San José State University
Department of Political Science
Pols 2-01: Introduction to Comparative Politics,

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Dr. Sergio Béjar-López
Office Location:	Clark 402C
Email:	Sergio.Bejar@sjsu.edu (preferred method of contact)
Office Hours:	TTR 1:30-2:45 PM, and by appointment
Class Days/Time:	TTR 10:30-11:45 AM
Classroom:	HGH 116
GE/SJSU Studies Category:	D2

Course Description

This introductory course to comparative politics will help students to better understand political processes across nations. In my view, college students not only should be aware of the most important questions about the world today, but also need to look beyond the American political system and learn how political institutions succeed or fail elsewhere. Because this is an introductory course, we will survey a wide range of topics including the comparative method, concept construction, states and regimes, political mobilization, political culture, political participation, elections and voting, interest groups, political parties, parliaments, executives, development, and globalization. We will also ask what lessons the United States may learn from other countries, and use case studies to deepen our understanding of the theoretical constructs discussed in class.

This course satisfies the Comparative Systems, Cultures and Environments general education requirement (D2). This requirement was meant to ensure that students would learn how to compare and contrast two or more ethnic groups, cultures, regions, nations or social systems. We will discuss examples of plenty of examples from both developed and developing countries with great variation in terms of political and economic development, as well as geographic, social and cultural factors. By the end of this course, students should be able to compare types of political systems as well as explain the effects of non-political factors on their political and economic development.

Political Science Learning Outcomes

The Political Science Department has the following objectives for its students:

1) <u>Breadth</u>: Students should possess a broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the various branches of the discipline.
2) <u>Application</u>: Students should be able to apply a variety of techniques to identify, understand, and analyze domestic and international political issues and organizations.
3) <u>Disciplinary methods</u>: Students should be able to formulate research questions, engage in systematic literature searches using primary and secondary sources, have competence in systematic data gathering using library sources, government documents, and data available through electronic sources, should be able to evaluate research studies, and should be able to critically analyze and interpret influential political texts.
4) <u>Communication Skills</u>: Students should master basic competencies in oral and written communication skills and be able to apply these skills in the context of political science. This means communicating effectively about politics and/or public administration, public policy, and law.
5) <u>Citizenship</u>: Students should acquire an understanding of the role of the citizen in local, state, national, and global contexts and appreciate the importance of lifelong participation in political processes.

GE Learning Outcomes (GELO)

This class satisfies the D2 general education requirement (Comparative Systems, Cultures and Environments). Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1) Place contemporary developments in cultural, historical, environmental and spatial contexts;
2) Identify the dynamics of ethnic, cultural, gender/sexual, age-based, class, regional, national, transnational, and global identities and the similarities, differences, linkages, and interactions between them;
3) Evaluate social science information, draw on different points of view, and formulate applications to appropriate to contemporary social issues;
4) Compare and contrast two or more ethnic groups, cultures, regions, nations, or social systems.

Students will satisfy these requirements through a combination of class discussion, exams, and written papers.

Workload and Credit Hour Requirements

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit

per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Required readings

1) David Samuels, Comparative Politics, Pearson, 2013

The rest of the assigned readings will be available on Canvas.

Expectations & Course Activities

You are fully responsible for your performance in the course. I expect you to fulfill the course requirements to the best of your ability. You should come to class prepared to engage in discussions that will touch on the readings listed in the schedule below. Therefore, it is best if you do the reading in the textbook *before* the dates shown. With much information conveyed in class it is difficult to receive a good grade if you choose not to do the readings and/or attend lectures. Politics is a live field of study, and there are always current events across the world that we can link to our readings and discussions, so time will be devoted to discuss such events.

Attendance

Attendance and punctuality are highly recommended. Attendance at lectures has always been a good predictor of a student's performance on exams. If you miss class, you are expected to get notes from a fellow student – 'private make-up lectures' with the professor <u>will not</u> take place.

Courtesy, active listening, and participation will make this course a more enjoyable and productive experience for you and for others. Please plan to dedicate your full attention to the discussion and activities of class.

Policy on Technology in the Classroom

1. This classroom is a tech-free zone. Laptops are not permitted unless you have an accommodation from AEC. If you want to refer to assigned readings during class discussions, bring hard copies of articles to class or notes that you've taken on assigned readings.
2. Students should not use text or use cell phones in class. Violations of this rule will result in a deduction in your participation grade for each observed incident.

Course Requirements

Grades in the course will be based on the following items:

- Midterm exams 1 and 2 are each worth 25%

- The final exam is worth 35%
- Simulation (5%) and paper assignment (10%)

Two In-Class Midterm Exams (25% each)

The exams will take place on **October 5th and November 9th.** You must sit in these exams at the scheduled time. There will be no make-up exams unless you have a documented medical excuse. Make travel plans accordingly. The exams will include material presented both in the reading and in the lectures.

In-Class Cumulative Final Exam (35%)

The cumulative final exam will take place on Monday, December 18th (9:45 am- 12:00 pm). **No exceptions.** It will cover material from the entire semester. I will discuss the format of the exam during the last day of classes.

Paper (10%) and simulation (5%)

Paper (10 percent) At the end of the term (Week 16), we will conduct an in-class simulation of a Constitutional Convention. Every student will act as representative of a societal group in an assigned country. The goal is to forge a constitution for this newly (re)created state. As part of your preparation, you will be required to compose a 1,000-word strategy paper. This assignment is due at the beginning of class on November 30 and it will count for 10 percent of your final grade. Here, you should describe your goals for the constitutional convention and explain how you want to achieve those goals during the in-class negotiations. On October 28, I will announce more details about this simulation and the paper assignment.

Grading and Written Work Policies

A+ = 97-100%; A = 93-96.9%; A- = 90-92.9%
B+ = 87-89.9%; B = 83-86.9%; B- = 80-82.9%
C+ = 77-79.9%; C= 73-76.9%; C- = 70-72.9%
D+ = 67-69.9%; D = 63-66.9%; D- = 60-62.9%
F = 59.99% - 0%

Email and Office Hours

Please feel free to contact me at sergio.bejar@sjsu.edu. I will respond to every email within 24 hours, and often sooner. Do not wait to contact me until the last minute to email me about a paper or an exam; I receive many, many emails before deadlines and exams, and may not be able to email you back immediately.

Office hours are a great opportunity for you to get additional feedback on your work or just continue a conversation that we began during class – please use them! My office hours are in Clark 402C, from 1:30 to 2:30 PM T & Th.

Policy on Submitting Written Work in this Course

I expect my students to submit written work that fits the grammatical, stylistic and citation expectations for college-level work in English. All written assignments in this course are therefore graded in two ways: both in terms of content (information in terms of logic, quality of evidence, etc.) and in terms of writing. If you are at all uncomfortable with writing at the college level, you need to take steps to rectify this.

Late Paper Policy

Hard copies of all papers are to be turned in to me personally on the announced due date during the first 10 minutes of class. Any paper turned in after this period expires will be considered one day late. I will deduct one letter grade for each day that the paper is late. **No exceptions.**

University Policies

Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs **maintains university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc.**"

You may find all syllabus related University Policies and resources information listed on GUP's Syllabus information web page at http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo

Disclaimer

All information in this syllabus may be subject to change with fair notice by the instructor, the Department of Political Science or San Jose State University. Changes to the syllabus (including tentative course schedule will be made in class and through Canvas).

Tentative Course Schedule

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics and Readings
1	Aug. 24	**Introduction**
2	Aug. 29	**What is Comparative Politics?** 1. Samuels, Chapter 1
2	Aug. 31	**The State I** 1. Samuels, Chapter 2: 28-38.
3	Sept. 5	**The State II** 1. Samuels, Chapter 2: 38-57. 2. Herbst, Jeffrey. 2000. States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control. Princeton: Princeton University Press, chapter 1.
3	Sept. 7	**Political Violence** 1. Samuels, Chapter 10. 2. Newspaper article on Somalia: "As Somali Crisis Swells, Experts See a Void in Aid." November 20, 2007 (by Jeffrey Gettleman).
4	Sept. 12	**Strong vs. Weak States** 1. Ross, Michael. 2008. "Blood Barrels: Why Oil Wealth Fuels Conflict." Foreign Affairs (May/June): 2-8. 2. Rotberg, Robert, "The New Nature of Nation-State Failure," in *Essential Readings in Comparative Politics*.
4	Sept. 14	**Regime Types I: Democracies** 1. Samuels, Chapter 3: 58-65. 2. Dahl Robert. 1971. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, Chapter 1.
5	Sept 19	**Regime Types II: Non-Democracies** 1. Samuels, Chapter 4.
5	Sept. 21	**Cultural Determinants of Regime Type I: Civic Culture and Identity** 1. Samuels, Chapter 5: 123-25. 2. Samuels, Chapter 6: 153-161. 3. Zakaria, Fareed. 1994. "A Conversation with Lee Kuan Yew."

Week	Date	Topics and Readings
		Foreign Affairs (March/April): 109-126.
6	Sept. 26	**Cultural Determinants of Regime Type: Religion and Politics** 1. Samuels, Chapter 7. 2. Beinart, Peter, "Bill Maher's Dark Critique of Islam," *The Atlantic* (October 9, 2014).
6	Sept. 28	**Regime Change I** 1. Samuels, Chapter 5: 125-129. 2. Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce and George Downs. 2005. 'Development and Democracy." Foreign Affairs 84(5): 77-86.
7	Oct. 3	**Regime Change II** 1. Samuels, Chapter 5: 129-146. 2. Goldstone, Jack. 2011. "Understanding the Revolutions of 2011." Foreign Affairs 90(3): 8-16.
7	Oct. 5	**Mid-Term Exam 1**
8	Oct. 10	**Political Participation** Samuels, Chapter 3: 79-87.
8	Oct. 12	**Parties and Elections I** 1. Samuels, Chapter 9: 246-253.
9	Oct. 17	**Parties and Elections II** 1. Reading TBD
9	Oct. 19	**Instructions for Simulation and Paper**
10	Oct. 24	**Parliamentary Democracies** 1. Samuels, Chapter 3: 66-67 ("Madison's Dilemma"), 69-79 ("Executive-Legislative Relations", "Judicial Review versus Parliamentary Supremacy"), and 88-89 ("Conclusion").
10	Oct. 26	**Presidential Democracies** 1. Mainwaring, Scott. 1993. "Presidentialism, Multipartism, and Democracy: The Difficult Combination." *Comparative Political Studies* 26(2): 198-228.
11	Oct. 31	**Constitutional Design and Democracy** 1. Samuels, Chapter 3: 67-69 ("Unitary versus Federal Constitutions")

Week	Date	Topics and Readings
		2. Stepan, Alfred. 1999. "Federalism and Democracy: Beyond the U.S. Model." *Journal of Democracy* 8(1): 27-42.
11	Nov. 2	**Accountability and Representation** 1. Ferraz, Claudio, and Fred Finan. 2011. Exposing Corrupt Politicians. J-Pal Policy Briefcase.
12	Nov. 7	**Quality of Democracy and the Rule of Law** 1. O'Donnell, Guillermo. 1993. "On the state, democratization and some conceptual problems: A Latin American View." World Development 21(8): 1355-69.
12	Nov. 9	**Midterm Exam 2**
13	Nov. 14	**Economic Development I** 1. Samuels, Chapter 11.
13	Nov. 16	**Economic Development II** 1. Siegel, J., M. Weinstein and M. Halpenn. 2004. "Why Democracies Excel." Foreign Affairs (Sept/Oct) 83(5): 57-71. 2. Przeworski, A., and F. Limongi. 1993. "Political Regimes and Economic Growth." Journal of Economic Perspectives 7(3): 51-69.
14	Nov. 21	**TBD**
14	Nov. 23	**Happy Thanksgiving! No class.**
15	Nov. 28	**Political Economy of Redistribution** 1. Samuels, Chapter 12
15	Nov. 30	**Globalization I** 1. Samuels, Chapter 13
16	Dec. 5	**Simulation**
16	Dec. 7	**Simulation**
Final Exam		Monday, December 18 (9:45 AM- 12:00 PM) Location: HGH 116