

POL 102: Introduction to Comparative Politics

W 6-8:50 Tupelo Center

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Course Description

The world's increasing interdependence makes understanding other parts of the world critical in the twenty-first century. Products, people, and capital increasingly mobile, and events in faraway corners of the world significantly impact our daily life. This course prepares you to better understand and succeed in this increasingly globalized world.

As we learn about politics in other societies, we will develop a “**comparative**” perspective. We will seek not only to describe **HOW** politics in other parts of the world are different, but also to understand **WHY** political processes differ across the world. To do so, we will draw on comparisons between three types of societies: industrialized democracies, the “developing” world, and post-communist societies.

Throughout, we will make judgments about how well different kinds of polities provide their people elements of “**the good society**”: physical well-being, safety, informed decision-making, and civil and political rights. Students will develop a familiarity with the politics of key countries, understand important concepts in comparative politics, and analyze global political trends. Additionally, each student will work on a short country study paper on a selected country.

Course Readings

The following book is *required* for this course:

Draper, Alan and Ansil Ramsay. 2008. *The Good Society: An Introduction to Comparative Politics*. New York: Pearson Longman.

We will also read recent articles from popular news magazines selected to supplement textbook themes and provide examples of the kind of real-world applications of comparative politics.

I am also assigning two films: *Slumdog Millionaire* and *Goodbye, Lenin!* You are responsible to locate and view them on your own (see below for more instructions).

Course Requirements

Below is a summary of course requirements:

Class Participation	10%
Reading Quizzes	10%
Midterm Exam	25%
Research Paper	20%
Class Presentation	10%
Final Exam	25%
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 100%

Attendance Policy. You are expected to arrive on time and stay until class is over. If you will miss class or arrive late/leave early, you must notify me **before** class. You are allowed **ONE** “personal day” absence (for any purpose, including health or family emergencies).¹ Each additional absence results in an automatic 5% reduction from the final semester grade.

Participation. This course combines lectures with in-class discussion and participation. I expect everyone to complete readings **before** the class for which they are assigned and come to class prepared to discuss them. Participation accounts for a significant portion of the semester grade (10%). Keep in mind that **attendance is NOT the same thing as participation**. Active, meaningful participation involves answering questions that I pose to the class, raising interesting or relevant ideas for discussion, and asking good questions about material you do not understand.

Reading Quizzes. I will give a 5-minute reading quiz at the start of each class. Quizzes will be based on assigned reading materials and will ask you to demonstrate understanding of the readings. I will provide reading guides (in class and online) to help guide your reading. Reading quizzes account for 10% of the semester grade.

Exams. There are two exams in this course, a midterm and a final. Each exam is worth 25% of the semester grade, and will be a combination of short essay, short answer/vocabulary, and multiple-choice. I will hand out study guides for each exam a week in advance. The midterm exam will be in class on **March 10**. The final exam will be held during final exams week.

Research Paper and Class Presentation. Each student will write a research paper and give a class presentation on a selected country. I will provide each student with a country packet (about 10-15 pages). The class presentation requires you to read your country packet and give a brief 10-minute PowerPoint presentation to the class, using guidelines I will provide. Class presentations (worth 10% of the semester grade) are scheduled for **April 7**.

The research paper must be 1,250-1,750 words (about 5-7 pages), not counting the title page and bibliography. References and citations should follow **Chicago citation style** conventions (we will cover this in class). The research paper is worth 20% of the semester grade and is due before the final exam. In addition to the material in the country packet, the research paper must use at least THREE “scholarly” sources found through the academic databases **Project MUSE** or **JSTOR** (we will cover this in class). I will provide further guidelines and guidance throughout the semester.

Films & Extra Credit

You will watch two films: *Slumdog Millionaire* tells the story of Jamal, a young “slumdog” from Mumbai, India, who wins a television contest. *Goodbye, Lenin!* tells the story of Alex, a young East German teenager whose life is transformed after the Berlin Wall falls. Both are available through Netflix, local DVD rental stores, and the Ole Miss university library.

I expect all students to (independently) watch both films; we will then discuss them in class. But I am offering two extra credit opportunities if you write a short, 400-500 word essay (about two pages) on a film, based on guidelines I will provide. Ask me for details if you are interested.

¹ Special consideration will be given under extraordinary circumstances (such as a serious, prolonged illness). But the best defense against absence penalties for unforeseen events is to not miss classes unnecessarily.

Current Events

You are expected to keep up with current events around the world. One of the goals of the course is to encourage you to remain engaged with global issues beyond this semester. Whenever appropriate, we will discuss recent world events in class. Keeping up with current events will also help you find a research paper topic.

Although cable television provides a number of 24-hour news channels (CNN, FOX, MSNBC, etc.), the depth of their coverage is often insufficient.

One easy way to keep up with current events is to listen to NPR or MPB Think Radio (90.3 Oxford, 89.5 Booneville). In particular, I recommend the following shows:

- *Morning Edition* (5-8 am weekdays)
- *All Things Considered* (4-6 pm weekdays)

You can also listen to NPR programs online (<http://npr.org>) or subscribe to podcasts.

Another way to keep up with current events is to read a weekly news magazine. Here are some I recommend (we will read material from them during the semester):

- *The Economist* (<http://www.economist.com>)
- *Newsweek* (<http://www.newsweek.com>)
- *Time* (<http://www.time.com>)

Political Science Grading Policy

Please note that grades lower than “C” in political science courses will not be counted toward the political science major.

Additional Issues & Class Rules

I do not allow the use of cell phones, laptops, or other electronic devices in class. The same goes for reading newspapers, sleeping, or working on materials for another course. Such behavior disrespects me and other students. If you are unable to actively attend class and participate, do not attend class.

Communication. Email has become the most common way for students and faculty to communicate outside of class. I will attempt to answer your messages promptly, but note that messages sent *after* 6 pm will not be answered until *after* 8 am the following day. Additionally, you should remember to keep your messages “professional” and respectful (e.g. use proper salutations, such as “Professor/Dr. Centellas”). Check your university account (name@olemiss.edu) frequently. I will use that address when sending important messages related to the course.

Special Accommodations. If you have a learning disability or other documented issues, please see me immediately to make appropriate arrangements to help you meet the course requirements.

Academic Integrity. You must follow the University of Mississippi’s Academic Discipline Policy. All work is expected to be original; **plagiarism** (in any form) will not be tolerated. You are expected to behave in a respectful manner, both toward the professor and other students. Violations will be subject to disciplinary action according to University policy, as specified in the University *M Book*.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: January 20

Introduction: Hand out syllabus and go over course requirements in class

Week 2: January 27

Thinking about the “good society” / Women and development

Read: *The Good Society*, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-21)

Kristof & WuDunn, “The Women’s Crusade” (*New York Times Magazine*)

Week 3: February 3

Political institutions / Different development paths: India v. China

Read: *The Good Society*, Chapter 2 (pp. 22-55)

Khanna & Huang, “Can India Overtake China?” (*Foreign Policy*)

Week 4: February 10

States and markets / Globalization

Read: *The Good Society*, Chapter 3 (pp. 56-89)

Schuman, “On the Road Again: The Global Recession Scatters Workers” (*Time*)

Week 5: February 17

Developed countries / Multiculturalism

Read: *The Good Society*, Chapter 4 (pp. 90-116)

Farouky, “The Many Faces of Europe” (*Time*)

Week 6: February 24

Regimes in the developed world / The European Union

Read: *The Good Society*, Chapter 5 (pp. 117-148)

“Enlargement: In the nick of time” (*Economist*)

“The EU after the Irish vote: The future’s Lisbon” (*Economist*)

Week 7: March 3

Sweden, the US, Germany / France and Japan

Read: *The Good Society*, Chapter 6 (pp. 149-182)

“The French model: Vive la différence!” (*Economist*)

“Japan’s election: Lost in transition” (*Economist*)

Week 8: March 10

***** Midterm exam**

***** Hand out country packets for April 14 presentations**

***** March 14-20: Spring Break *****

Week 9: March 24

Developing countries (the “third world”) /

Read: *The Good Society*, Chapter 7 (pp. 183-211)

Muzandar, “Man Bites Slumdog” (*Newsweek*)

Slumdog Millionaire (film)

Week 10: March 31

Regimes in developing countries / Failed states

Read: *The Good Society*, Chapter 8 (pp. 212-243)
"The 2009 Failed States Index" (*Foreign Policy*)

Week 11: April 7

***** In-class country presentations**

Week 12: April 14

South Korea, Nigeria, Chile, Brazil / Iran's recent election

Read: *The Good Society*, Chapter 9 (pp. 244-290)
"Iran's presidential election fallout" (*Guardian* online interactive)
Zakaria, "Theocracy and its Discontents" (*Newsweek*)
Dickey, "The Supreme Leader" (*Newsweek*)

Week 13: April 21

Communism and postcommunist regimes / The fall of the Berlin Wall

Read: *The Good Society*, Chapter 10 (pp. 291-300)
Beinhold, "Lessons from the Former East Germany" (*New York Times*)
Wawrzyniak, "Hello, Lenin!" (*Newsweek*)
Goodbye, Lenin! (film)

Week 14: April 28

Postcommunist regimes in transition / Postcommunism in Cuba

Read: *The Good Society*, Chapter 10 (pp. 300-335)
Cohen, "The End of the End of the Revolution" (*New York Times Magazine*)

***** May 2-8: Finals Week - No Classes *****

Additional Required Readings

The following is the list of additional *required* readings posted on the course website:

- Allen, Paddy, Simon Jeffery, Julian Borger, Ian Black. 2009. "Iran's presidential election fallout." *The Guardian*, June 15.
- Beinhold, Katrin. 2009. "Lessons from the Former East Germany." *New York Times*, November 8.
- Cohen, Roger. 2008. "The End of the End of the Revolution." *New York Times Magazine*, December 5.
- Dickey, Christopher. 2009. "The Supreme Leader." *Newsweek*, June 20.
- Farouky, Jumana. 2007. "The Many Faces of Europe." *Time*, February 15.
- Foreign Policy*. 2009. "The 2009 Failed States Index." June.
- The Economist*. 2009. "Lost in transition." September 3.
- , 2009. "The French model: Vive la différence!" May 7.
- , 2008. "Enlargement: In the nick of time." May 29.
- , 2009. "The EU after the Irish vote: The future's Lisbon." October 8.
- Khanna, Tarun and Yasheng Huang. 2003. "Can India Overtake China?" *Foreign Policy*, July/August.
- Kristof, Nicholas D. and Sheryl WuDunn. 2009. "The Women's Crusade." *New York Times Magazine*, August 17.
- Mazumdar, Sudip. 2009. "Man Bites Slumdog." *Newsweek*, February 21.
- Schuman, Michael." 2009. "On the Road Again: The Global Recession Scatters Workers." *Time*, April 27.
- Wawrzyniak, Wieslaw. 2003. "Hello, Lenin!" *Newsweek*, May 12.
- Zakaria, Fareed. 2009. "Theocracy and Its Discontents." *Newsweek*, June 20.