PS 507/PAP 621: COMPARATIVE POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

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Objectives and Approach:
The political institutions of a country are critically important; from determining the groups in society that are represented to the policy results of the state, the institutions play a major role in political outcomes. This course examines both the types of political institutions used in countries around the world as well as the theories that engage the consequences of those institutions. We focus our analysis on the varieties of institutions in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, and also consider the ways cultural diversity, revolution, and corruption change the expected outcomes of institutions.

Course Assignments and Grading:
15% = Discussion & Participation in Class
20% = Discussion Paper One
20% = Discussion Paper Two
45% = Final Exam

Discussion & Participation In Class:
Class attendance is required, and you are expected to do the reading for each week and be prepared to discuss the reading in class. In addition, there will be periodic in-class assignments based on the readings, and those grades will be included in this category as well. A word of warning: this will be an extremely challenging course. It is absolutely necessary that everyone keeps up with the reading and attends class regularly. Falling behind is easy to do and difficult to overcome.

Final Exam:
The format of the final exam will mimic the format of your particular program’s exams. Thus, for PhD students, your exam will be take-home and will have questions similar to those that will appear on your core exams. For MA/MS students, your exam will be in-class, closed book/note, and will include questions that are similar to those found in your comprehensive exams for the comparative field.

Discussion Papers One & Two:
These papers should be submitted at the beginning of lecture (no emailed papers accepted) and should engage the readings of the day that it is submitted. On the first day of class, each student will sign up for a paper due date/presentation day, and this schedule must be adhered to. Each paper should accomplish the following goals:

1. Provide brief but coherent summaries of either 2 of the articles or the entirety of the book assigned for the day that you are focusing on. The summary section of your paper should be no more than 3 pages.
2. Present a brief summary of a reading NOT assigned for our class but which directly relates to the readings of that day. This could be a reading that supports a theory advanced in our readings, or directly contradicts it - it is up to you. The goal is to do a bit of research outside of our course readings on this subject, and to find a reading that relates back. This reading must be an academic journal article (www.jstor.org is a great resource, and our librarians have many others).
3. Present an original theory based on the readings. This theory does not need to be ground-breaking, but should be a good attempt at making a contribution to the literature.

4. Apply your theory to an actual, real-life case in the world. That is, choose a country that illustrates or contradicts what the theory predicts and discuss it. E.g., Did your real-world case perform as the theory or readings expected? If not, is your case an anomaly, or is the theory just wrong? This section of your paper should be the biggest and most developed, and please note that you cannot select the USA as your case study.

Each discussion paper should be at least 10 pages. Double-sided printing is encouraged!

Please note: There are no allowances for late discussion papers, and discussion papers that are simply a summary of the assigned reading will be considered weak and will receive substantially fewer points.

**Academic Honesty:** Fair and effective education requires academic honesty, and any violation is a very serious matter. PSU rules concerning academic dishonesty are spelled out in the General Catalog. Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments in this course are individual, and no collaboration with any other person is permitted. These rules will be strictly enforced. Any academic dishonesty will without exception be reported to the student's dean for disciplinary action.

**Title IX Statement:** Portland State is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment. Title IX and our school policy prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, which regards sexual misconduct — including harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. We expect a culture of professionalism and mutual respect in our department and class. Please be aware that as a faculty member, I have the responsibility to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination to PSU’s Title IX Coordinator, the Office of Equity and Compliance or the Dean of Student Life and cannot keep information confidential. You may report any incident of discrimination or discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment, to either the Office of Equity and Compliance or the Office of the Dean of Student Life. If you would rather share information about sexual harassment or sexual violence to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact a confidential advocate at 503-725-5672 or by scheduling on-line (psuwrc.youcanbook.me) or another confidential employee found on the sexual misconduct resource webpage. For more information about your obligations and resources for sex/gender discrimination and sexual violence (Title IX), please complete the required student module Creating a Safe Campus in your D2L.

**Access and Inclusion for Students with Disabilities:** PSU values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to fostering mutual respect and full participation for all students. My goal is to create a learning environment that is equitable, useable, inclusive, and welcoming. If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment. If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, 503-725-4150, drc@pdx.edu, https://www.pdx.edu/drc.

- If you already have accommodations, please contact me to make sure that I have received a faculty notification letter and discuss your accommodations.
• Students who need accommodations for tests and quizzes are expected to schedule their tests to overlap with the time the class is taking the test.
• For information about emergency preparedness, please go to the Fire and Life Safety webpage (https://www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/fire-and-life-safety) for information.

Readings:

Books: The following books have been ordered by the PSU bookstore- all readings are required.


**In addition, there will be articles online. You can access these articles via my website, or via any computer with a PSU connection. (hereafter referred to as “WEB”)**

Class Schedule:

Tuesday, April 2: Introduction and logistics

Tuesday, April 9: Institutions and Ideals

a. Clucas & Valdini, *Character of Democracy*, Chapters 1,2,9

Tuesday, April 16: Executive Branch

Tuesday, April 23: Elections & Party Systems

Tuesday, April 30: Policy

Tuesday, May 7: Gender and Ethnicity

Tuesday, May 14: Courts
c. Clucas & Valdini, *Character of Democracy*, Chapters 8

Tuesday, May 21: Regime Type and Culture

**Tuesday, May 28:** Social Revolutions & Corruption  
 c. WEB: Samuels, David. “Pork Barreling is Not Credit Claiming or Advertising: Campaign Finance and the Sources of the Personal Vote in Brazil.” *The Journal of Politics.* Vol. 64, no. 3, pp. 845-863.

**Tuesday, June 4:** The End of the State? Globalization and Decentralization  

**Tuesday, June 11:** FINAL EXAM  
 For MA/MS students: 3:30- 5:20 (same room)  
 For PhD students: take home exam is distributed today via email, and will be due at 3:30pm on Friday, June 14. Please deliver a paper copy to my mailbox in the political science department.