Syllabus for Introduction to Comparative Government

Richard M. Skinner, Rollins College
Introduction to Comparative Government

Richard Skinner

The purpose of this course is to provide you with the opportunity to develop a critical understanding of Comparative Politics. We will spend our time analyzing politics around world; we will examine government and its relationship with citizens; the economic and political institutions of various societies; and how governments respond to economic and political change.

Your most important responsibility in this course will be the careful and reflective reading of the assignments listed in the outline that follows. Throughout the term we will also want to pay close attention to the political process as it unfolds in front of us.

REQUIREMENTS:

One midterm (30 points)
Two short essays (15 points each)
One final exam (30 points)
Attendance and participation (10 points)

ATTENDANCE / PARTICIPATION: You are required to attend class. I will take attendance on a regular basis. If you come late, please see me after class. While regular attendance is expected, by itself it does not guarantee a perfect participation grade. Discussion is a central component of this class. You should come to each class meeting prepared to talk about the arguments made by the section’s authors and about your response to them. A guide to my expectations for class participation can be found at the end of the syllabus.

ESSAYS: You will have to write two essays of three to five pages each; there will be three opportunities to submit it. You will have to choose your topic from lists that I will provide. While these essays are designed to be written using the readings assigned for class, you may choose to engage in additional research. If you do so, please make sure to cite your sources, using a commonly used system such as that used by the Modern Language Association or that found in The Chicago Manual of Style. The essay will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each
day it is late. After the third day, papers will not be accepted. You may choose to rewrite your essay, in which case, your final grade will be an average of the original and the rewrite.

Unless you have a specific reason to so (which you have cleared with me), I prefer that you not use laptop computers in this class.

REQUIRED READINGS:


Lawrence Mayer, Frank Thames, and Dennis Patterson. 2008. *Contending Perspectives in Comparative Politics: A Reader*. CQ Press.


**Week 1: Orientation**

Drogus and Orvis, ch. 1

Mayer et al, chs. 1 & 2

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (selections)


**Week 2: The State**

Drogus and Orvis, ch. 2

Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince* (selections)

Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation.”

Dahl, chs. 1-3

**Week 3: States and Citizens**

Drogus and Orvis, ch. 3

Dahl, chs. 4-7

**Week 4: The State and Identity**

Drogus and Orvis, ch. 4

Dahl, ch. 12
Week 5: MIDTERM

Week 6: The State and the Market
Drogus and Orvis, ch. 5
Dahl, chs. 13-14

Week 7: Political Institutions – Governing
Drogus and Orvis, ch. 6
Mayer et al, chs. 3-4

Week 8: Political Institutions – Participation & Representation
Drogus and Orvis, ch. 7
Mayer et al, chs. 5-7
Dahl, ch. 8-11

Week 9: Authoritarian Institutions
Drogus and Orvis, ch. 8

Week 10: Regime Change
Drogus and Orvis, ch. 9
Mayer et al, chs. 12-14

Week 11: Globalization, Deindustrialization, and Development
Drogus and Orvis, ch. 10
Mayer et al, chs. 8-9

Week 12: Public Policy When Markets Fail
Drogus and Orvis, ch. 11
Mayer et al, chs. 10-11

Week 13: Politics and Politics of Inclusion and Clashing Values
Drogus and Orvis, ch. 12
Mayer et al, ch. 15
Dahl, ch. 15