**POL 2700: Comparative Political Systems**

University of Missouri

Fall 2011

M W 9:00-9:50AM, Middlebush Hall 12

Laron K. Williams, Ph.D.

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Sections: 01D (F 12:00-12:50) and 01F (1:00-1:50)

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Sections: 01A (F 9:00-9:50), 01B (11:00-11:50), 01C (12:00-12:50) and 01E (1:00-1:50)

**Purpose:** The course is designed to introduce students to some of the basic concepts and issues encountered in the comparative study of politics. Comparative politics is more than the act of comparing countries, but of using different countries to attempt to understand broader political phenomena. As such it is an analytic, and not merely descriptive, enterprise. Students will learn about key concepts related to political development, regime type, institutional structure, and policymaking by studying a variety of countries that serve as illustrative cases. Additionally, we will often use the United States as a point of departure for our discussions about these other cases.

The countries we will discuss are representative of developed countries and developing nations. Thus, many of the lessons we will draw from these cases can be directly applied to other cases not covered in class. As you will note from the syllabus, however, the course is not organized around a country-by-country study. Instead, the organization is intended to develop conceptual tools to compare these countries and generalize to other cases. *Comparative politics is not simply the description of other countries. Comparative politics is the study of multiple countries to understand why particular political outcomes occur.*

**Grades:** There are two components of your grade. The first component is based on exams. There will be four exams, but your grade will come from the three exams (each weighted 30%) with the highest scores. This means that you may miss (or skip) one of the four exams without any penalty.
Attendance at lectures is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for a passing grade. Ideal answers to questions on the examinations will express clear knowledge of both the assigned reading materials and the content of the lectures. In addition, the lectures will be used to deliver important class information.

Your grade in this course will be based on the top three grades from four exams. The exams will contain multiple choice questions about topics from the preceding lectures (meaning the exams are not cumulative). Exams will cover both lectures and reading materials. I do not scale or curve exams. The grade you earn is the grade that you will receive. At this point, I do not envision extra credit opportunities.

The other component of your final grade will be based on attendance and participation at the Friday sections (10%).

Final class grades will be assigned with the following grading scale:

- **A+** = 97.0 - 100
- **A** = 93.0 - 69.99
- **A-** = 90.0 - 92.99
- **B+** = 87.0 - 89.99
- **B** = 83.0 - 86.99
- **B-** = 80.0 - 82.99
- **C+** = 77.0 - 79.99
- **C** = 73.0 - 76.99
- **C-** = 70.0 - 72.99
- **D+** = 67.0 - 69.99
- **D** = 63.0 - 66.99
- **D-** = 60.0 - 62.99
- **F** = 0 - 59.99

You will need a scantron for each of the tests.

**Readings:** There will not always be perfect unity between the course lectures and assigned readings. Thus it will be necessary to attend all lectures and to read the assigned materials in order to be exposed to all of the material that you are responsible for in this course.

The following required text is available at local bookstores (as well as through online sources).


**Blackboard:** We will be using Blackboard (courses.missouri.edu) to display grades, post additional readings, and for announcements.
Other Considerations

• Out of respect for fellow students, each person will refrain from talking, whispering, eating, making offensive remarks, newspaper reading, and other disruptive behavior during lecture. Cell phones must be turned off and may not be used during class time. Inappropriate classroom behavior may result in the student being requested to leave the classroom.

• Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person’s work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. In this course, you are expected to submit original work and behave in a respectful manner toward both the professor and other students in the class. Breaches of the academic integrity rules are extremely serious matters. Sanctions for such a breach range from instructor-imposed academic sanctions, such as a failing grade for the course, to University-imposed disciplinary sanctions, such as probation or expulsion. If you have questions, please consult the University’s academic integrity website, http://academicintegrity.missouri.edu/, and the University M-book, www.missouri.edu/~mbook. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any student plagiarizing (or cheating on tests) will receive an automatic “F” in the course, no exceptions!

• Final Examination: Each student must take the final examination at the time assigned in the University’s schedule of classes. You MUST NOT make any travel arrangements for holidays, family occasions, or the like that would require you to miss this examination. There will be no exemptions from the final or early final examinations given.

• If you need accommodations because of a disability, please inform the professor immediately. In addition, students must register with the Office of Disability Services, S5 Memorial Union, 882-4696, to request academic accommodations for a disability. It is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students requesting academic accommodations, and for accommodations planning in cooperation with students and instructors, as needed and consistent with course requirements. For other MU resources for students with disabilities, click on “Disability Resources” on the MU homepage.

Make-up Exams/Excused Absences

Make-up exams will only be given for university-excused absences. For any of these absences to be “excused,” you must provide me with written documentation. To be excused the student must notify his or her instructor in writing (acknowledged e-mail message is acceptable) prior to the date of absence if such notification is feasible (in particular in times of university-excused absences). In cases where advance notification is not feasible (e.g. unanticipated illness, accident, or emergency) the student must provide notification by the end of the second working day after the absence by 5:00 PM. This notification should include an explanation of why notice could not be sent prior to the class.

The student must also provide documentation substantiating the reason for the absence that is satisfactory to the instructor prior to taking the make-up exam. Failing to take a make-up exam
at a previously agreed-to time will result in a zero. The make-up exam must be taken within one week of the original test date listed in the syllabus, except under extreme circumstances approved by the instructor. For illness, documentation should include an official note from a doctor or clinic. Also, keep in mind that an exam proctored outside of the normal exam time may be of a different format than the original exam. If you do not have an excused absence you will receive a zero for the exam. **No exceptions.**

**Class Schedule**

We will spend as much time as necessary on each topic for this course. Because I am unable to predict in advance how long each topic will take, the schedule below is only a rough guideline. _I expect that you will have read the assigned readings before the class period for which they are assigned. I will announce additional required readings during class meetings._

**Part 1: What Is Comparative Politics?**

**Week 1: August 22-24**

- Monday: Course Overview/Chapter 1
- Wednesday: Chapter 2

**Week 2: August 29 & 31**

- Monday: Chapter 2 (continued)
- Wednesday: Chapter 3

**Week 3: September 5 & 7**

- Monday: No class
- Wednesday: Chapter 3 (continued)

**Week 4: September 12 & 14**

- Monday: Chapter 4
- Wednesday: Chapter 4 (continued); Review
Week 5: September 19 & 21
- Monday: Exam I
- Wednesday: Chapter 5

Part 2: What Is Democracy?

Week 6: September 26 & 28
- Monday: Chapter 6
- Wednesday: Chapter 7

Week 7: October 3 & 5
- Monday: Chapter 7 (continued)
- Wednesday: Chapter 8

Week 8: October 10 & 12
- Monday: Chapter 8 (continued)
- Wednesday: Exam II

Part 3: Democratic Institutions

Week 9: October 17 & 19
- Monday: Chapter 9
- Wednesday: Chapter 9

Week 10: October 24 & 26
- Monday: Chapter 10
- Wednesday: Chapter 11

Week 11: October 31 & November 2
- Monday: Chapter 11 (continued)
- Wednesday: Chapter 12
Week 12: November 7 & 9

- Monday: Chapter 12 (continued); Review
- Wednesday: Exam III

Part 4: Consequences of Democracy

Week 13: November 14 & 16

- Monday: Chapter 13
- Wednesday: Chapter 13 (continued)

Week 14: No Class

Week 15: November 28 & 30

- Monday: Chapter 14
- Wednesday: Chapter 14 (continued)

Week 16: December 5 & 7

- Monday: Chapter 15
- Wednesday: Chapter 15 (continued)

Final Examination: Thursday, December 15: 3:00-5:00pm