Comparative Politics

Professor: Miguel Carreras  
Course meets: Tuesday & Thursday: 11:10 am - 12:30 pm  
Location: Bourns Hall (BRNHL B118)  
Email: Miguel.Carreras@ucr.edu  
Office: 2232 Watkins Hall  
Office hours: Thursday 1:30 pm - 4 pm

Course Description

After a brief introduction to the logic of comparative inquiry and the different methods of comparative analysis in political science, this course will be organized thematically. We will discuss important concepts in comparative politics, such as democratization, the state, institutions, political culture, civil society, political participation, and incorporate these into the comparative analysis of various countries around the world. Each class will start with a presentation of a set of theories linked to a specific concept in comparative politics (e.g. the different theories explaining democratization). This presentation will be followed by the discussion of some concrete examples from different regions of the world.

Course Requirements

There will be two exams, held in week 5 and finals’ week. The first exam will count for 35% of your grade and the final exam 45%. Exams will be comprised of short questions (definition of terms and brief explanation of concepts) and longer essay questions. The remaining portion of your grade (20%) will be based on your participation in section. That participation will be evaluated based on your attendance, contribution to the discussion and on quizzes or assignments to be determined by your TA. You will receive a separate syllabus for the section and you should first address any concerns you may have regarding the section with the TA.

Grading

*Mid-term exam: 35%  
*Final exam: 45%  
*Participation in section: 20%

Readings

There are no books required for purchase as we will be reading articles and chapters from many different books, although you might consider making some of the titles part of your personal library. While the lectures are extremely important, it will be difficult to gain an adequate understanding or to do well on the exams without paying attention to the readings. All the readings are available on iLearn.
Attendance and Participation

Students are expected to attend every lecture, every week. I do not consider class time to be a time simply to review the assigned readings. We will cover materials during class that are not in the readings (and we will not cover every single point from the readings in class). Class attendance is, therefore, imperative. You are responsible for all materials covered in class, whether you are physically present or not.

In addition to the lectures, students must participate in a weekly discussion section. Your attendance and active participation are vital to the success of these discussion sections. Different students participate in different ways. At a minimum, students should come to class on time having read and thought about the assigned readings for that class. I expect that all students will make a contribution to class discussions through comments, questions, criticisms, and analysis of the assigned readings. Your TA will provide more detailed information about the expectations regarding participation and assignments in the sections.

Every effort should be made to be present for the exams. Students who miss an exam will be given an alternate test at a mutually convenient time only if the absence was excused. Excused absences require official documentation and are at the discretion of the TA and the professor.

Students with Disabilities

Every effort will be made to accommodate students with disabilities. Please contact me or your TA as early as possible in the course about your needs, and we will treat the matter confidentially and with the resources provided by Student Special Services.

Academic Integrity

Cheating in any form is a deeply serious offense. Students who attempt to cheat will be subject to disciplinary procedures. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with UCR’s Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures and are required to read the Academic Integrity Guidelines posted on iLearn. More information on what constitutes cheating and other forms of academic misconduct is available at: http://conduct.ucr.edu/learnpolicies/academicintegrity.html

Phones, Laptops, and Other Electronic Devices

Silence or shut off your phone and stow it away before class begins. Absolutely no texting during class will be tolerated. Laptops and other devices are to be used for note-taking only; internet browsing and other distracting activities during class time are unacceptable. Failure to abide by these rules will result, at minimum, in a significant reduction of the participation grade.
Course Schedule and Readings

March 29 - General Introduction

No readings.

March 31 - The Comparative Method


April 5 - States and State Formation


April 7 - NO CLASS

April 12 - Political Identities: Nations and Ethnicities


April 14 - Authoritarianism I: Different Types of Authoritarian Regimes


April 19 - Authoritarianism II: How do Authoritarian Regimes Govern?


April 21 - Democratic Regimes


April 26 – Democratization


April 28 - MIDTERM EXAM
May 3 - Presidential and Parliamentary Governments


May 5 - Policy-Making and Implementation


May 10 - Regional Organization of Power


May 12 - Political Parties and Party Systems


May 17 - Elections and Electoral Systems


May 19 - Voting Behavior


May 24 - Political Culture and Political Attitudes


May 26 - Political Participation


May 31 - Social Movements


June 2 - Review Session

June 8 - FINAL EXAM (08:00A.M. - 11:00A.M.)