

INTA 3203: Comparative Politics

Sam Nunn School of International Affairs

SPRING 2013

M/W/F 10:05 – 10:55 AM, U A Whitaker Biomedical Engr 1103

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This course will examine the different political systems and institutions that are in place in countries around the world.

This class will be unique. Much of our semester will be focused on a simulation where the class will act as a constitutional convention for a newly-independent state based on the Georgia Tech campus and story. The more you participate and engage in the simulation the better the experience will be for you and your fellow students.

Required Reading

One textbook is required for this course. Copies are available at the student bookstores and elsewhere.

- Caramani, Daniele (2011). *Comparative Politics*: (2nd ed.). New York, NY, US: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0-19-957497-1 (abbreviated as CP)

I am also posting outside reading that will provide additional information for the drafting of the Constitution for our class.

There will also be a YouTube® channel created for the class that will be a link in the class T-Square site. Videos that are shown during lectures will be added to that channel so that you can access them at your leisure.

The T-square site will also contain other important material for the course, including assignments, study guides for exams, and so on. Regular access to T-Square is mandatory for this course. Most of you already have the necessary skills to use this tool, but if you don't OIT runs periodic workshops.

Recommended Reading

Being informed about what is going on in the world is always a good idea. We will spend some time in this course discussing contemporary world politics, and though it is not required I highly recommend spending a little time each day checking the international news. Keeping up with events will enhance the quality of our discussions as we incorporate

what we are learning with what we see and read in the news. If you need to know some well-respected sources of information, I am happy to give you that info.

Class Format

This class will meet three times a week for 50 minutes each. A list of general discussion questions appears with the reading assignment for each session during the lecture portion of the semester. I expect all students to come to class having done the reading and ready to comment and/or ask questions. Remember, no question is too small or too obvious. Chances are your classmates will be wondering the same thing. During the constitutional convention portion of the class, lectures will occur on Mondays and Wednesdays while negotiations and voting will occur on Fridays.

Course Requirements

- Quizzes: 15%
- Commission Presentation: 5%
- Midterm: 20%
- Constitutional Convention: 15%
- Research Paper: 15%
- Final Exam: 20%
- Attendance and Participation: 10%

Midterm and Final (20% each)

There will be two exams during the semester – the midterm and final. The midterm will cover all of the material prior to the date of the midterm. The final will cover all of the material from the class. The exam will consist of a series of short answer, matching and identification questions. I will provide study resources prior to the exam. **The final is scheduled for Wednesday, 1 May, at 11:30am.**

Commission Presentation (5%)

Every student in the class will choose to join one of six Royal Commissions on policy for the new nation. Each group will make a 5-6 minute presentation to the rest of the convention on policy options within their area of purview. Each group will have to present three options for the convention to choose from during their presentation. Further instructions and requirements will be provided in class. **The presentations will be given in class on Monday, 4 February.**

Quizzes (15%)

There will be three quizzes over the semester, given on Fridays. The quizzes will not last more than 15 minutes, but will be mainly to make sure you are keeping up with the reading and lectures. The first quiz will be over world geography. Make-up quizzes will not be offered.

Constitutional Convention (15%)

For the simulation part of the class, each Friday will be the official sessions for the convention. Before each convention session you have to create your own clause or part of the Constitution that will be discussed in that session. You are to bring the part you have written to class (typed) so that it can be turned in to show your work. Your level of participation and effort will determine your grade for the Convention.

Research Paper (20%)

I will assign one final paper to be written. It should be between seven (7) and nine (9) pages, matching the format listed in the paper guides. Papers must be submitted on paper and stapled (double-sided is encouraged). Electronic submission will be not accepted. Late papers will not be accepted. The topic is the following: Find a problem that one country faces (corruption, bad institutions, human trafficking, etc) and find the solution in another country. More specific instructions will be given in class. You will be required to turn in benchmarks throughout the semester.

Attendance and Participation (10%)

Attendance in class is mandatory. However, being in class is not enough – you should participate and ask questions, especially during each lecture. Demonstration of having done the reading will result in a better grade. Please advise me ahead of time if you will miss class or afterward if you are ill. I will grant you two absences (for whatever reason) during the semester after which your final grade will be deducted 1 point for each additional absence (10 points off your participation grade). Obviously there are extenuating circumstances that I will consider, but you need to consider your presence in class as vital to your final grade. Only family emergencies, documented illnesses, or Institute-approved absences will count as excused absences.

Honor Code

Full compliance with the Georgia Institute of Technology's Honor Code is required on all assignments, exams, and papers.

Go to www.honor.gatech.edu for more information.

Special Needs

I am happy to meet any special needs you may have for the class in terms of assistance. You must present me with your ADAPTS office information so that I can make sure our learning environment is best suited to help you succeed.

Final Caveat

This syllabus is to be considered a living document and therefore subject to change. Any major changes (such as moving a due date) will be discussed with the class and posted to T-Square. If you have any questions about what you see on the syllabus, please see me to discuss.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Introduction to Comparative Politics:

Week One: January 7-11 : Introduction, Methods and Geography

- CP, chapter 1

What are we doing this semester?

What is comparative politics and why are we even bothering to study it?

Where in the world is Carmen Sandiego?

Week Two: January 14-18: Methodology

- **Coronation 1/14**
- **Commission Assignments 1/14**

- CP, chapters 2-3
- “History and CP” in T-Square
- “The Comparative Method” in T-Square

What is the Comparative Method?

What are the main approaches in doing comparative politics?

What are different methods in doing comparative political research?

Week Three: January 21-25: Forms of government

- CP, chapters 5-6

What is a democracy?

What are characteristics of a democracy?

What are the different types of authoritarian regimes?

Constitutional Convention:

Week Four: January 28- February 1: Constitutions

- **QUIZ ONE: 2/1**
- **PAPER TOPIC DUE**

- CP, chapter 9
- “Comparative Constitutions” in T-Square
- “Analyzing Constitutions” in T-Square
- “Judicial Institutions” in T-Square

*What are the different types of Constitutions?
What is necessary in a constitution?*

Week Five: February 4-8: Governments/Bureaucracy

- CP: chapter 8, 11
- “Comparative Executive-Legislative Relations” in T-Square
- “Comparative Federalism” in T-Square
- “Territorial Institutions” in T-Square

*How are governments organized?
What role does the bureaucracy play in governance?
Does bureaucracy implement or create policy?
What is a federal system?
What are the benefits and drawbacks to a federal system?*

Week Six and Seven: February 11-22: Legislatures

- CP: chapter 7
- “Comparative Legislative Behavior” in T-Square
- “Legislative Organizations” in T-Square
- “Bicameralism” in T-Square
- “Executives in Parliamentary Government” in T-Square

*What are the different structures of legislatures?
What is the benefit of bicameralism or unicameralism?*

Week Eight: February 25-March 1: Elections

- **QUIZ TWO: 2/22**
- **PAPER SOURCES DUE 3/1**

- CP: chapter 10
- “Electoral Systems” in T-Square

What are the different types of electoral systems?

Does an electoral system have an impact on the system and the policy output?

Should everyone have to vote?

Should everyone have the right to vote?

Week Nine: March 4-8: Midterm

- *Monday: Midterm Review*
- *Wednesday: Midterm*
- *Friday: Constitution catch-up*

Week Ten: March 11-15: Rights and Welfare

- CP: Chapter 21-22
- “The Welfare State” in T-Square
- “Economic Institutions” in T-Square
- “Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU” in T-Square

What kinds of rights should the nation protect?

What should the limit be of the welfare state? Should there be a limit?

Week Eleven: March 18-22: SPRING BREAK

Post-Constitution: Debate and Implementation

Week Twelve: March 25-29: Political Parties and Systems

- CP: chapters 12-13
- “Political Parties in and out of Legislatures” in T-Square

What are the different types of political parties?

How do political parties work together in the different systems?

Week Thirteen: April 1-5: Interests and Movements

- QUIZ THREE: 4/5
- PAPER OUTLINE DUE 4/1

- CP: chapters 14, 16

*What are some of the newer ways citizens are making their opinions heard?
Are the political institutions of the 21st Century adapting to new technology and
communication systems?*

Week Fourteen: April 8-12 : International Organizations

- CP: chapters 23-24
- “International Security Institutions” in T-Square

*What role do organizations like the EU play in the world today?
Is the nation-state becoming obsolete?*

Week Fifteen: April 15-19: Constitutional Debate

Week Sixteen: April 22-26: Constitutional Debate