

PS 21: Introduction to Comparative Politics
Tufts University
Spring semester 2012
MW 10:30-11:45pm (Block E+)
CABT ASEAN

Professor Oxana Shevel

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Office hours: Tuesdays 2:00-4:00 pm, and by appointment

Course website accessible through <http://trunk.tufts.edu/>

Teaching Assistant: Irina Chindea

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Individual meetings by appointment

- Wednesday 6 pm (EATN 203) recitation section
- Thursday 6 pm (BRAK 225) recitation section

Teaching Assistant: Amit Paz

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Individual meetings by appointment

- Friday 12 noon (EAST 016) recitation section

Course description and objectives

If you are interested in why some countries are democratic and others are not, why some countries are rich and some are poor, and why some countries break apart and others hold together, then this course is for you. In this course we will examine and evaluate competing theoretical approaches (institutional, cultural, agency-centered, and others) to important phenomena in world politics, including democracy and democratization; economic development; revolutions; and ethnicity and ethnic conflict. We will also explore recent debates about the role of the state, political institutions, ideologies, culture, and civil society in shaping regime types, economic development, and political violence. For students majoring in political science, this course will introduce you to some of the big ideas and issues in comparative politics and prepare you for higher level courses.

Course requirements

This course meets three times a week: Monday and Wednesday are lectures, and the third meeting is a recitation with your teaching assistant. Recitation sections are mandatory, and your participation in section represents a significant component of your grade. You are expected to attend all classes and participate actively in recitation section discussions. To do so, you need to keep up with the reading, which averages around 50-60 pages a week. Recitations will begin the week of January 30th.

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

- 1) Section participation (15%).** Recitation section grade will include attendance and active participation, weekly reading question you are to submit via Trunk (see instructional handout on Trunk under Assignments) and may include pop quizzes on the week's readings or other short assignments to be given by your section leader.
- 2) Mid-term exam # 1 (30%).** The in-class mid-term will include essay questions and may include multiple choice and/or term identification questions. It will take place on **March 14**.
- 3) Mid-term exam #2 (30%).** In-class mid-term will take place during the last class meeting on **April 30**. The format will be similar to the first mid-term's format. This mid-term is not cumulative, it will cover material from the second half of the course.
- 4) Short paper (25%).** This paper can be EITHER in the format of a critique of a group of theories we examine in this course, OR in the format of an empirical test of one or two theories of democratization against recent events in one of the countries of the Arab world (or you may chose another example of authoritarian regime(s) collapse). The paper has to be 8-10 pages long, double-spaced. It will be due during finals week.

Grading scale and policy: The following grading scale is used when grading each assignment/exam, and when determining final course grades (final grades are weighted averages of all assignments/exams).

A	93 and higher	B-	80-82	D+	67-69
A-	90-92	C+	77-79	D	63-66
B+	87-89	C	73-76	D-	60-62
B	83-86	C-	70-72	F	59 and below

A document explaining grading policy, including policy on re-evaluating grades, is posted on Trunk under "Assignments."

On academic integrity: Tufts University values academic integrity. All students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences by familiarizing themselves with *The Academic Integrity* booklet available at <http://uss.tufts.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/Academic%20Integrity.pdf> and also on Trunk. If a student's work is suspected of not being original, Turn-it-in.com will be used to investigate the case. Per Tufts policy, any instance of suspected academic dishonesty will also be reported to the Dean of Student Affairs office.

Late policy: Late papers will be accepted and make-ups allowed *only at the discretion of the instructors and only in the event of significant and verifiable (i.e., documented) personal emergencies (e.g., serious illness, death in the family)*. Students experiencing such circumstances should inform the instructor as far as possible in advance. In the interest of fairness to all, under no condition will extensions will be granted due to the stresses of academic life (e.g., demands of other classes, other papers or exams, extracurricular activities, etc). No exceptions will be made to this rule. Please take care and plan accordingly.

Special needs: Please inform me in advance of any special needs.

Possible changes to the syllabus. This syllabus may change as the semester progresses. Updates will be announced in class, and updated syllabus will be posted to the course website on Trunk. Please treat the online syllabus on Trunk as the most recent, most definitive version.

Course materials

1. Patrick H. O'Neil and Ronald Rogowski, *Essential Readings in Comparative Politics*, 3rd Edition (WW Norton 2010).

This book is available for purchase at the bookstore. If you are buying a used copy elsewhere, make sure you are purchasing the 3rd edition! A copy of the book is also placed on reserve at Tisch.

2. Additional required readings posted on Trunk course site. Marked **TR** in the syllabus.

Class schedule and readings

*NOTE: Readings should be completed *before* the start of the class for which they are assigned.*

1. Mon, Jan 23. Introduction to the course.

No readings assigned.

Part I: Key concepts and theoretical approaches in comparative politics

2. Wed, Jan 25: The discipline of comparative politics and its methods.

1. Essential Readings, pp. 3-7 (Lichbach and Zuckerman, "Research traditions and theory in comparative politics.")
2. Essential Readings, pp. 7-9 (Fukuyama, "How academia failed the nation.")
3. Essential Readings, pp. 11-13 (Bates, "Area studies and the discipline." Start reading from "Deeper fusion" on p. 11).
4. Michel Sodaro, *Comparative politics: A global introduction*, "Critical thinking about politics," pp. 56-70; 76-87 (from "nonfalsifiable hypothesis" on p. 76 till "indirect hypothesis testing" on p. 87) (**TR**).

3. Mon, Jan 30: Approaches to the study of the state.

1. Essential Readings, pp. 22-28 (Weber, "Politics as a vocation.")
2. Essential Readings, pp. 28-40 (Herbst, "War and state in Africa.")
3. Essential Readings, pp. 43-51 (Rotbeg, "The new nature of nation-state failure.")