

## INTRODUCTION TO COMPARTIVE POLITICS

**Spring 2012**

**OFF: 447 CLARK HALL**

**OFF. HRS TR 3:00-4:00**

**Prof. Harris**

**924 -5568**

**Contents:**

**Course description**

**Texts**

**Assessment of student learning**

**Comparison is the cornerstone of knowledge because without it we cannot determine what is good, bad, normal or abnormal!**

**For example, students would be responsible for answering following questions in Comparative Politics:**

- **Why is the US hated more than France even though both countries are imperial powers?**
- **Why are some countries attacked by terrorism and others are not?**
- **What countries will benefit from global warming and what countries will be harmed?**
- **Why are aids infections rising faster in Asia than in the US?**

**Comparative Politics uses countries as the point of entry to analyze the essential patterns that all political and socio-economic systems must create to assure the persistence of their regimes. Talcott Parsons identified the basic patterns and types of behavior for the survival for all socio-economic political systems are the following:**

- **Pattern Maintenance –Stability/ Institutions**
- **Goal Attainment – The capacity of the system to achieve goals**
- **Adaptation- Societies must choose between competing goals**

- **Integration requires constant adjustment to interest groups and like political sub-systems.**

**We translate the preceding theoretical ideas by using the Comparative Politics tool box of political concepts!**

- 1. The political system is based on the authoritative allocation of values and goods and services**
- 2. Political Actors: Elites, Interest Groups, Classes, staff the government and the institutions that conduct the business of government.**
- 3. The environmental context or level of analysis is where the legislative and political mandates are imposed or negotiated, from the city, to the state, international level.**

**We also examine the conflict and competition between agents of social change as elites, political parties, groups, and their interaction. In addition to institutions and political actors many have expanded their analysis to include global issues such as free and fair trade between the southern and northern regions!**

**Political Scientists also use different modes of analysis to explain political behavior. For example, advocates of a cultural analysis argue that culture explains political behavior more than economics. On the other hand the Marxist paradigm is based on materialism! Others cite race or religion as the most important variables to explain political behavior for example in the Middle East. Nonetheless there is very little science in politics because our discipline has developed any laws that can predict or explain human behavior!**

**COMPARATIVE POLITICS: SATISFIES THE COMPARATIVE SYSTEMS CATEGORY OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES!**

## **Required Reading**

**Marcus E. Ethridge, Politics in a Changing In a Changing World**

**A comparative introduction to Political Science Politics**

**C. Johnson, Blowback**

**The Cost and Consequences of American Empire**

GRADES:

**Based on the review of Blowback: explain and discuss the impact of blowback on our foreign policy. Take a pro or con position - 40 PTS.**

**2: Final Paper Based on the assigned books: Pick Two Countries and Compare and Contrast their political system 4-6 pages 60 PTS,**

**Week One Introduction review :**

**Required Reading, Politics in a Changing:**

**Weeks: 1-6.**

**CHAPTS: 1, 2, 3, and 4**

**Weeks: 7-8 , Politics in a Changing World**

**REQUIRED READING: CHAPTS 5, 6, 7&8**

**Weeks: 9**

**Politics in a Changing In a Changing World**

**CHAPTER 10**

**Week 10 Spring Break**

**3/26-4-1**

Weeks: 11, 12:

REQUIRED READING: 12, 13, 14 and 15

Take home midterm paper back in class week13

REQUIRED READING: BLOW BACK, C.JOHNSON

WEEKS: 13 &17

Chapters 1-6 and 9

Mid Term

COMPARE AND CONTRAST one country from the east and one county from west and on how their political development is unfolding (3-5pages)

What are the major costs and consequences based on Johnson's Blowback analysis. (5-7)

TOOL-BOX

WORLD POLITICS: INTERESTS, INTERACTIONS, INSTITUTIONS

A: WHO ARE THE ACTORS AND WHAT ARE THEIR INTERESTS?

B WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THEIR INTERACTIONS?

C. WHAT STRATEGIES WILL THEY PURSUE?

D. HOW DO INSTITUTIONS CONSTRAIN OR IMPACT

INTERACTIONS?

WHEN AND HOW DO INSTITUTIONS FAVOR DIFFERENT ACTORS

AND INTEREST?

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