GOVT E-20
INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS
(DRAFT)

Course Description: In this course, we will explore questions in contemporary comparative politics. We will focus on several questions that have long been central to research in comparative politics, including: 1) the challenges for democratization and democratic stability in certain social and economic contexts; (2) how countries vary in their political institutions (e.g. constitutional, electoral, administrative, and party systems) and why these variations matter and 3) what explains the persistence of ethnicity and causes of civil conflict. Country cases will be drawn from different regions of the world to ground students in the set of tools of comparative analysis. The objective is for students to use these tools to further examine the political system and policies of any country. Throughout the semester, we will challenge you to link the “facts” to the larger questions discussed above.

Requirements and Grading: The course has an in-class mid-term examination, one 5-7 pages (double-spaced) paper on a topic given by the instructor (graduate students will be required to write a longer, 10-15 pages) and a comprehensive final examination. Participation in both lectures and sections is required, and is crucial to mastering the materials of the course. You are expected to do the reading for each week and be prepared to discuss the reading. In-class tests will include both objective and essay questions. Students must complete the midterm, the paper, and the final examination to pass the course. Extensions, incompletes, or make-up exams will be given only in exceptionally pressing cases and in accordance with university policy. Petitions must be timely, properly documented, and submitted in writing. All requests for grade changes must be made formally in writing to your TA. Any such requests will cause the entire exam or paper to be reevaluated, and may result in either a higher or lower grade. Overall grades in the course will be calculated as follows:

- Short paper (tbd) 25 percent
- Midterm examination (tbd) 25 percent
- Participation in section 15 percent
- Final examination (tbd) 35 percent

Course Materials: All assigned readings have been, or are being, placed on regular or electronic reserve at the Library. Many of the readings can also be downloaded
from JSTOR. The following books are available for purchase at the Harvard University Bookstore:


**Disability Services:** The Extension School is committed to providing an accessible academic community. The Disability Services Office offers a variety of accommodations and services to students with documented disabilities. Please visit [www.extension.harvard.edu/resources/policies/resources/disability-services-accessibility](http://www.extension.harvard.edu/resources/policies/resources/disability-services-accessibility) for more information.

**Academic Integrity:** You are responsible for understanding Harvard Extension School policies on academic integrity ([www.extension.harvard.edu/resources/policies/student-conduct/academic-integrity](http://www.extension.harvard.edu/resources/policies/student-conduct/academic-integrity)) and how to use sources responsibly. Not knowing the rules, misunderstanding the rules, running out of time, submitting “the wrong draft”, or being overwhelmed with multiple demands are not acceptable excuses. There are no excuses for failure to uphold academic integrity. To support your learning about academic citation rules, please visit the Harvard Extension School Tips to Avoid Plagiarism ([www.extension.harvard.edu/resources/policies/resources/tips-avoid-plagiarism](http://www.extension.harvard.edu/resources/policies/resources/tips-avoid-plagiarism)), where you’ll find links to the Harvard Guide to Using Sources and two, free, online 15-minutes tutorials to test your knowledge of academic citation policy. The tutorials are anonymous open-learning tools.

**COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS**

**August 31: INTRODUCTION: Why Study Comparative Politics? The Comparative Method**

PD&S Chs. 1-2 (1-43)


**September 7: Labor Day Holiday**

**Sept. 14: What is Democracy?**

Lijphart Ch. 1-4

“A Question of Freedom” The Economist Mar 8, 2003

**Sept. 21: Where Does Democracy Come from?**


PD&S Ch. 13, Politics of China, pp. 381-387.

**Sept. 28: Democratization in South Korea and Taiwan**


Hung-mao Tien 1997, ”Taiwan’s Transformation” in Diamond, Plattner, Chu and Tien eds., *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies: Regional Challenges.* (123-161)

**October 5: Democracy in Plural Societies**

Arend Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies (Yale 1977), Ch. 1 (1-20) and Ch. 5 (142-176)

“ Asking for More” The Economist, Mar 29, 2003


*Paper Assignment handed out*

**October 12: Columbus Day Holiday**

**Oct. 19: Problems of Development and Democratization**

PD&S Ch. 15, Politics in Brazil, pp. 471-479.

PD&S Ch. 12, Politics in Russia, pp. 367-374.

“The Road to Riches,” The Economist, Dec 31, 1999


“The Road to Hell is Unpaved,” The Economist, 21 December 2002

Easterly, The Elusive Quest for Growth (ch 12: 241-252)

“Poverty and Property Rights: No Title.” The Economist, Mar 31, 2001

*Papers Due at the beginning of class

October 26: Electoral Institutions and Political Parties – What Determines the Number of Parties? Does the Number of Parties Matter?

Lijphart Chs. 5 and 8

PD&S Ch. 5, pp. 79-99, Ch. 11, Politics in Japan, pp. 309-318 and Ch. 8, Politics in Britain, pp. 151-156, 181-185

November 2: IN CLASS MIDTERM

November 9: Do Institutions Matter? Parliamentary and Presidential Systems


“Three Months of Waiting” The Economist, Apr 26, 2003

November 16: Bureaucracies and the Sources of Corruption and Inefficiency

PD&S Ch. 6, pp. 100-123 and Ch. 11, Politics in Japan, pp. 320-329.


**November 23: Legislatures, Courts, Constitutions, Federalism**

Lijphart, Chs. 11-12, pp. 187-225.

“Lords save us” *The Economist*, May 18, 2002

“Silvio Berlusconi’s constitutional exercise” *The Economist*, Oct 16, 2004


PD&S Ch. 7, pp. 124-149, PD&S Ch. 9, Politics of France, pp. 235-238, Ch. 10, Politics of Germany, pp. 283-288.

“It has to happen – but will it?” *The Economist* Apr 26, 2003

“We know what’s best for your old age...” *The Economist* Aug 3, 2002

**December 7: Globalization and the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis**


**December 14: Ethnic Conflict and Persistence of Ethnicity**


December 21: Civil Wars


TBD – FINAL EXAMINATION