The Chinese University of Hong Kong  
Master of Social Science in Global Political Economy Programme  

GPEC 5016 Introduction to Comparative Politics  
2013/2014 Period 2  

Course Outline  

Instructor: Mr. Seanon Wong  
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Friday 6:45 – 9:30pm  
CYT LT8  
Consultation by appointment  

Teaching Assistant: Mr. Damian Cheung  
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Description  
This course introduces students to the field of comparative politics. It begins with a discussion on the definition of politics, the comparative method, and such essential concepts as institutions, freedom and equality. In Lecture 2, we focus on the state. We explore its meaning, historical origins, and the sources and components of state power. In Lecture 3, we discuss what it means to be a nation or a society, and how people of different political attitudes, ideologies and cultures see the world differently. In the second half, we examine how these attitudes, ideologies and cultures are put into practice in three broad categories of regimes: democratic (Lecture 4), nondemocratic (Lecture 5), and communist and postcommunist (Lecture 6). From Lecture 2 onwards, two to three case studies are included to facilitate discussion.  

Assessment  

30% **Participation:** Students should actively respond to questions posed by the instructor, put forward their own questions and comments, and participate in discussions during lectures. Remember: mere presence is not participation.  

30% **Short paper:** No more than 2,000 words in length; due in-class on **Dec 20.** Students should focus on two countries of their choice that exhibit marked differences in ONE issue-area (policy, institutional, systemic, etc.), and explain in detail such differences with the terms and concepts they have learned. Further instructions and examples will be provided.  

40% **Final in-class exam (Dec 20):** Students are expected to demonstrate knowledge of – but not rote memorization of (!) – the materials covered throughout the course.  

Readings  
The following two books are required. They are available for purchase at the University Bookstore:


**General Guidance**

• The assigned readings constitute only part of the body of knowledge students should be familiar with by the end of the course. Lectures do not simply regurgitate their content, but instead supplement it with materials and perspectives from outside sources. Reading is therefore not a substitute for attending lectures, nor is the other way round.

• Students are expected to complete all assigned readings in advance, and lecture PPTs are posted to Blackboard after each class.

• Students are encouraged to make good use of *StudySpace*, an online resource that complements *Essentials of Comparative Politics*. It includes exercises, interactive learning tools, assessment, and review materials ([http://www.wwnorton.com/college/polisci/compol4/](http://www.wwnorton.com/college/polisci/compol4/)).

• The instructor might distribute news articles, commentaries and analyses as a way to understand comparative politics through current events. Students are expected to check their email and course page on Blackboard on a regular basis.

**Schedule**

**Nov 8 (Lecture 1)**

• *Essentials*, Ch. 1: Introduction

• *Cases*, Ch. 1: Introduction

**Nov 15 (Lecture 2)**

• *Essentials*, Ch. 2: States

• *Cases*, Ch. 3: United States and Ch. 14: Nigeria

**Nov 22 (Lecture 3)**

• *Essentials*, Ch. 3: Nations and Society

• *Cases*, Ch. 2: United Kingdom, Ch. 6: Japan and Ch. 9: India

**Nov 29 (Lecture 4)**

• *Essentials*, Ch. 5: Democratic Regimes

• *Cases*, Ch. 4: France, Ch. 5: Germany and Ch. 11: Mexico

**Dec 6 (Lecture 5)**

• *Essentials*, Ch. 6: Nondemocratic Regimes

• *Cases*, Ch. 10 Iran, Ch. 12 Brazil and Ch. 13 South Africa
Dec 13 (Lecture 6)
  • Essentials, Ch. 9: Communism and Postcommunism
  • Cases, Ch. 7: Russia and Ch. 8: China

Dec 20 (Final Exam)

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University Policy and Regulations on Honesty in Academic Work

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/.

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign on the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.