

**POLSCI-335: Comparative Political Systems**  
**Online, Mini-session III, 4/9/2012-5/10-2012**

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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. Readings will primarily come from the textbook for the course:

Landman, Todd. 2008. *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics: An Introduction 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.* Routledge. (ISBN: 978-0-415-41237-7, New: \$44.95, Used: \$31.00 [if available])

The third edition of the book is much expanded from the previous editions, so I am afraid that only the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition will work for the course. The book is on sale at the University Book Store for (approx \$45 New/ approx \$31 Used) and may be available more cheaply from other online retailers. There will be other readings as well, but those will be made available to use in electronic format as they are required on the course’s D2L site as required.

## 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
- This course is given completely in the third mini-session (4/9-5/10). Thus, all work will have to be completed by the end of the mini-session and I expect that you will keep up with the work over the course.

## Grading

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

### Quizzes 30%

Five quizzes (roughly one each week) 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, though you should have plenty of time to answer the question.

### Midterm Exam 30%

The midterm exam will test you on roughly the first half of the course material and will be available to take for the 24 hours between 3:00 PM 2/10/2011 and 3:00 PM 2/11/2011. These exams will include some objective questions (i.e., multiple choice and true/false), some short answer and some essay 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 and will be available to take for the 24 hours between 3:00 PM 2/25/2011 and 3:00 PM 2/26/2011. These exams will include some objective questions (i.e., multiple choice and true/false), some short answer and some essay 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.

**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. Please take pride in and responsibility for submitting your own work.

## Miscellaneous

You may obtain information on UWM policies concerning academic issues and course conduct here: <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf>. While there are no indications of an unusually severe flu season this year (or anything else that might compromise our ability to complete the course). However, the format for this course may be modified to enable completion of the course if such a situation arises. 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. 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 are open unconditionally from 4/9. Modules 2 and 3 and Quiz 2 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 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. This course is, thus, maximally flexible in that it allows you to learn at whatever pace you see fit, so long as it happens entirely within the allotted five-week period. This also provides ample opportunity for you to get *very* behind and overwhelmed if you don't keep up with the work throughout the five weeks. You are responsible for getting the work done. If you are interested, I have provided what I think is a reasonable schedule that you may try to follow as a calendar file (.ics) on the D2L site for the course. The dates, however, are just instructive.

### 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)
- US State Department. *2009 Human Rights report: Introduction* (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**