

## Section 1

# Bellevue College

Bellevue, WA 98007-6484

## Political Science and International Studies Program

### Introduction to Comparative Politics

(POLS 204, Item 5377 OAS)

Summer 2013 (June 24-August 8)

*Credit:* 5 -- No pre-requisite, but POLS& 101 would be advantageous.

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## Course Overview and Objectives

This comprehensive introductory course looks at how political authority operates and is organized in different political systems, the structures through which decision-making takes place, the channels of citizen participation, and the attitudes and practices that determine policy outcomes. A primary objective is to provide students with the basic tools to compare the variations amongst societies based on individual priorities and values and to see how these lead to outcomes that are sometimes similar but other times different. Our focus takes us well beyond the highly-industrialized and transitional societies to the developing areas where most of the world's people live. Thus, we give equal attention to the global south, distinguishing among societies whose economic and social progress show them making great strides, those that are making little or no progress, and those that are best examined through Islamic cultural lenses. The common theme throughout this course is change – its causes, effects and impact on the structure and decisions of governments.

## Learning Outcomes

*At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:*

- Demonstrate knowledge of various political systems, institutions and processes
- Evaluate the ways in which different countries have shaped their political institutions and public policies and the costs and benefits of these choices
- Demonstrate understanding of the nature of the democratic transitions underway in the formerly communist societies
- Determine the opportunities and challenges of globalization in different political systems
- Demonstrate understanding of the major perspectives and theories that inform comparative politics
- Apply the comparative method to generalize about political systems
- Gain a range of global competencies, intercultural and others.

*Required Text* (Available at the BC Bookstore):

McCormick, John. 2013. *Comparative Politics in Transition*. Seventh Edition. Wadsworth Cengage (ISBN 1111832579).

*Supplemental:*

Bok, Derek. *The State of the Nation: Government and the Quest for a Better Society*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1996 (ISBN 0-67429211-1)

### Essential Online Resources

[http://www.wadsworth.com/politicalscience\\_d/special\\_features/ext/cprc/](http://www.wadsworth.com/politicalscience_d/special_features/ext/cprc/)  
[www.politicalresources.net](http://www.politicalresources.net); [www.electionworld.org](http://www.electionworld.org)  
[www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org); <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs>  
[www.un.org](http://www.un.org); [www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook)  
[www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org); [UNESCO](http://www.unesco.org), [Global Perspectives](http://www.globalperspectives.org), [Global Policy Forum](http://www.globalpolicyforum.org), [Yale Global Online](http://www.yaleglobalonline.org)

You are encouraged to read daily one of these newspapers: The Monitor, The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Economist, Le Monde, Far Eastern Economic Review, Financial Times (London), The Guardian Weekly, The Independent (London). You can get a student subscription, access some on-line, or read them at the BC Library. Follow the news on [NPR](http://www.npr.org), PRI's [The World](http://www.theworld.org), [BBC](http://www.bbc.com), [Aljazeera English](http://www.aljazeera.com), and [France24](http://www.france24.com).

## GRADING

*The following weighted distribution will assess how well students have achieved the course objectives:*

Online Assessments	25%
Comparative Country Study	25%
Final Exam (Multiple Choice) <sup>1</sup>	25%
Weekly Discussions	25%

## Grading

*Allocations and corresponding grade points for this course are as follows:*

A	94-100	(4.0)
A-	90-94	(3.7)
B+	87-90	(3.3)
B	84-87	(3.0)
B-	80-84	(2.7)
C+	77-80	(2.3)
C	74-77	(2.0)
C-	70-74	(1.7)
D+	66-70	(1.3)
D	60-66	(1.0)
F	< 60	(0.0)

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<sup>1</sup> The examination will be available for a 24-hour period, August 7-8.

## COURSE POLICIES (Read carefully!)

This course will comprise discussions, various text-related engagement assessments and exercises, a comparative country assignment, weekly discussions, and a comprehensive final examination—all of which are designed to meet the course objectives and enrich the learning experience. *Schedule may change, depending on the needs of the class and extenuating circumstances.*

### How to Succeed

Read the required text chapters and notes carefully and in a timely manner, submit all assignments by the due dates, and contribute to all the discussion topics.

### Academic Expectations

All provisions of the BC regulations concerning cheating and plagiarism—including the attached Social Science Division *Policy & Procedures* statement-- will be strictly enforced. This is a serious matter, and violations will carry heavy penalties! The basic rule for all written assignment is that if you borrow an idea from the text or any other source, including the web, then you must acknowledge it by citing it, even if it is not a direct quotation. This is normally done by way of footnotes or endnotes and a Works Cited. Citations should follow either the Modern Language Association (MLA) or American Psychological Association (APA) style. Recommended style resource: [Purdue OWL](#).

### Special Needs

If you require accommodation based on a documented disability or have emergency medical information to share, or if you need special arrangements, please contact me as soon as possible. If you would like to find out about support services available to you at BC, please contact Disability Resource Center at 425.564-2498.

### Campus Support Services

If you are on campus, you should take a guided tour of the Library Media Center's books, journals, abstracts, audio and videotapes collections and find out about on-line resources that could be very useful for research. There is also a Student Technology and Support Center (HELP DESK) (425) 564-5555) and Academic Success Center (425) 564.2200 with a wealth a student resources. Refer to our Canvas Course site (**Getting-Started** folder) for more helpful information.

### Key Dates:

- July 2: Last Day to withdraw without a "W" posted to transcript: in person by 6:00 p.m. or online by midnight.
- July 4 – Holiday, No class;
- August 8: Quarter ends!

## Section 2:

### Calendar

Note: This is not a formal contract. Course content and schedule may change, depending on the progress and needs of the class and on unforeseen circumstances. In addition to the required text, the discussions draw on other scholarly material in the subfield.

### PART I: INTRODUCTION

June 24: Understanding Comparative Politics; The Story of States

McCormick, Ch. 1, 2

#### *Further Reading*

Bok, Derek. *The State of the Nation: Government and the Quest for a Better Society* (All)

Kingdon, John W., *America the Unusual*. New York: Worth, 1999 (All)

Brown, Bernard E. "How and Why Compare? In Brown, ed. *Comparative Politics: Notes and Readings*, pp. 19-32. Belmont, CA: Thompson Wadsworth, 2006.

Putnam, Robert D. "The public Role of Politics," pp. 40-45. Ibid.

Eckstein, Harry, "A culturalist theory of political change." *American Political Science Review* 82, (1988), pp. 789-804.

Inglehart, Ronald & Marita Carballo, "Does Latin America Exist? (And is there a Confucian Culture?): A Global Analysis of Cross-Cultural Differences," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 30, March 1997: 34-46.

Collier, David, "The Comparative Method," in Ada W. Finifter, Ed., *The State of the Discipline II*. Washington, American Political Science Association, 1993

Almond Gabriel A, "Capitalism and Democracy," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 24, No. 3, Sep. 1991: 467-474.

Discussion: Is the state on its way out?

Thursday, July 4 – No Class

### Part II: POLITICS IN THE LIBERAL DEMOCRACIES

July 1: United States; Britain

McCormick, Ch. 3, 4

[The World in 2012](#), *The Economist*

*Film*: Order! Order! Library A-V Collection (where possible)

*Discussion*: Is the United States exceptional?

### Part III: COMMUNIST AND POST-COMMUNIST STATES

July 15: Russia; China

McCormick, Ch. 6, 7:

Discussion: Is the authoritarian political culture of the communist era still a factor in Russia politics? Should China still be considered communist?

### Part III: NEW DEMOCRACIES

July 22: Mexico

McCormick, Ch. 8

*Discussion:* What would it take for Mexico to become a genuine liberal democracy?

### Part IV-V: LESS-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND THE ISLAMIC STATES

July 29: Nigeria

McCormick, Ch. 10; 11

*Discussion:* Should Nigeria simply accommodate itself to its sharp ethnic divisions and build on it, rather than try to subvert it in the interest of a strong center?

August 29: The Islamic States-- Iran

*Discussion:* What are the prospects of a political opening in Iran, and what must happen to make it possible?

### CONCLUSIONS

Division of Social Sciences  
Political Science and International Studies Program  
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