POS 241

INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

SPRING 2017 ONLINE COURSE

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For technical assistance, please call 1-877-947-HELP toll free, or 581-4891 locally. Or e-mail help@umit.maine.edu.

This is strictly an online course. I distribute all notes, assignments, and tests online. Our discussions all occur online. You need access to a computer. You need computer skills that include using e-mail, accessing websites, and turning on and rebooting the computer. You do not need high-speed Internet. If you need the software, you must download First Class from www.umit.maine.edu and install it on your computer. You must access First Class throughout the course.

Introduction to Comparative Politics introduces students to politics in countries around the world. In addition, we closely examine the politics of Britain, Japan, Russia, China, Mexico, Brazil, India, and Less Developed Countries (LDCs), with closest attention to Islamic countries. In keeping with the spirit of comparative study, our text’s author and our online lectures compare these countries with each other, and with the United States, wherever appropriate.

There are four evaluations, each contributing one-quarter of your grade. Three are prelims which you will write and e-mail to me. The fourth evaluation is my assessment of your contributions to our class’s online discussions. Each lecture and reading assignment will include discussion questions. Your discussion posts are very important. They contribute greatly to the success of our class.

If you need accommodation for a disability, please contact Disability Support Services, 121 East Annex, at 581-2319, or by e-mail at dss@maine.edu
We have one assigned book. You may obtain it from the bookstore in Orono or in Augusta. The Augusta bookstore’s phone is 1-800-621-0083, and its fax is 1-800-243-7338. The text should be available used.


**Course Goals**

In this course, you will:
--gain familiarity with the diverse historical experiences and political cultures of other countries
--appreciate how national cultures interpret political values in varying ways
--explore how and why other countries’ political cultures and institutions differ from the United States, and consider what these differences might suggest to Americans
--appreciate why some countries and regions achieve and sustain higher levels of political and economic development than others

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the semester and in the future, you will:
--be motivated to identify and track future trends in other countries’ politics
--place future developments in appropriate social and political contexts
--learn to make judgments about various countries’ approaches to political issues
--understand why certain countries take a particular future political course
--gain sufficient confidence to discuss other countries’ politics knowledgeably

**Course schedule**

Week 1, January 16-20
Introduction to Comparative Politics
Nations and States
Modern Governments
Popular Ideologies
Elitism, Pluralism and Polyarchy
Read Powell, 1-21

Week 2, January 23-27
Constitutions
Presidential and Parliamentary Systems
Authoritarian and Totalitarian Regimes
Read Powell, 22-38
Week 3, January 30-February 3
 Political Culture
 Public Opinion
 Political Socialization
 Unitary, Federal, and Devolved Systems
 Read Powell, 39-55

Week 4, February 6-10
 Legislatures
 Executives and Bureaucracies
 Courts, Judiciaries, and Human Rights
 Read Powell, 96-147

Week 5, February 13-17
 First test

Week 6, February 20-24
 Political Parties
 Elections and Public Participation
 Interest Groups and Civil Society
 Instability, Violence, and Revolutions
 Read Powell, 56-95

Week 7, February 27-March 3
 Britain
 Read Powell, 148-193

Mid-semester Break

Week 8, March 20-24
 Japan
 Read Powell, 294-335

Week 9, March 27-31
 Russia and China
 Read Powell, 336-383 (Russia), 384-431 (China)
Week 10, April 3-7
Second test

Week 11, April 10-14
Mexico
Read Powell, 432-481

Week 12, April 17-21
Brazil
Read Powell, 482-531

Week 13, April 24-28
India
Read Powell, 582-629

Week 14, May 1-5
Less Developed Countries and Islamic Countries
Read Powell, 532-581 on Iran OR 630-677 on Nigeria
Third test

End of course

Academic honesty: Academic honesty is very important. It is dishonest to cheat on exams, to copy term papers, to submit papers written by another person, to fake experimental results, or to copy or reword parts of books or articles into your own papers without appropriately citing the source. Students committing or aiding in any of these violations may be given failing grades for an assignment or for an entire course, at the discretion of the instructor. In addition to any academic action taken by an instructor, these violations are also subject to action under the University of Maine Student Conduct Code. The maximum possible sanction under the student conduct code is dismissal from the University.

Sexual Discrimination Reporting
The University of Maine is committed to making campus a safe place for students. Because of this commitment, if you tell a teacher about an experience of sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, relationship abuse (dating violence and domestic violence), sexual misconduct or any form of gender discrimination involving members of the campus, your teacher is required to report this information to the campus Office of Sexual Assault and Violence Prevention or the Office of Equal Opportunity.
If you want to talk in confidence to someone about an experience of sexual discrimination, please contact these resources:

For confidential resources on campus: Counseling Center: 207-581-1392 or Cutler Health Center: 207-581-4000. For confidential resources off campus: Rape Response Services: 1-800-310-0000 or Spruce Run: 1-800-863-9909.

Other resources: The resources listed below can offer support but may have to report the incident to others who can help:

For support services on campus: Office of Sexual Assault & Violence Prevention: 207-581-1406, Office of Community Standards: 207-581-1409, University of Maine Police: 207-581-4040 or 911. Or see the OSAVP website for a complete list of services at http://www.umaine.edu/osavp.