windows are not designed so that you might get a sneak peak at the questions. Please take pride in and responsibility for submitting your own work. Should you have any questions about the quizzes, exams or any other aspect of the course for that matter, please direct them to me rather than your colleagues.

Schedule of Grading

Grading will be done over each weekend. So, material submitted by 5PM on Friday will be graded by 9AM on Monday. If you are someone who wants/needs feedback on things before completing other assignments, you need to prepare accordingly. While it is possible that grading can and will happen at other times, I cannot promise that it will be done at any particular time other than the weekend.

Miscellaneous

You may obtain information on UWM policies concerning academic issues and course conduct here: http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf. In extreme and unforeseen circumstances, the format for this course may be modified to enable completion of the course. In that event, you will be provided an addendum to this syllabus that will supersede this version.

Outline

The course consists of seven modules and each module is made up of a voice over slideshow presentation as well as a set of readings. These will show up on the “News” section of the D2L site once you’ve completed the appropriate material. There are four quizzes and two exams, where each is conditionally released after completion of the previous item. The conditional release works as follows: Module 1 and Quiz 1 will open after you successfully complete the “initial quiz” (more on this below). Modules 2 and 3 and Quiz 2 (which covers modules 2 and 3) will be released upon the completion of Quiz 1; Module 4 and the Midterm will be released upon the completion of Quiz 2, Modules 5 and 6 and Quiz 3 (which covers modules 5 and 6) will be released following completion of the Midterm, Module 7 and Quiz 4 will be released after the completion of Quiz 3 and the Final will be released upon the completion of Quiz 4. The material up through and including the
midterm must be submitted by 11:59PM on 6/18/2016. The remaining material (i.e., quizzes 3 and 4 and the final exam) must be submitted by 11:59PM on 7/9/2016. This course is, thus, quite flexible in that it allows you to learn at whatever pace you see fit, so long as it happens within the constraints provided above. You do not have to wait until the second half of the course to do quizzes 3 and 4 and the final. So long as you have completed the prior material, you can complete those as you wish. With that flexibility comes the responsibility of not putting everything off until the last day. If you put all of the work off until the last day and, for some reason, your internet connection craps out making it impossible for you to complete the required work, I will not be particularly sympathetic.

There is an “initial quiz”, which will essentially ask you to confirm some important dates. You have 10 attempts to complete the quiz and may use whatever resources are at your disposal (i.e., you can use the internet, this syllabus, the course D2L site, etc...). The material for the course will only become available to you after you have successfully answered all of the questions on the initial quiz.

Module 1: Comparative Political Science

- What is Comparative Politics and Why We Compare Countries.
  - Landman, Chapter 1
- How to Compare
  - Landman, Chapters 2
  - POCP2 (D2L)
- Comparing Many Countries / Basic Quantitative Methods
  - Landman, Chapter 3
- Comparing Few Countries / Single-Country Studies
  - Landman, Chapters 4 and 5

Quiz on Module 1

Module 2: Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy

- Philippe Schmitter and Terry Karl, What Democracy Is and Is Not (D2L)
- POCP5 (D2L)
- Robert Dahl, Polyarchy (D2L)

Module 3: Economic Development and Democracy

- Landman, Chapter 6
- Adam Przeworski and others, Political Regimes and Economic Growth (D2L)

Quiz on Modules 2 and 3
Module 4: Transitions to Democracy

- Landman, Chapter 9
- POCP8 (D2L)

Midterm Exam
Module 5: Human Rights

- Landman, Chapter 11
- *UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (D2L)

Module 6: Political Dissent

- Landman, Chapter 7 & 8

**Quiz on Modules 5 and 6**

Module 7: Globalization

- ERCP11 (D2L)
- Samuel Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations* (D2L)

**Quiz on Module 7**

Final Exam