Introduction to Comparative Politics
Fall 2020
Online format
Tuesday/Thursday 9:00-10:15 a.m. (while most course activities will be online and asynchronous, we will reserve this course time for any synchronous activities and will use these days to establish submission deadlines)

Prof. Caress Schenk
Office: 6.106, Email: cschenk@nu.edu.kz
Office Hours: I will regularly be available during the class time Tuesday/Thursday 9:00-10:15 via our course Zoom link. You may join the Zoom meeting if you have questions or would like to discuss course material.
https://nu-edu-kz.zoom.us/j/97670839293?pwd=YUNFMnVSSnlDYndWN2JqbGM3ZnNkUT09
Meeting ID: 976 7083 9293
Passcode: 500403

Teaching Assistant Aiym Daulbekova
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Office Hours: by appointment via email

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, France, 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:
- Engage in all course activities
- Read all course material
- Put forward your best effort on all class-related activities and engage the material, the instructor and colleagues with an open mind.

Learning and classroom support
NU and faculty are committed to the principals and philosophy of inclusive education and to ensure that all students are treated equitably and supported in their learning. It is reasonable to expect that there will be circumstances where some students will require additional learning support. This could be due to physical impairments, learning difficulties, social or emotional problems, and temporary or chronic illness. This will mean that reasonable adjustments may be required to ensure that every student has the opportunity to be successful in our courses and programs. If you feel that these adjustments could be relevant to your circumstances then please email me at the start of the semester and we can discuss. All discussions will be strictly confidential.

Final Grades will be comprised of:
Weekly (weeks 1-11) lecture reflection forum (individual)   20%
Weekly (weeks 1-11) reading quizzes (individual)   15%

Current events presentation (group):		10%	
Participation in 8 current events discussions (individual):		10%	
COVID briefing paper + video promo (group):		15%	
COVID discussion forum (individual)		10%	
Final exam (individual):		20%	

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

The **required reading** for this course can be found in the textbooks and on Moodle.
   o Essentials of Comparative Politics, sixth edition, by Patrick H. O'Neil, WW Norton
      Publisher, (henceforth labeled ESSENTIALS)
   o Cases in Comparative Politics, sixth edition, by Patrick O'Neil, Karl Fields, and Don Share,
      (henceforth labeled CASES)
   o You MUST use the 6th edition of each of the above books. They will be available through
      the library, but it is also possible to find them online.
 • Additional readings will be placed on Moodle.

Course activities:
Weekly lecture reflections (20%). Lectures will be posted each week in video and podcast format.
Watch/listen to one of the formats. Each week Prof. Schenk/Aiym will post reflection questions on the
lecture in a Moodle forum. You should post at least 3 responses of around 50-70 words each (shorter answers
will not be accepted). Posts are **due each week (1-11) on Wednesdays by 23:59**.

Weekly reading quizzes (15%). Each week complete the reading quiz posted on Moodle by **Tuesday
23:59**. Weeks 1-11 only.

Students will be automatically/randomly divided into eight groups (countries) for the semester, which will be
the basis for all group activities. Your groups will lead current events discussions throughout the semester,
meet together for small-group discussions and activities, and work on a COVID-19 briefing together. Group
A: UK, Group B: US, Group C: France, Group D: Germany/EU, Group E: Russia, Group F: China, Group
G: Iran, Group H: Kazakhstan

During **current events presentations (10%)**, one group will be responsible for giving a 10-minute briefing
on the topic listed in the syllabus in video format, which will be graded based on content and visual
appeal/creativity. Before preparing the video, **at least one week before your video is due**, you should
submit an outline of your presentation. Videos can be prepared in any format but should be uploaded to
YouTube and the link sent as your submission. The group should also provide discussion questions (5
questions) for a class discussion. These questions must be approved by Prof. Schenk before the video is
submitted. Please submit the text version of your final and approved questions and video link together by
email to Prof. Schenk AND Aiym before **23:59 Wednesday** on the week of your presentation. Presentations
are given a group grade and individual grade. The group grade reflects the overall quality of the finished work.

The individual grade is based on your contributions to the output, which will be determined by Prof. Schenk/Aiym's assessment of your work, self-reporting and your group-mates' assessment of your efforts.

All students participate in **current events discussions (10%)** in weeks 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11. You should post one response of around 50 words for EACH of the questions posted (shorter answers will not be accepted). On the weeks where there are current events discussions, your posts must be completed by **Thursday 23:59**.

Each group will write a 3,000 word **COVID briefing (15%)** that discusses the experience of your group's country and the government's response to the virus. Your group should create a 2-3-minute **promo video** of key findings and 3 discussion questions for students. Both the paper and video are **due November 8** (**23:59**). Briefing papers should be uploaded to Moodle. Video links (YouTube) should be emailed to Prof. Schenk AND Aiym. The papers and videos will be posted in the last weeks of the course for group discussion. Papers and videos are given a group grade and individual grade. The group grade reflects the overall quality of the finished work. The individual grade is based on your contributions to the output, which will be determined by Prof. Schenk/Aiym's assessment of your work, self-reporting and your group-mates' assessment of your efforts.

COVID discussion forums (10%) will take place the final weeks of the course and will operate in much the same manner as weekly discussions. During weeks 12-14, there will be 8 presentations for you to watch and 8 discussion forums to participate in. In each of the 8 discussion forums you should answer EACH of 3 questions with responses of around 50 words (shorter answers will not be accepted).

The **final exam** will be an open-book take home exam that asks you to reflect on and apply the concepts you have learned in the course. It will be comprised of several essay questions that you will write original answers for. You should not copy word for word from any source (plagiarism), nor should you copy from what you've written for other assignments in this or other courses (self-plagiarism). All assignments will be submitted via Turnitin, which will compare your essay to officially published sources (e.g. the textbook, internet sources) and other student papers at NU and elsewhere. Plagiarism or self-plagiarism will result in an automatic zero/failure for the assignment and possibly the course. Final exam questions will be posted on Moodle on November 27 and the final written work will be due on Moodle **December 6 (23:59)**.

Extra credit is available for this course. Students may earn up to 5% towards the final grade by participating in a research project of Prof. Schenk. More details will be posted on Moodle.

Class policies
- All assignments should be submitted on Moodle unless otherwise specified. Keep in mind that when you submit assignments to Moodle, you should not wait until the last minute because the system sometimes gets overloaded.
- 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 discussion forum posts.
- 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 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). An updated syllabus will be kept on Moodle, which will act as the version of record for the course.

Reading and Activity Outline

Weekly schedule:
Lectures will be posted by Monday each week
Reading quizzes should be completed by Tuesday (23:59) each week
Lecture discussion forum posts should be completed by Wednesday (23:59) each week
Current events presentations should be submitted by Wednesday (23:59) on your group's week
Current events discussion forum posts should be completed by Thursday (23:59) (weeks 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11)

Week One: August 18, 20
Topic: Course Introduction and Introduction to Comparative Politics
Readings: chapter 1 (ESSENTIALS), chapter 1 (CASES)

Week Two: August 25, 27
Topic: United Kingdom
Readings: chapter 2 (CASES), chapter 2 (ESSENTIALS) "States"

Week Three: September 1, 3
Topic: United Kingdom (cont.)
Readings: chapter 5 (ESSENTIALS) "Democratic Regimes"
Current events presentation, group A (topic: BREXIT)

Week Four: September 8, 10
Topic: United States
Readings: chapter 3 (ESSENTIALS) "Nations and Societies", chapter 3 (CASES)

Week Five: September 15, 17
Topic: United States (cont.)
Readings: September 15: chapter 4 (ESSENTIALS) "Political Economy", Barro: "Democracy: A Recipe for Growth?", Przeworski et al "Political Regimes and Economic Growth" (MOODLE)
Current events presentation, group B (topic: Police Protests)

Week Six: September 22, 24
Topic: France
Readings: chapter 4 (CASES)
Current events presentation, group C (topic: TBA)

Week Seven: September 29, October 1
Topic: Germany and the European Union
Readings: chapter 5 (CASES), chapter 7 (ESSENTIALS) "Advanced Democracies"
Current events presentation, group D (topic: Refugee Crisis)

FALL BREAK: October 5-9

Week Eight: October 13, 15
Topic: Russia
Readings: chapter 7 (CASES), chapter 6 (ESSENTIALS) "Nondemocratic Regimes"
Current events presentation, group E (topic: TBA)

Week Nine: October 20, 22
Topic: China
Readings: chapter 8 (CASES), chapter 9 (ESSENTIALS): Communism and Postcommunism
Current events presentation, group F (topic: TBA)

Week Ten: October 27, 29
Topic: Iran
Readings: chapter 10 (Cases), Zakaria "Islam, Democracy, and Constitutional Liberalism" (MOODLE)
Current events presentation, group G (topic: TBA)

Week Eleven: November 3, 5
Topic: Kazakhstan
Readings: chapter 10 (ESSENTIALS), chapter 7 (ESSENTIALS) "Political Violence
Current events presentation, group H (topic: TBA)

Week Twelve: November 10, 12
COVID Spotlight
November 10: COVID-19 response in the UK, group presentation and discussion
November 12: COVID-19 response in the US, group presentation and discussion

Week Thirteen: November 17, 19
COVID Spotlight
November 17: COVID-19 response in the France and Germany, group presentation and discussion
November 19: COVID-19 response in the Russia, group presentation and discussion

Week Fourteen: November 24, 26
COVID Spotlight
November 24: COVID-19 response in the China and Iran, group presentation and discussion
November 26: COVID-19 response in the Kazakhstan, group presentation and discussion

Final exam due on Moodle **December 6 (23:59)**