

**PLS140 Introduction to Comparative Politics****Fall 2019****Professor:** Dr. Hélène Thibault**Room:** Blue Hall**Schedule:** Tuesday and Thursday, 10:30 am - 11:45 am**Office number:** 8.507A**Office hours:** Monday 13:00-14:00 and Friday: 10:00-12:00**Email:** [helene.thibault@nu.edu.kz](mailto:helene.thibault@nu.edu.kz)**Teaching assistant:** Bagnur Karbozova**Office number:** 8.239**Office hours:** Mon&Wed 10-12pm & 2-4pm; Tue&Thurs 2-4pm.**Email:** [bkarbozova@nu.edu.kz](mailto:bkarbozova@nu.edu.kz)**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

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This course introduces students to the field of Comparative Politics. In this course we will explore competing theories and arguments that explain political dynamics in modern societies; including democratization, social movements, political violence, etc. In addition we will analyze and employ the comparative method. To achieve this we will study theories, use case studies, examine real-world data and explore important political developments in different regions of the world. Special emphasis will be paid to various modes of governance and the importance of political institutions. However, this course challenges students to give equal consideration to the role of non-state actors and broader social and economic institutions.

**READINGS**

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*Essentials of Comparative Politics*, 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> edition, by Patrick H. O'Neil, WW Norton Publisher (henceforth labeled *Essentials*).

*Cases in Comparative Politics*, 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> edition, by Patrick H. O'Neil, WW Norton Publisher (henceforth labeled *Cases*).

There are copies available on reserve at the library as well as online.

For the other mandatory readings, you have to find and download them yourself. There are few exceptions and I have indicated in the given weeks when the document is available on Moodle.

## CLASS POLICIES

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### Cell phones

The use of cell phones in class is strictly forbidden. It can be very disruptive for you and your classmates and it is impolite. I reserve the right to mark you as absent every time I see you use your cell phone. Laptops and pads can be used ONLY to take notes.

### Language quality

You will be judged on your writing abilities for written assignments. I understand that English is not your first language but it is your responsibility to avoid mistakes in your written assignments. You could be penalized to up to 5%, to the professor's discretion. This applies only to written assignments uploaded to Moodle and not to examinations written in class.

### Late submissions

Late submissions are not accepted. Exceptions are made only for illness or other serious situations deemed as such by the professor. All absences from exams and all late submissions due to illness should be supported by a medical certificate. If a student misses an in-class assessment and does not find a way to contact the professor within a twenty-four-hour window prior to the deadline or exam date (either personally or via a friend or family member), the student may receive a zero for the assessment.

### **Beware of Academic Fraud and cheating!**

Academic fraud is an act committed by a student to distort the marking of assignments, tests, examinations, and other forms of academic evaluation. Academic fraud is neither accepted nor tolerated by the University. Academic fraud will result in an automatic failure for the given assignment and/or for the course and students will be reported to the Faculty. In case of academic misconduct, students are liable to other severe academic sanctions according to SHSS policies. **During exams, everyone caught cheating will be immediately expelled from the room and attributed a zero for the exam.**

In recent years, the development of the Internet has made it much easier to identify academic plagiarism. The tools available to your professors allow them to trace the exact origin of a text on the Web, using just a few words.

Here are a few examples of written academic fraud:

- presenting an author's argument or ideas as your own without quoting him or her;
- engaging in any form of plagiarism or cheating;
- presenting falsified research data;
- handing in an assignment that was not authored, in whole or in part, by the student; - submitting the same assignment in more than one course.

**\*The information contained in this syllabus may change throughout the semester.\***

## ASSESSMENT METHODS

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Readings are mandatory to succeed in this class. The course consists of a mix of lectures and in-class exercises. Usually, Fridays will be dedicated to in-class discussions and exercises around the mandatory readings or any other topic selected by the professor.

### **Class attendance 10%**

Class attendance is necessary to successfully complete this course. Ms. Karbozova, the teaching assistant, will take attendance at the beginning of every class. Attendance points are calculated automatically in Moodle and unjustified absences and tardiness will lower your grade. However, I reserve the right to take away the entire 10% if you miss more 4 lectures. Three late check-ins will result in an absence. Sleeping in class will count as an absence.

### **Reading report 10%**

This exercise is meant to help you identify the arguments and methodology of an academic article, as well as pay attention to the conclusions reached by the author. I will provide a document/template for you to answer specific questions. You will have to upload your document on Moodle. Deadline: Thursday September 29, 9am.

### **Midterm exam 30%**

The exam will be based on class lectures and assigned readings and consists of a mix of multiple-choice and short-answer questions. The exam will take place during Week 8, after the fall break.

### **Movie review 15%**

You will watch the movie *V for Vendetta*. Your task will be to write a short summary of the movie as well as present an analysis by using the concepts of democracy, equality, and power discussed in class and in the readings. The word limit is from 700 to 800 words. You will have to upload your document on Moodle. Deadline: Friday, November 8, 5pm.

### **Final exam 35%**

The exam is cumulative will be based on class lectures and assigned readings seen since the beginning of the semester. It will combine multiple-choice and short-answer questions as well as an essay. The date is determined by the Registrar's office.

| <b>Summary of evaluations</b> | <b>% of the final grade</b> |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Attendance                    | 10                          |
| Reading report (August 29)    | 10                          |
| Midterm exam (October 10)     | 30                          |
| Movie review (November 8)     | 15                          |
| Final exam (TBA)              | 35                          |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>100%</b>                 |

## GRADING

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

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## COURSE OUTLINE

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### **Week 1: Introduction to comparative politics**

**August 12 – 18**

Tuesday: Presentation of the syllabus.

Thursday: Chapter 1 *Essentials*.

### **Week 2: The state: origins and characteristics**

**August 19 – 25**

Tuesday: Chapter 2 *Essentials*.

Thursday: Tilly, Charles. 1985. "War making and state making as organized crime" in *Bringing the State Back In*, Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (Eds), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). [Find it on Moodle.](#)

### **Week 3: Nations and societies**

**August 26 – September 1**

Tuesday: Chapter 3 *Essentials*

Thursday: Gil-White, Francisco. 1999. "How Thick is Blood? The Plot Thickens: If Ethnic Actors are Primordialists, What Remains of the Circumstantialist/Primordialist Controversy?" *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22(5); 789-820.

**Week 4: Political economy****September 2 – 8**Tuesday: Chapter 4 *Essentials*.Thursday: Evans, Peter. 1998. "Transferable Lessons? Re-examining the Institutional Prerequisites of East Asian Economic Policies," *Journal of Development Studies* 34(6); 66-86.**Week 5: Democratic regimes I****September 9 – 15**Tuesday: Chapter 5 *Essentials*.Thursday: Chapter 3 – The United States of America *Cases*.**Week 6: Democratic regimes II****September 16 – 22**Tuesday: Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1994. "The Social Requisites of Democracy Revisited: 1993 Presidential Address", *American Sociological Review*, 59(1); 1-22.Thursday: Chapter 9 - India *Cases*.**Week 7: Non-democratic regimes****September 23 – 29**Tuesday: Chapter 6 *Essentials*.Thursday: Chapter 10 – Iran *Cases*.**FALL BREAK****September 30 - October 4****Week 8: Midterm exam****October 7 –13**

Tuesday: In-class reviewing.

Thursday: EXAM.

**Week 9: Communism and post-communism I****October 14 –20**Tuesday: Chapter 9 *Essentials*.Thursday: Chapter 7 Russia *Cases*.

**Week 10: Communism and post-communism II****October 21- 27**

Tuesday: Schatz, Edward. 2009. "The Soft Authoritarian Tool Kit: Agenda-Setting Power in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan". *Comparative Politics* 41(2); 203-222.

Thursday: Thibault, H el ene and Edward Lemon. 2018. "Counter-extremism, power and authoritarian governance in Tajikistan", *Central Asian Survey*; 37(1); 137-159.

**Week 11: Industrializing countries****October 28 – November 3**

Tuesday: Chapter 10 *Essentials*.

Thursday: Chapter 14 – Nigeria *Cases*.

**Week 12: Advanced Democracies****November 4 – 10**

Tuesday: Chapter 8 *Essentials*.

Thursday: Foa, Stefan and Yascha Mounk. 2016. "The democratic disconnect", *Journal of Democracy* 27(3); 5-17.

Ian Bremmer on Brexit: <http://time.com/4389141/brexit-will-erode-the-values-that-have-defined-europe/>

**\*Movie review due this week\***

**Week 13: Politics of gender****November 11 – 17**

Tuesday: Lorber, Judith. 1994. "A Night to His Day", In *Paradoxes of Gender*. Yale University Press. [Find it on Moodle](#).

Thursday: Burnet, Jennie E. 2011. "Women Have Found Respect: Gender Quotas, Symbolic Representation, and Female Empowerment in Rwanda". *Politics & Gender* 7; 303–334.

**Week 14 Political violence****November 18 – 24**

Tuesday: Chapter 7 *Essentials*.

Thursday: Mueller, John. 2000. "The Banality of "Ethnic War"", *International Security*, 25(1); 42-70.

**\*Final exam during Exam week. Date to be determined by the Registrar's Office.\***