

Chaminade University
Comparative Government and Politics: Pol 111-3-1

Suzanne Acord, PhD
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Class time: 4:00-5:20PM, Tuesdays and Thursdays
Office hours: 5:20-5:50PM, Tuesdays and Thursdays

Phone: 808-783-6034
Classroom: Henry Hall 227

Teaching philosophy:

Tell me and I'll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I'll understand.
--Ancient Chinese Proverb

Course description: This course will allow students to explore the origins and purpose of comparative politics. Students will hone their ability to analyze and explain political patterns in a variety of countries.

Course objectives:

Students will learn to identify and compare the origins of political organizations, political cultures, political-economic systems, democratic regimes, nondemocratic regimes, communist regimes, less-developed and newly industrializing countries, political violence, globalization and international organizations.

Textbook: O'Neil, Patrick H. *Essentials of Comparative Politics*. Third Edition. ISBN: 978-0-393-93376-5

Grading scale:

100%-90%=A 89%-80%=B 79%-70%=C 69%-60%=D 59% and below=F

Assignments:

Tuesday reflection papers	30%
One group presentation	10%
One major research paper/presentation	30%
United Nations simulation/writing assignment	20%
Attendance and participation	10%

Class participation and attendance:

Students are expected to actively participate in class activities and discussions. Students are expected to arrive to class on time. A tardy of more than fifteen minutes will be considered an absence. Leaving class early will affect your attendance average.

Late work:

Please complete all assignments on time. Late work will not be accepted. Reflection papers are due when class begins. This requires that you be punctual. Your lowest reflection paper score will be dropped.

Communication:

Students are expected to communicate with the instructor when they have questions about course expectations. When using email, please include a subject line, your full name, standard fonts and a professional tone. When leaving voice mail, please leave your full name and a detailed message. I will respond to your messages within 24 hours.

Students with disabilities:

It is the student's responsibility to self identify with the Director of Personal Counseling in order to receive accommodations. Only those students with appropriate documentation will receive services. Contact the Director of Personal Counseling at (808) 739-4603 or email: jyasuhar@chaminade.edu

Reflection paper expectations: (Due every Tuesday)

- a. Use a full heading, double space, use 12-point standard font, staple pages, cite when necessary.
- b. Summarize major concepts discussed in the reading. (1-2 paragraphs)
- c. Respond to questions posed by the instructor. (1 paragraph per question)

Group presentation expectations: (5-7 minutes)

- a. Summarize the week's reading.
- b. Explain a current event related to the reading. (Newspaper article)
- c. Provide "reflections" on the readings.
- d. Groups should feel free to ask the class to ponder questions during this time.
- e. Groups should meet prior to class to determine format and content of the presentation.

Major research paper: (4-6 pages)

- a. Choose a country to research.
- b. Analyze this country's historical and contemporary political development and challenges. Use concepts from our readings throughout the paper.
- c. What form of government does this country use and why?
- d. Determine the role this country plays in our world today. What relationship does this country have with other countries and with international organizations?
- e. Use a variety of historical and contemporary sources. Possible sources include *The Economist*, *The New York Times*, *Foreign Affairs*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs websites for respective countries, *UN.org*, *CIA WorldFactBook*, among many others. Avoid *Wikipedia*.
- f. Use a proper bibliography and citations throughout. Use at least five sources in your paper.

Extra credit opportunity: (Due November 6th)

Visit the campaign headquarters of one candidate prior to November 6th. Be sure to call the headquarters prior to your visit to ensure it is open. Write a two-page essay about your observations during your visit. Who did you meet? What activities did you observe? Did your opinions about this candidate change during your visit? Why/Why not? Include

a photo of yourself at the headquarters on the last page of your essay. Be prepared to present this to the class. (Ten points toward research paper)

Weekly readings and assignments:

Week of August 28th: The U.S. political system

Due Thursday: Find two pieces of election paraphernalia to bring to class on Thursday. If you can't find brochures or mailers, take photos of two different election signs. Print them out and bring them to class.

Reflection paper questions: None

Threaded discussion: None

Week of September 4th: The U.S. political system

Read: Presidential party platforms for Democrats, Republicans and one other party of your choice. (You can easily find these online.)

Reflection paper questions:

- a. Summarize the goals of each party. (3 paragraphs total)
- b. Which party are you more likely to support? Why? (All opinions are valuable.)

Week of September 11th: What is comparative politics?

Read: Chapter 1

Reflection paper questions:

- a. What are the strongest institutions in your country that define politics? What are their benefits and drawbacks? How easy would it be to change them?
- b. If you have to make a choice between greater individual freedom at the expense of collective equality, or greater equality at the expense of freedom, which would you prefer? Why? Can you have both?

Week of September 18th: States

Read: Chapter 2

Reflection paper questions:

- a. Why do we have states? Would it be possible to live without them?
- b. Do you live under a weak state or a strong state? Is it either too weak or too strong? Why?

Due Thursday: One paragraph that explains which country you would like to research and why. The instructor must approve your choice.

Week of September 25th: Nations and society

Read: Chapter 3

Reflection paper questions:

- a. Are people in the United States stronger in their feelings of nationalism or in their feelings of patriotism? What are the differences between the two?
- b. In your view, should every nation be allowed to form its own state? Why?

Week of October 2nd: Political economy

Read: Chapter 4

Reflection paper question:

- a. What basic public goods should a state provide? What should be left to the free market? Explain.

Week of October 9th: Democratic regimes

Read: Chapter 5

Reflection paper questions:

- a. Should democracies rely more on initiatives or referenda to decide policy or are forms of indirect democracy better? Explain.
- b. Which is a more democratic form of leadership—presidents or prime ministers? Why?

Week of October 16th: Nondemocratic regimes

Read: Chapter 6

Reflection paper question:

- a. Is authoritarianism a more efficient means of rule than democracy? Explain.

Due Thursday: Bring a hard copy of a constitution from a country of your choice.

Week of October 23rd: Advanced democracies

Read: Chapter 7

Reflection paper question:

- a. Is the European Union an anomaly or will more countries create similar integrationist bodies in the future?

Due Thursday: Detailed outline of research paper and a bibliography with at least 3 sources. Bring a hard copy to class.

Week of October 30th: Communism and postcommunism

Read: Chapter 8

Reflection paper questions:

- a. Why was communism able to spread across such a large part of the globe? What explains its attraction?
- b. Why was communism unable to provide the benefits that it promised in theory?

Week of November 6th:

Due Tuesday: Extra credit only.

Thursday: Less-developed and newly industrialized countries

Read: Chapter 9

Reflection paper questions due **Thursday**:

- a. Are all of the problems of less-developed countries the result of imperialism? What other factors should we consider?
- b. What should be done to help less-developed countries develop—focus on infrastructure, living standards or good governance?

Week of November 13th: Political violence and globalization

Read: Chapters 10 and 11

Reflection paper questions: (Only one reflection paper is necessary.)

- a. What are the objectives of terrorism? Of revolution? How are the two related?
- b. In your opinion, what are the most effective ways to limit political violence?
- c. Is globalization a primarily beneficial or detrimental development? Why?

Week of November 20th: The United Nations

(No class on Thursday)

Read: Explore the United Nations website. www.un.org

Reflection paper questions:

- a. What is the purpose of the United Nations? When was it founded?
- b. Explain an issue that is currently being discussed by the UN that is of interest to you.

Week of November 27th: Individual presentations (5-7 minutes)

Sign up prior to the 27th. Choose the most significant points in your research paper to present. Include at least one visual aid. Choose a presentation style—Power point, iMovie, simulation, etc. Be prepared to answer questions posed by the class. Use feedback provided during your presentation to tweak your research paper.

Week of December 4th: United Nations simulation and course wrap-up

During the United Nations simulation, you will represent the country that you researched. Bring your position paper to class both days. It should be based on the topic we chose as a class on Nov. 20th.

Due **Tuesday/Thursday**: United Nations position paper. See

<http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/gmun/lang/en/home/delegates/papersguide>

Due **Thursday**: Final research paper and bibliography.

**The instructor reserves the right to make reasonable changes to this syllabus.