PLSC 341: Comparative Politics - Syllabus
John Felice Rome Center
Spring 2019
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2:20 p.m. - 3:35 p.m.
Professor Claudio Lodici
Email: clodici@luc.edu
Office hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays (by appointment)

Course description: To offer an informative introduction to the complexities of government in some selected countries in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas, regardless of their ideology, size, and economic development. Finally, to provide students with a civic background whatever their academic specialization. This will imply tentative answers to questions such as the purpose of government, the functions of political institutions, and the real actors of political processes in the global era. Constitutions, legislatures, administrations, social forces, interest groups, political parties, and elections will be scrutinized in turn.

Learning outcomes: By the end of this course students will have an understanding of:

- Various terms used in comparative political science such as political systems, regimes, governments, states, and ideologies;
- The major aspects of liberal democratic and non-democratic ideologies;
- The major political economic features of democratic and authoritarian regimes;
- The political history, key institutions, political cultures, political parties, interest groups; political issues, cleavages, of the major political conflicts of contemporary political systems;
- Some understanding of the relationship between a) political ideologies and political regimes, and b) political regimes and economic systems in the countries explored in the course;
- Politics as the struggle between freedom and equality.

Course procedure: Students are expected to have completed their reading before the end of the semester. They are also expected to actively participate in all sessions, and their participation will be taken into consideration. Some sessions are in seminar format.


Evaluation:

Class participation, attendance, and questions. Students will be expected to bring to class each Tuesday one question related to the chapter from the McCormick, Hague and Harrop text for that week. As you read the chapter[s], there should be something that either is of interest to you or that is not clear to you. The success of this class depends upon the quality of the dialogue in class. It is expected that students will attend every class and that they will be fully prepared to discuss the material assigned for that day. Class participation grades will reflect their attendance record, the frequency of their contributions to class discussions, and the quality of their questions, observations, and conclusions. **Class participation counts for 5 percent of the final grade.**

There will be a **term project worth 15 percent of the final grade.** Each student will also write a paper of approximately 3000 words (or about 12 double-spaced typewritten pages) analyzing one aspect of comparative politics and government. Students must choose their topic in consultation with the instructor. The completed paper will be due by April 11.

The following schedule will be strictly observed:

1. Consultation with the instructor on your research idea (by **February 5**).
2. A typed project proposal, including the central questions, a plan for research, and a preliminary bibliography (due **February 14**).
3. A rough draft of the paper (due **March 21**).
4. A final draft (due **April 11**).

Plagiarism:

Students of this university are called upon to know, to respect, and to practice a high standard of personal honesty. Plagiarism is a serious form of violation of this standard. Plagiarism is the appropriation for gain of ideas, language, or work of another without sufficient public acknowledgement that the material is not one’s own. Plagiarism on the part of a student in academic work or dishonest examination behavior will result in failure and will be reported to the Office of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

There will **multiple-choice quizzes worth 6 percent of the final grade.** Quizzes will relate to current and previous topics. A quiz may be given at the beginning of a class. There will be no make-up quizzes -- none even later during the same class period. Quizzes will be announced 1 week in advance.
Each student will write a book review of approximately 600 words. Students will have the ability to make their own choice as long as the book deals with world politics. This will be submitted no later than April 4. Each review should include a brief synopsis, followed by the reader’s reaction. What was the author’s point. What did the editor provide. What do you think of the book. What did you learn. What did you like about the book. What didn’t you like about the book. How did the book relate to your understanding of democracy and government today. Why was the assignment worthwhile. Why wasn’t the assignment worthwhile. THIS ASSIGNMENT MUST BE WORD PROCESSED, SPELL CHECKED AND PROOF READ. Failure to follow these directions will result in either a lowered grade or having the assignment returned ungraded to be resubmitted. Late assignments (including those returned for resubmission) may have points deducted for each day late.

**Reviews count for 4 percent of the final grade.**

**Examinations:**

There will be two examinations (Midterm: essay, with some choice--2 of 5, e.g.; Final: 10 short answer essays). The **Midterm exam will count 30 per cent of the final grade**, the final exam will be worth **40 percent of the final grade**. **Travel plans or other personal commitments may not interfere with examinations.** The first exam will cover the first half of the class; the final exam will be cumulative.

In-class tests (mid-term exam, final exam, and quizzes) are **closed book/notes**. Quizzes may include multiple choice, true/false, or short answer questions. No exams are dropped or replaced. **Caveat:** student may not miss any exams. Missed exams, without verifiable appropriate documentation, will be recorded as a zero. The final exam must be taken to receive credit in the course. Tests and exams are cumulative. All graded material will have to be returned to the instructor in a timely manner for archiving.

**Grading:**

94-100: A  
90-93:  A-  
87-89:  B+  
84-86:  B  
80-83:  B-  
77-79:  C+  
74-76:  C  
70-73:  C-  
67-69:  D+  
65-66:  D-  
60-64:  F
60-66: D  
59 or lower: F

The minimum passing grade for a course taken under the Pass/Fail option will be C minus (C-)
I    Incomplete
W    Withdrawal
WF   Withdrawal Failure

**Percentage-Based Grading System:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>5 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>6 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book review</td>
<td>4 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term paper</td>
<td>15 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>30 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>40 %</td>
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**Grading philosophy:**

A    Excellent. Indicates the highest level of achievement in the subject and an outstanding level of intellectual initiative.
B    Good. Indicates a good level of achievement, intelligent understanding and application of subject matter.
C    Satisfactory. Indicates academic work of an acceptable quality and an understanding of the subject matter.
D    Poor. Minimum credit. Indicates the lowest passing grade, unsatisfactory work and only the minimum understanding and application.
F    Failure. Indicates the lack of even the minimum understanding and application.

**Attendance Policy:**

(please note that course attendance is based on prompt class attendance, preparation and active participation in class discussions)

In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following absence policy. Prompt attendance, preparation and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student.

This course meets twice a week, thus a total of two unexcused absences will be permitted. Unexcused absences beyond these will result in a lowering of your final grade.

There are no make-up exams, tests, or quizzes unless students demonstrate in advance that a significant life-event prevents them from attending class or if they have a documented emergency. The following are not acceptable excuses: scheduled flights or trips, job interviews, picking up relatives at the airport, etc.

Attendance and punctuality are basic requirements for an effective course. Beyond that, each person's frequency and quality of
contribution to the class discussion will be assessed and reflected in the class participation score. If students cannot attend a class it is a courtesy to inform me in advance if possible.

**Disagreement:**
Political attitudes and opinions tend to reflect one's social background and self-interest, and since we all have different backgrounds and interests there is no reason why we should be expected to agree. A student does not have to agree with the professor to get a grade in this class. It is both legitimate and desirable for you to disagree with me and independently and critically evaluate the material. I will exercise my academic freedom and say what I think is accurate about politics; you have the same right. Political Science is a way of thinking about politics, not a set of right answers and airing your disagreements is an excellent way to learn how to think. So please, if you feel I am wrong, challenge me. Former Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn had two bits of advice for the new members: *"Learn to disagree without being disagreeable"*, and *"Don't turn political differences into personal differences"*.

**Behavior:**
Civility and toleration are essential for an academic atmosphere conducive to learning. Incivility in the classroom will not be tolerated. Students should make sure to turn off cellular phones and other electronic devices before class. Students are not allowed to eat, drink, or smoke in the classrooms.

**Honor Code:**
Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our honor code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

**Examinations:**
As stated above, travel plans or other personal commitments may not interfere with midterm and final examinations.
# Course outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 22-24</td>
<td>Key Concepts. The State.</td>
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<td>February 5-7</td>
<td>Theoretical Approaches.</td>
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<td>February 12-14</td>
<td>Comparing Government and Politics.</td>
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<td>February 19-21</td>
<td>Constitutions and Court.</td>
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<td>February 26-28</td>
<td>Legislative.</td>
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<td>March 5</td>
<td>Executive.</td>
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<td>March 7</td>
<td>Midterm examination</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 8-17</td>
<td>Spring semester break</td>
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<td>March 19-21</td>
<td>Executive (cont’d). Bureaucracies.</td>
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<td>March 20-22</td>
<td>Sub-national Government.</td>
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<td>April 2-4</td>
<td>Political Parties. Elections</td>
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<td>April 9-11</td>
<td>Voters</td>
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<td>April 16-18</td>
<td>Interest groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 19-22</td>
<td>Easter recess</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 23-25</td>
<td>Public Policy</td>
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Final examinations: April 27-May 2.

* Please note that students must complete the reading assignments listed above by Thursday in the current week.*