

PLS 140, Introduction to Comparative Politics

Fall 2016

Tuesday/Thursday 9:00-10:15 am, Room 8.154

Prof. Caress Schenk

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Office Hours: Tuesday 15:00-17:00, Thursday 14:00-17:00, or by appointment

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Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday 10:30-12:30

This course introduces students to the field of Comparative Politics. It aims to provide students with factual knowledge about the political systems, processes and development of major countries including the US, UK, Germany, Russia, Iran, China and others. Country studies will introduce students to important themes of Comparative Politics such as national identity, institutional and electoral design, political economy, political attitudes and ideologies, regime type, and civil society, etc. which will be used to analyze modern political strategies and pitfalls.

Course learning objectives:

- Students will be able to present their ideas and information in an appropriate format
- Students will be able to synthesize arguments within Comparative Politics
- Students will be able to listen to and be tolerant of different ideas
- Students will be able to bring together theoretical concepts and real world politics

Students are required to:

- Attend and participate in all class sessions
- Read all course material
- Participate in all simulation activities
- Put forward your best effort on all class-related activities and engage the material, the instructor and colleagues with an open mind.

Final Grades will be comprised of:

Online glossary	10%
Current events discussions	10%
Simulation activity/group project:	20%
Midterm:	25%
Final:	35%

Grading scale

A	95-100	Excellent, exceeds the highest standards in the assignment or course
A-	90-94.9	Excellent; meets the highest standards for the assignment or course
B+	85-89.9	Very good; meets high standards for the assignment or course
B	80-84.9	Good; meets most of the standards for the assignment or course
B-	75-79.9	More than adequate; shows some reasonable command of the material
C+	70-74.9	Acceptable; meets basic standards for the assignment or course
C	65-69.9	Acceptable; meets some of the basic standards for the assignment or course
C-	60-64.9	Acceptable, while falling short of meeting basic standards in several ways
D+	55-59.9	Minimally acceptable
D	50-54.9	Minimally acceptable; lowest passing
F	0-49.9	Did not satisfy the basic requirements of the course

Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. **Any student who does not have an attendance rate of 80% or better will not be permitted to sit for the final examination. This includes BOTH EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES!**

The **required reading** for this course can be found in the textbooks and on Moodle.

- Essentials of Comparative Politics, fifth edition, by Patrick H. O'Neil, WW Norton Publisher (henceforth labeled ESSENTIALS)
- Cases in Comparative Politics, fifth edition, by Patrick O'Neil, Karl Fields, and Don Share (henceforth labeled CASES)
- Essentials and Cases are available from the library. You MUST use the 5th edition.
- Additional readings will be placed on Moodle.

Online glossary

Students will choose a week in which they will add a term or a concept to the glossary. The concepts cannot be repeated. You can add files to your descriptions if you consider it important. Each glossary entry then has to be viewed by your course mates, everyone can comment or add to it. This glossary will serve as your review sheet when you prepare for the exams and quizzes.

Students will be divided into six groups for the semester, which will be the basis for all group activities. Your groups will lead current events discussions throughout the semester, and be transformed into parties for the purpose of an elections simulation.

During **student discussions and group activities**, one group will be responsible for giving a 10-minute briefing on the topic listed in the syllabus. A 1-page printed handout should accompany the presentation and will be graded based on visual design (i.e. appeal and artistry) and content. The class will then be divided into discussion groups and will be guided in a 20-minute discussion by the presentation group. Discussion questions to be used in the discussion session should be approved by instructor or TA.

The **election simulation** will take place during weeks 7-8. Students will form parties, create party platforms, conduct a media campaign and debates, and form a governing coalition. There will be a combination of in-class assignments and assignments that you must work on as a group outside of class.

The **midterm** will consist of fill in the blank, multiple choice and short essay. It will cover material from lectures, class discussions, and readings (including both those on the syllabus and those posted to Moodle) as well as a current-events component, and will account for 25% of the final grade. The **final exam** will be comprehensive, will be of a similar format to the midterm, and will account for 35% of the final grade.

Class policies

- All assignments should be submitted in class or on Moodle unless otherwise specified. Assignments submitted via email will not be accepted. Keep in mind that when you submit assignments to Moodle, you should not wait until the last minute because the system sometimes gets overloaded.
- No cellphones or laptops. No exceptions. I reserve the right to garnish your final course grade 5% for violations.
- All written assignments must use Times New Roman font, size 12, and should be single space. Margins must be 1 inch (or the equivalent standard on the metric scale).
- While you are welcome to email anytime about any issue you may be having in the class, please use proper email etiquette. Do not start your email "Hey Dr. Schenk," or "Hey" or "Professor" or

“Mrs. Schenk” or without a salutation. Instead, “Dr. Schenk,” “Dear Dr. Schenk,” or “Dear Professor Schenk,” should be used for initial contact. I will not answer emails that use an improper salutation.

- I will also not answer emails that can be answered by looking at the syllabus.
- Late assignments turned in more than 5 minutes late on the due date will receive half credit. Assignments turned in past the due date will receive no credit.
- There will be no make-ups for quizzes or in class assignments.
- There will be no extra credit offered for this course.
- Tests may only be made up if prior arrangements have been made.
- Plagiarism will not be tolerated including self-plagiarism (submitting the same assignment to multiple courses/professors). Any plagiarism will result in an automatic zero for the assignment and will be reported to the dean to be placed on your permanent record. Violations could result in an F for the course.
- Cheating will not be tolerated. Any behavior that even hints of cheating will be reported to the school disciplinary committee and will result in an automatic F for the assignment and/or course.
- I will generally be on campus on Tuesday s and Thursdays. You may feel to stop by anytime, but **I cannot guarantee that I will be in my office or available if you do not make an appointment with me.** (What this really means: **DO NOT** complain to me that you were looking for me but I wasn't in my office! Send an email.)
- I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus as needed, including adding and subtracting assignments and changing due dates. I will notify you in class or via email about changes (this means you are responsible for checking your email and for being in class to hear about changes).

Course Outline

Week One:	<i>Course Introduction and Introduction to Comparative Politics</i>
Tuesday, 16 August:	Read: chapter 1 (ESSENTIALS)
Thursday, 18 August:	Read: chapter 1 (CASES)
Week Two:	<i>United Kingdom</i>
Tuesday, 23 August	Read: chapter 2 (CASES)
Thursday, 25 August	Read: chapter 2 (ESSENTIALS) “States”
Week Three:	
Tuesday, 30 August	no class meeting: Constitution Day
Thursday, 1 September	Brexit and Scottish Referenda discussion/group activity Simulation exercise one: party formation Read: assignments 1-2 from Moodle
Week Four:	<i>United Kingdom (cont.)</i>
Tuesday, 6 September	Read: chapter 5 (ESSENTIALS) “Democratic Regimes”
Thursday, 8 September	Read: chapter 8 (ESSENTIALS) “Advanced Democracies”
Week Five:	<i>United States</i>
Tuesday, 13 September	no class meeting: Kurban Ait
Thursday, 15 September	Read: chapter 3 (CASES), Read: chapter 3 (pp 69-79 ONLY) (ESSENTIALS) “Political Attitudes and Ideologies”
Week Six:	<i>United States (cont.)</i>

Tuesday, 20 September	Read: chapter 4 (ESSENTIALS) "Political Economy", Barro: "Democracy: A Recipe for Growth?", and Przeworski et al "Political Regimes and Economic Growth" (MOODLE)
Thursday, 22 September	US Presidential Elections discussion/group activity
Week Seven: Tuesday, 27 September	<i>Simulation: Elections in West Europa</i> Simulation exercise two: creating a party platform Read: assignments 3 from Moodle
Thursday, 29 September	Written party platforms due Thursday 29 September Simulation exercise three: viewing media campaigns Read: assignment 4 Campaign ads and logos due today!
Week Eight: Tuesday, 4 October	<i>Simulation: Elections in West Europa</i> Simulation exercise four: debates and campaign speeches Read: assignment 5
Thursday, 6 October	Simulation exercise five: coalition building Read: assignment 6
Fall Break: 10-14 October	
Week Nine: Tuesday, 18 October	<i>Midterm exam and Germany</i> MIDTERM EXAM
Thursday, 20 October	Simulation report due Read: chapter 5 (CASES)
Week Ten: Tuesday, 25 October Thursday, 27 October	<i>Germany</i> Read: chapter 3 (ESSENTIALS) "Nations and Societies" European refugee crisis discussion/group activity
Week Eleven: Tuesday, 1 November Thursday, 3 November	<i>Russia</i> Read: chapter 7 (CASES)
Week Twelve: Tuesday, 8 November Thursday, 10 November	<i>Russia (cont.)</i> Sanctions and economic recovery discussion/group activity
Week Thirteen: Tuesday, 15 November Thursday, 17 November	<i>China</i> Read: chapter 8 (CASES) Read: chapter 9 (ESSENTIALS): Communism and Postcommunism Discussion/group activity: topic TBA
Week Fourteen: Tuesday, 22 November Thursday, 24 November	<i>Iran</i> Read: chapter 7 (ESSENTIALS) "Political Violence" and Zakaria "Islam, Democracy, and Constitutional Liberalism" (MOODLE) Read: chapter 10 (Cases) and chapter 6 (ESSENTIALS) "Nondemocratic Regimes" Discussion/group activity: topic TBA

EXAMS WEEK