

POLS 3339: Comparative Political Systems (14031)

Fall 2016, UGLC 342, TR 10:30-11:50 a.m.

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Welcome to the world of comparative politics! This course is UTEP's introduction to the study of political systems outside of the United States. It also serves as one of two gateway courses to the concentration and minor in International Politics. During the first half of the course we will explore key issues in comparative politics and contrast the political development of Great Britain and France, two early modernizing countries in Europe. In the latter half of the course, we will examine different patterns of political development in Japan, a late modernizer, and Peru, one of the most interesting countries in Latin America.

Learning Objectives: By the end of the course students should be able to appreciate similarities and differences among countries with regard to their historical development and the extension of suffrage, social cleavages, political culture, electoral and party systems, parliamentary vs. presidential regimes, key policy issues, and other topics.

Course Requirements and Policies

1. Attendance and Punctuality. Regular attendance is expected. If you do not attend class regularly, you will not do well. Moreover, you risk missing frequent quizzes. **Leaving class early counts as an absence. Please use the restroom before class. I reserve the right to count students as "absent" if they are using tablets or laptops for purposes unrelated to the class, if they are using their phones, or if their behavior disrupts the learning environment.** I DO NOT DIRECTLY PENALIZE students for missing class, though you will miss quizzes and not do well in the class overall.

Extra Credit for Good Attendance: If you have perfect attendance (i.e. no recorded absences), I will add three extra points to your course average. If you have only one recorded absence, I will add two extra points, I will add one extra point if you have only two recorded absences. However, I will not give any extra credit to students who leave early or walk in and out of class. I do not try to determine "excused" and "unexcused" absences because I give extra credit for outstanding attendance, rather than penalizing poor attendance.

If you arrive after roll is checked, please notify me at the end of class so that you can receive a tardy. Two tardies are excused. The third and each subsequent tardy count as absences.

2. Lectures. I will post the power point slides of my lecture before each class. Students are encouraged to print out the power point slides and bring them to class in order to facilitate note-taking. Students should be able to correctly answer the questions on the quizzes and the exams on the basis of the power point slides and questions on the videos (see below). There is no required textbook for the class, but short readings on contemporary politics may be assigned; these would be posted on Blackboard or handed out in class.

3. Videos. I will show various videos on course-related topics to the extent that time, availability, and scheduling permit. These are not "blow-off" classes; indeed, some quiz and exam questions will be based on audiovisual materials. Questions for most videos will be posted on Blackboard. You should print out the questions and answer them in class as the video is playing. Some videos, especially short ones on current events, may simply reinforce material given in class and not have any specific questions.

4. Quizzes. I will give about 11 quizzes, following the schedule below as much as possible. Each quiz will cover the lecture, power point slides, and videos since the last quiz. There will be no make-up quizzes. However, the lowest three or four quiz grades will be dropped. Save your quizzes because they will be useful in studying for the exams. And the first quiz will likely contain a question based on this syllabus!

5. Exams. Exams are scheduled for September 22 (Thursday), October 18 (Tuesday), and December 1 (Thursday), the last day of class. Each exam will be comprised of multiple choice and true/false questions. Each exam will cover a discrete section of the course, though some of the material has a cumulative character. The third (final) exam is not comprehensive, but it will be weighted twice as much because it covers the second half of the course. If necessary, exam grades will be curved, in accordance with overall student performance. ***Please do not leave the room during the exam, except in the case of an emergency.***

A make-up exam will be given only in the case of a documented medical or personal emergency. In such an event, Professor Schmidt (747-7973) or the Political Science Office (747-5227) must be notified before the exam. A make-up exam may be in a format that requires more intensive preparation.

6. Extra Credit Points. I do not accept extra credit projects to improve low quiz or exam grades because opportunities for extra credit must be available to all students on an equal basis.

However, some extra credit opportunities may appear on quizzes or exams. You can also earn extra credit through good attendance, as discussed above. In addition, I reserve the right to add a point or two of extra credit for outstanding class participation. In assessing class participation, I will emphasize quality, rather than mere quantity.

7. Course Grade. The following weights will be used to determine your course average

Highest 7-8 Quizzes	20%
First Exam	20%
Second Exam	20%
Third Exam	40%
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	100% + any extra credit points

Course grades will be distributed as follows:

Final Average and Extra Credit	Final Grade
90-100%	A

80-89%	B
65-79%	C
50-64%	D
Below 50%	F

Incompletes will not be given for reasons other than a medical or personal emergency and then only after presentation of verifiable documentation. Academic hardship does not qualify as an acceptable reason.

8. Seating and Determination of Attendance. Beginning in the second week of class, all students will sit in permanently assigned seats to facilitate the checking of attendance and so that I can learn your names.

9. Adjustments in Course Schedule. I will do my best to follow the course schedule outlined below, but I reserve the right to make reasonable adjustments with adequate warning if unforeseeable or uncontrollable circumstances (e.g. jury duty, weather, illness, travel, fire drills) so warrant. It is not fair, however, to change the schedule or previously set exam dates simply to accommodate the preferences of some students, since other students inevitably suffer.

10. Academic Integrity. Students are expected to know and comply with UTEP policies on academic integrity in the latest online edition of the *Undergraduate Catalog*, Curriculum and Classroom Policies.

Course Outline

AUGUST 23

Introduction to Course

AUGUST 25

Basic Concepts: Nation, State, and Democracy

AUGUST 30

A Framework for Analysis and Comparison

SEPTEMBER 1

Quiz 1

Great Britain: The Impact of the Past

SEPTEMBER 6

Video: *The Blair Decade* (selected clips)

SEPTEMBER 8

Quiz 2

Great Britain: Political Culture

Great Britain: Electoral System and Parties

SEPTEMBER 13

Great Britain: Governmental Institutions

SEPTEMBER 15

Quiz 3

Video: *Order! Order! Britain's Parliament at Work*

SEPTEMBER 20

Great Britain: Quarrels

Review

SEPTEMBER 22

First Exam

SEPTEMBER 27 and 29

Go Over First Exam in Class

France: The Impact of the Past

Video: *The French Revolution*

OCTOBER 4

Quiz 4

France: Political Culture

Video: *The Essential History of France*

OCTOBER 6

France: Elections and Parties

OCTOBER 11

Quiz 5

France: Governmental Institutions

OCTOBER 13

Quiz 6

France: Quarrels

Review

OCTOBER 18

Second Exam

OCTOBER 20, 25

Go Over Second Exam in Class

Japan: The Impact of the Past

Video: *Meiji: Asia's Response to the West*

OCTOBER 27

Video: *Reinventing Japan*

NOVEMBER 1

Quiz 7

Japan: Political Culture

Japan: Elections and Parties

NOVEMBER 3

Japan: Governmental Institutions

Japan: Quarrels

Video: *Bursting the Bubble*

NOVEMBER 8

Quiz 8

Peru: The Setting and History before the Third Wave of Democracy

NOVEMBER 10

Peru: Tenuous Democracy

Video: *Mario Vargas Llosa: The Story of the Novelist Who Would be President*

NOVEMBER 15

Quiz 9

Peru: The Fujimori Decade

NOVEMBER 17

Video: *The Fall of Fujimori*

NOVEMBER 22

Quiz 10

Peru After Fujimori

Peru: Political Culture and Institutions

THANKSGIVING BREAK

NOVEMBER 29

Quiz 11

Catch-Up and Review

DECEMBER 1

Third Exam