

PSCI 2500
Introduction to Comparative Politics -- Spring 2017
MW 10:00-11:15 am Roskens Hall 304

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Office Hours: MW 8:45-9:45am and 1:00-2:30pm
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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Political Science 2500 is an introduction to the study of comparative politics, one of at least four subfields of political science (international relations, U.S. politics, and political theory are three other subfields taught at UNO). Comparative politics examines the world's different political systems by contrasting and comparing aspects of them and by seeking generalizations about them. This is a task far too large for any single introductory course, especially for a course that contains mostly non-majors. Any introduction to comparative politics can only scratch the surface of the vast amount of political phenomena studied by comparative political scientists. Nevertheless, students who successfully complete this course can at the very least expect to have a far easier time digesting the international news segments of newspapers and television programs.

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Define key concepts in the study of political systems, including regimes, governments, ideologies, states, and nations.
- Compare and contrast the basic features of political systems from around the world.
- Use the key theoretical tools and approaches in political science to analyze contemporary global political developments.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Required Readings:

Alan Draper and Ansil Ramsay, *The Good Society: An Introduction to Comparative Politics*, 3rd ed., (Pearson/Longman, 2016).

There will be additional short readings including newspaper articles and news videos throughout the semester. Additional readings aim to make you link the course concepts with current issues. All the readings will be available online.

Exams will cover the material in the textbook, additional reading assignments, and in-class materials including lectures.

Make-Up Exams and Incompletes

I will not allow make-ups without **an official documented excuse** regarding medical or family emergencies. Please keep in mind that late assignments will be downgraded. An incomplete will only be given in exceptional circumstances (a documented circumstance beyond the student's control). Students will only be given an incomplete if they have been doing passing work during the semester.

Code of Conduct

All students need to acquaint themselves with what constitutes academic dishonesty and the consequences thereof. See the general university policies for further information:

<http://www.unomaha.edu/aandsaffairs/leftcolumn/inside/students/policiesandprocedures/aiundergrad.php>. **Laptops and other devices with internet connection are not allowed during the classes.**

Although I acknowledge that laptops provide several benefits for learning, I am convinced, based on my experience, that they distract students from the lecture and discussions.

Fairness and Disability Statement

The instructor of this course is committed to support the learning of all students, irrespective of gender, race, age, religion, handicapping condition, or sexual preference. Students should be able to expect that their learning environments are free from any form of prejudice. Disparaging comments aimed stereotypically at any group and any questioning of the seriousness of purpose or academic commitment of students based upon group characteristics may undermine our educational mission. If such behavior occurs in class, students should first talk with the instructor. Identify specific examples of behavior by the instructor or by other students that the student finds offensive or disparaging. If the student is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint, the student is encouraged to consult with the Department Chair and to seek the Chair's assistance in improving the classroom environment.

Students requiring special consideration must contact and work through the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities in EAB 117 (554-2872). This office then notifies the instructor in writing of the accommodations the student needs in compliance with 504/ADA.

Course Website

I will make use of the features of the Blackboard system, which you can access through UNO webpage. The course syllabus, some of the course readings, lecture notes, and assignments will be available on this website. You will also submit your assignments electronically through Blackboard. I may intermittently send course-related e-mails to you via this site. Therefore, you need to make sure that your university email is up and running and that you understand how to use your Blackboard account.

Grading

Your final grade will be based on the following criteria

1. Attendance (5 %) and Participation (5 %)

You are expected to attend all the course sessions. More than three unexcused absence will negatively influence your grade. After three absences, each absence will decrease your attendance grade by 0.5 %. You are also expected to productively contribute to classroom discussions. This contribution can be in the form of participating informal and formal debates, posing and responding questions, sharing other resources that can facilitate classroom learning. To facilitate your class participation, I encourage you to think critically, and as part of that, to think the positive aspects of the lectures and readings, and to develop your own analysis of the subject. I will distribute handouts in the beginning of each class and the students will be required to fill it out as we move in class. In addition to your verbal participation, these handouts will be used as the basis for your participation grade. Class attendance and participation will worth 12.5 percent of your final grade.

2. Exams (25 % each, 75 % total)

There will be 3 in-class exams based on the assigned readings and material covered in the class lectures. Exams will include both multiple choice and short answer questions. Suggestions for exam preparation will be given prior to the tests. The exam dates are **February 15, March 15, and May 1**. Each exam is worth of the 25 percent of your final grade.

3. News Reports (2 % each, 6 % total)

The relevancy of this course will become most apparent if you keep up with current events and relate those events to the political science concepts and theories that we cover in our classes. Therefore, starting from the second week of the semester, you will be required to choose a country and follow the current events in that country regularly. You are required to read at least a newspaper article that is related to the topic we cover in class about your country each week. The newspapers that you choose should be the following: *The New York Times, The Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, The Financial Times, The Guardian, The*

Christian Science Monitor, and Le Monde Diplomatique (there is an English version). Most of these newspapers are available online.

To make sure that you read the news throughout the semester regularly, three news reports will be required. Each news report should include the source, date, title, and 2-3 sentence summary of the news that you will read. A template for the news reports will be posted on the course website in advance. The news reports are due on **February 13, March 13** and **April 19**. You are required to upload your news reports to Blackboard. Unless you have a legitimate excuse, you will lose 10 percent of your grade for this assignment for each day your assignment is late. In the event of a problem, please contact me as soon as you know. Each news report weighs 2 percent of your final grade.

4. Final Analysis of the News Reports (5 %)

In the end of the semester, the students will write a 3 double-spaced page analysis paper on their news report assignments. The students will summarize the skills and knowledge that they gained from the news report assignments. They are expected to bridge course readings with the news stories in this report. I will post a detailed sheet on Blackboard about the assignment and how it will be graded. Final analysis of the news reports is due on **April 26** and will be worth of 5 percent of your final grade.

5. Sharing Insights with the Community (4 %)

Starting from February 2, each student will be asked to lead and conduct an hour of discussion with the residents of Aksarben Senior Living on Thursday nights at 6 p.m. The schedule of student discussion leaders will be prepared in the first few weeks of the semester. The discussions at Aksarben Senior Living will carry our class discussions to the community. The students are encouraged to come up with a newspaper article related to the discussion (you may use your news report article for that particular week) so that the residents can read it in advance. The students will write a double-space one-page reflection paper summarizing the discussion and their experience. This assignment weighs 4 percent of your final grade.

A Summary of Grading Requirements

<u>Course Requirement</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Attendance	5 %	
Participation	5 %	
News Report 1	2 %	February 13
Exam 1	25 %	February 15
News Report 2	2 %	March 13
Exam 2	25 %	March 15
News Report 3	2 %	April 19
Final Analysis of Reports	5 %	April 26
Sharing Insights with Comm.	4 %	Varies
Exam 3	25 %	May 1
TOTAL	100 %	

The entire course is worth 100 points:

A	94-100 points	C	72-76 points
A-	90-93 points	C-	69-71 points
B+	87-89 points	D+	66-68 points
B	83-86 points	D	63-65 points
B-	80-82 points	D-	60-62 points
C+	77-79 points	F	0-59 points

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

INTRODUCTIONS

January 9: Overview of the Course

January 11: Movie Screening on South Korea (NO CLASS, Watch the Video at Home)
“South Korea: A Nation to Watch,” History Channel Documentary. Available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z8gw5qNr6PU>

January 16: Martin Luther King Day (NO SCHOOL)

January 18: The Good Society
Draper and Ramsey, Chapter 1, “Comparative Politics and the Good Society,” pp. 10-25

January 23: Comparative Method
Draper and Ramsey, Chapter 1, “Comparative Politics and the Good Society,” pp. 1-10

STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS: INSTITUTIONS

January 25: States
Draper and Ramsey, Chapter 2, “The State,” pp. 26-47

January 30: Weak States and Good Society
Draper and Ramsey, Chapter 2, “The State,” pp. 47-54

February 1: Political Participation
Draper and Ramsey, Chapter 3, “State and Society,” pp. 55-70

February 6: Patron-Client Relations
Draper and Ramsey, Chapter 3, “State and Society,” pp. 71-73

February 8: Political Culture and Social Capital
Draper and Ramsey, Chapter 4, “Political Culture and Identity,” pp. 74-84

February 13: Politics of Identity
Draper and Ramsey, Chapter 4, “Political Culture and Identity,” pp. 84-97

News Report 1 due

February 15: EXAM 1

STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS: DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

February 20: States and Markets
Draper and Ramsey, Chapter 5, “Political Economy,” pp. 98-106

February 22: Globalization and State Regulation
Draper and Ramsey, Chapter 5, “Political Economy,” pp. 107-125

February 27: Authoritarianism and Good Society

Draper and Ramsey, Chapter 6, "Authoritarianism," pp. 126-138 and pp. 142-151

March 1: The Persistence of Authoritarianism

Draper and Ramsey, Chapter 6, "Authoritarianism," pp. 138-142

March 6: Democracy and Democratic Systems

Draper and Ramsey, Chapter 7, "Democracy," pp. 152-166

March 8: Economic Development and Democracy

Draper and Ramsey, Chapter 7, "Democracy," pp. 166-174

March 13: What Promotes Development?

Draper and Ramsey, Chapter 8, "Economic and Human Development," pp. 175-202

News Report 2 due

March 15: EXAM 2

DIFFERENT MODELS OF GOVERNANCE AND THE GOOD SOCIETY: THE CASES

Developed Countries and the Good Society

March 27: Putting Democracies into Context

Manfred G. Schmidt, "Political Performance and Types of Democracy: Findings from Comparative Studies," *European Journal of Political Research*, Volume 41 (2002), pp. 147-163.

March 29: Social Democracy: Sweden

Draper and Ramsey, Chapter 9, "Developed Countries and the Good Society," pp. 203-219

April 3: Market Democracy: United Kingdom

Draper and Ramsey, Chapter 9, "Developed Countries and the Good Society," pp. 219-233

April 5: Christian Democracy: Germany

Draper and Ramsey, Chapter 9, "Developed Countries and the Good Society," pp. 233-249

Less-Developed Countries and the Good Society

April 10: Flawed Democracy: Brazil

Draper and Ramsey, Chapter 10, "Less-Developed Countries and the Good Society," pp. 250-263

April 12: Semi- Democracy: Nigeria

Draper and Ramsey, Chapter 10, "Less-Developed Countries and the Good Society," pp. 263-272

April 17: Electoral Authoritarianism: Iran

Draper and Ramsey, Chapter 10, "Less-Developed Countries and the Good Society," pp. 272-289

Communism, Post-Communism and the Good Society

April 19: Communist and Post-Communist Russia

Draper and Ramsey, Chapter 11, "Communism, Post-Communism and the Good Society," pp. 290-309

News Report 3 due

April 24: Communism and Market Economy: China

Draper and Ramsey, Chapter 11, "Communism, Post-Communism and the Good Society," pp. 309-329

CONCLUSIONS

April 26: Conclusions

Final Analysis of News Reports due

May 1: Exam 3 (9:30 am-11:30 am.)