
Introduction to Comparative Politics

Political Science 2053

Prof Wm A Clark
240 Stubbs Hall
poclark@lsu.edu
Office Hours by Appointment

Spring 2017
220 Stubbs
Tu Th 9:00-10:20

Course Description

This course is a lower-level undergraduate course that seeks to provide an introduction to that sub-field of political science referred to as comparative politics. This sub-field focuses much of its attention on the organization of domestic politics in comparative perspective, with special emphasis on comparative institutional arrangements. Whereas the closely related sub-field of international relations concerns itself with the interaction of states (“politics among states,” as it were), comparative politics focuses on the internal organization of politics and structure of political institutions (“politics within states”).

Course Requirements

Students are expected to attend all class sessions, to stay current on the assigned readings, to participate in class discussions, and to sit for four short quizzes and two longer examinations. Students are responsible for any and all material delivered in class sessions and in the assigned readings. The first examination will be held during the class session on Thursday, March 2. The second examination will be held during the final examination period, on Tuesday, May 2 from 10:00-12:00. The second examination will test material covered after the first examination. Each examination is equally weighted at 40 percent of the class grade, and will be based on a combination of the assigned readings and in-class lecture material. Quiz dates will be announced at least 1 class period prior. There will be two quizzes before the midterm examination and two quizzes after the midterm examination. The quizzes are each weighted at 5 percent of the course grade, combining for 20 percent total. **No extra-credit assignments will be available.**

Weights of Quizzes & Exams (Dates)

Quiz #1	5 percent	TBD
Quiz # 2	5 percent	TBD
Exam #1	40 percent	March 2, 2017
Quiz #3	5 percent	TBD
Quiz #4	5 percent	TBD
Exam #2	40 percent	May 2, 2017

Grading System

Letter grades for the course will be based on the following thresholds, reflective of both LSU's new +/- grading scale and the LSU *General Catalog*, which stipulates that the various letter grades reflect the following levels of mastery of the course material. Each student will be assigned a grade in the highest category that matches their final course average.

“A” indicates “distinguished mastery”

A+ = final averages of 97 and above

A = final averages of 93 and above

A- = final averages of 90 and above

“B” indicates “good mastery”

B+ = final averages of 87 and above

B = final averages of 83 and above

B- = final averages of 80 and above

“C” indicates “acceptable mastery”

C+ = final averages of 77 and above

C = final averages of 73 and above

C- = final averages of 70 and above

“D” indicates “minimally acceptable achievement for credit”

D+ = final averages of 67 and above

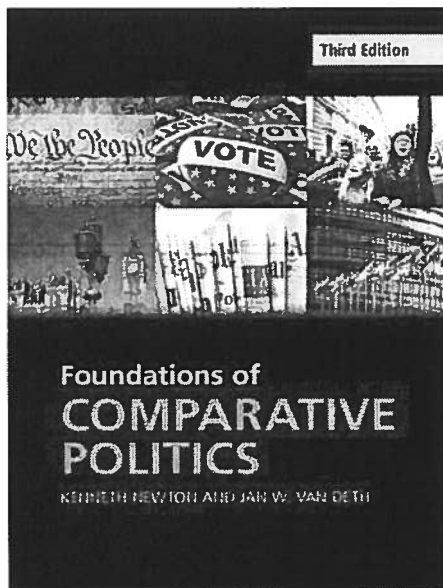
D = final averages of 63 and above

D- = final averages of 60 and above

“F” indicates “failing”

F = final averages below 60

Text



Kenneth Newton and Jan W. van Deth (2016). Foundations of Comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern World, 3rd Edition (Cambridge University Press).

Additional materials (including notes, handouts and additional readings) will be posted on the course Moodle site. Students are responsible for these materials as well as for the assigned reading from the text.

Syllabus of Topics & Readings

Class	Topic	Readings from Text & Articles
Th Jan 12	Introduction to the Class	Colomer (2008)
Tu Jan 17	The State	Chapters 1-2; 362-366
Th Jan 19	The State	Olson (1993)
Tu Jan 24	Constitutions	Chapter 4
Th Jan 26	Presidential Systems	94-97; 101-107
Tu Jan 31	Presidential Systems	Verney (1959)
Th Feb 2	Parliamentary Systems	97-100
Tu Feb 7	Parliamentary Systems	101-107
Th Feb 9	Parliamentary Systems	Verney (1959)
Tu Feb 14	Semi-Presidential Systems	100-101
Th Feb 16	Semi-Presidential Systems	101-107
Tu Feb 21	Unitary & Federal States	118-120; 120-124; 133-135
Th Feb 23	Federal & Confederal States	112-118; 110-112; Galligan (2008)
Tu Feb 28	Mardi Gras Holiday – No Class	
Th Mar 2	Examination #1	
Tu Mar 7	Executives & Cabinets	137-144; 283-286; 290-291
Th Mar 9	Executives & Cabinets	
Tu Mar 14	Legislatures	81-84; 144-149
Th Mar 16	Legislatures	Taylor et al (2014)
Tu Mar 21	Voters & Elections	Chapter 12
Th Mar 23	Voters & Elections	
Tu Mar 28	Voters & Elections	Hermens (1936)
Th Mar 30	Political Parties	Chapter 13
Tu Apr 4	Political Parties	
Th Apr 6	Political Parties	
Tu Apr 11	Spring Break – No Class	
Th Apr 13	Spring Break – No Class	

Tu Apr 18	Political Ideologies	Chapter 14
Th Apr 20	Political Ideologies	
Tu Apr 25	Majoritarian Democracy	150-152; 291-293
Th Apr 27	Consensus Democracy	Studlar & Christensen (2006)
Tu May 2	Examination #2 (10:00-12:00)	