

University of Colorado at Boulder
Department of Political Science
Introduction to Comparative Politics
Sections 101 & 104
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Monday 12 PM and Tuesday 8 AM

Recitation Description and Objectives

As mentioned in the class syllabus, comparative politics is essentially a sub-field in Political Science, comparing and contrasting different political systems (hence, different countries), assessing their potential or actual effectiveness and weaknesses. For this purpose, we need to carefully examine and analyze different systems to the point where we are able to grasp their inner mechanism, institutions and functionings.

It would be a great endeavor to map all the political systems in every single different country and study them in one class. Unfortunately, due to time limitations, we will have to focus on a handful countries, which are rather representative of many others. As in any scientific field, the purpose of Political Science is to come up with general patterns, theories and categorizations, encompassing many, if not all, of the political systems that are out there. Hence, the four countries picked, the United Kingdom, Russia, China, and South Africa are chosen not only for the purpose of learning these cases in dept but also because they represent the different possible categories of political structures (i.e. presidential vs. parliamentary systems). Depending on the class schedule, countries can be added or subtracted. See Prof. Jupille's syllabus for details.

The above goals of the class will be complemented with discussions stimulated in the recitation sessions. The rationale of having discussion sections is threefold:

- Making sure that the assigned readings are done on a regular basis by asking students questions and arousing debates around the week's topics
- Providing an additional venue to address confusions, questions and misunderstood parts of the class lecture
- Engaging students in argumentative discussions during which they can freely express their opinions and comments about the week's topics

Expectations and Grading

As mentioned in the class syllabus, the recitations are worth 20% of your final grade. Out of this, 10% is purely attendance. The remaining 10% will cover a 5 to 10 minute presentation and participation, meaning actively talking and engaging in discussion, making informed comments about the class material.

Students are required to make 1 short presentation during the semester. It will be an informal summary/recap of that week's class materials. Do not be intimidated by this task. It will be merely talking for 5 minutes about the part of the class you found most intriguing. It does not have to cover everything; it can even be about one topic and one topic only, as long as you develop an argument which can be turned into a discussion. In other words, you will do a 5 minute talk at the beginning of the class, come up with debate-stirring questions and put them out there for the class to discuss. If you need any help or ideas about how this will work, feel free to contact me before you present. The presentation will be 5% of your grade and participation will cover the remaining 5%. Needless to say, class participation is crucial for the recitations. The more you talk, the higher will your participation grade be.

Also, the recitations will begin with a brief overview of the week's current political developments around the world. Students of the CU are expected to follow what is going on in the world and have at least a basic understanding of important political developments happening on a daily basis.

Finally, previous experience of discussion sections shows that students tend to go off topic at times. Also, the nature of the discussion may lead to an ambiance of conflict and resentment. To avoid these situations, try to answer the question directly. It is OK to go on tangents once in a while, but it is not advisable to pull the discussion into an entirely irrelevant direction. There will be conflict of opinions between speakers from time to time. This does not mean you can insult or hurt your classmates. Be respectful. When criticizing, it is sensible to mention 2 positive aspects of the previous comment and then add a critique to it. Remember, this is not a competition. We are here to express our opinions and talk freely in a hospitable environment.

Suggested Readings:

Due to the nature of this course, it is highly recommended that the students keep up with major developments in world politics. You are, therefore, advised to read the international section of the *New York Times* or the *Economist*.

Attendance

Attendance in recitations is required. At the beginning of each recitation an attendance sheet will be passed around. Students are required to come to class on time. It is the student's responsibility to ensure his/her presence is recorded. Students have only two excused absences. Beyond the two unexcused absences, your attendance grade will be lowered from 100 by 10 percentage points *per absence*. Students with 8 or more unexcused absences will either have to drop the class or receive an "F". As this can seriously affect the final grade, it is strongly recommended not to miss any recitations.

Excessive tardiness will be taken into consideration as well and will be reflected on your final grade. It is the student's responsibility to provide documented proof of absence to the professor or teaching assistant in a timely manner.

University of Colorado Policies

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, or www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices.

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code.

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and at <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>.

The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment (<http://www.colorado.edu/policies/discrimination.html>), the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships applies to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>.