

Introduction to Political Science (POLS 11)

Prof. Nathan Batto

Spring 2007, MWF 2:00-3:20

OH: George Wilson Hall, 1st floor; MW 3:30-4:30, Th 10:00-12:00, and by appointment

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Political science addresses questions of...well...politics. It examines the ways in which people govern themselves through political institutions, ideas, and behavior. It considers the question of how we create, or attempt to create, just and effective governing structures. This course focuses particularly on looking at the different ways that this task has been approached in different countries around the world. What are the theoretical and practical goals of politics and government? What are the challenges to effective governance? How do citizens participate in politics? What role does power play in society, and how is power represented in political form?

In this course, we will focus on three main questions. First, why are some countries poor and others rich? Second, what makes a democracy? Third, how do people decide how to vote? Of course there are myriad other questions that are interesting to political scientists, but these are three of the most important. In each of these areas, we will look at various types of theories that attempt to answer the question. By the end of the course, you should understand the difference between different types of explanations as well as understanding the more concrete answers that have been offered.

This will be a participatory class. Each class will feature one or two presentations, and the rest of the class is expected to learn from and react to these presentations. In addition, everyone is expected to participate in class discussions as well. Of course, you cannot participate if you are not present. Moreover, we will cover a lot of content in class that are not covered in the readings, and you are responsible for all of it. If you miss a lot of class time, it will be almost impossible for you to get a good grade in this class. I do not plan on taking attendance in this class. However, if I feel that too many people are missing class, I may be forced to take attendance.

Your course grade will be determined as follows:

1. 1 st midterm	20%
2. 2 nd midterm	20%
3. final exam	20%
4. 1 st oral presentation	10%
5. 2 nd oral presentation	10%
6. report	10%
7. participation	10%

Presentations

Each student will give two in-class presentations. You will have 5-10 minutes for the first presentation and 10-15 minutes for the second presentation. One purpose of this

exercise is to force you to figure out how to make the most effective presentation in an allotted amount of time, so presentations under the allotted time will be penalized and you will be cut off when your time is up. If there is time, we will allow another 5-15 minutes for questions and discussion. You will be graded on how much the rest of the class learns from your presentation, so make your presentation interesting and informative. If we have time for discussion, your grade will also reflect the quality of questions and comments inspired by your presentation. Everything presented in these presentations is fair game for the midterms and final exam.

The purpose of the first presentation is to introduce the class to politics in a particular country. Your presentation should include a brief description of the country, to the extent that those features are important for politics. The main part of your presentation should discuss politics in the country. What are the lines of division? How do those cleavages shape politics? What kinds of problems does the government face? What else is interesting about politics in that country? Your presentation should give us a general overview of politics in that country.

The second presentation should focus on a single, specific, current political question in a country (not necessarily the same country as your first presentation). Your presentation should include the history of the issue, what the various political actors want, possible solutions, and whatever else you think is necessary for us to understand this issue. In addition, you should tell us how to best understand this question. Should we think about it in rational, structural, or cultural terms? This presentation should be based largely on what you learn while doing research for your paper. However, you should not simply read your report to the class – you will bore the class to death!

Report

As a companion to your second in-class presentation, you will write a 4-6 page paper on the same topic. In writing this paper, you should draw heavily on newspaper articles (readily available on the internet). You must cite at least ten newspaper articles, from at least four newspapers, one of which must be based in the country that you are studying. Of course, you are also encouraged to cite academic books and journal articles. Please include a standard bibliography as well as a copy of each article that you cite.

Exams

There will be two in-class mid-term exams and a final exam.

Academic Honesty

I take cheating very seriously. If you cheat in my class, I will fail you. I will also report you to the Office of Student Life.

Cheating on exams is usually obvious and blatant, but students often are confused about what constitutes plagiarism. I strongly urge you to review the section on plagiarism in your student handbook. As a general rule of thumb, unless an idea is common knowledge, you should cite the source.

Readings

All readings will be posted on blackboard.

Disclaimer

This syllabus is intended to provide an overview over the course. You cannot claim any rights from it. In particular, scheduling and dates may change. I may also choose to add or subtract readings. Although the syllabus should be a reliable guide for the course, official announcements are always those made in class.

Course schedule

Part One: Theoretical Orientations

Jan 17-19: Introduction

Jan 22-26: Types of theories

Reading:

Lim, Timothy C. 2006. *Doing Comparative Politics: An Introduction to Approaches and Issues*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner. Chapter 3.

Part Two: Why are some countries poor and other countries rich?

Jan 29-Feb 2: Why are poor countries poor?

Reading: Lim, Chapter 4.

Feb 5-Feb 9: Why are East Asian countries rich?

Reading: Lim, Chapter 5.

Feb 12-21: How has China gotten rich?

Feb 19: NO CLASS

Readings:

Hinton, William. 1966. *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village*. New York: Vintage. Pp 37-68.

Yang, Dali. 1996. *Calamity and Reform in China: State, Rural Society and Institutional Change since the Great Leap Forward*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Pp 42-67.

Feb 23: 1st Midterm (in class)

Part Three: What makes a democracy?

Feb 26-Mar 9: Theories of Democratization

Readings:

Lim, Chapter 6.

Lerner, Daniel. 1958. *The Passing of Traditional Society*. New York: Free Press. Pp 19-42.

Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1959. *Political Man*. New York: Doubleday. Pp 45-72.

Przeworski, Adam et. al. 2000. *Democracy and Development*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Pp 78-117.

Tien, Hung-mao. 1992. "Taiwan's Evolution toward Democracy: A Historical Perspective." In *Taiwan: Beyond the Economic Miracle*, Denis Fred Simon and Michael Kau, eds. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe. Pp 3-23.

Almond, Gabriel and Sidney Verba. 1963/1989. *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage. Pp 337-374.

Mar 12-Mar 16: SPRING BREAK

Mar 19-Mar 23: Presidentialism vs. Parliamentarism

Readings:

Linz, Juan. 1994. "Presidential or Parliamentary Democracy: Does it make a difference?" In *The Failure of Presidential Democracy: Comparative Perspectives*, Juan Linz and Arturo Valenzuela, eds. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. Pp 3-87.

Mar 26-Apr 11: Does the number of parties matter?

Readings:

Lipset, Seymour Martin and Stein Rokkan. 1967. "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction." In *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*, Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, eds. New York: Free Press. Pp 1-64.

Lijphart, Arend. 1969. "Consociational Democracy." *World Politics* 21,2: 207-225.

Mainwaring, Scott and Timothy Scully. 1995. "Introduction: Party Systems in Latin America." In *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America*, Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully, eds. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Pp 1-34.

April 13: 2nd Midterm (in class)

Part Four: How do voters decide who to vote for?

April 16: Spatial logic

Readings:

Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper & Row. Pp 36-50.

April 18-April 23: The Michigan model

Readings:

Meehl, Paul. 1977. "The Selfish Voter Paradox and the Thrown-Away Vote Argument." *American Political Science Review* 71, 1: 11-30.

April 25-April 30: The Reasoning Voter

Readings:

Popkin, Samuel. 1994. *The Reasoning Voter*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp 44-95.

May 2-May 7: case studies

Readings:

Gwynne, S.C. "Retail Politics." *Texas Monthly* (January 2006), 116.

Diamond, Larry. 2001. "Anatomy of an Electoral Earthquake: How the KMT Lost and the DPP Won the 2000 Presidential Election." In *Taiwan's Presidential Politics*, Muthiah Alagappa, ed. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe. Pp 48-87.

The first presentations will be roughly from Jan 29 to Feb 26, with two presentations in each class. The second presentations will be roughly from Feb 28 to May 4, with one presentation in each class.