POLS 655: COMPARATIVE POLITICAL SYSTEMS

San Diego State University
Prof: Ahmet Kuru
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W 4.00-6.40 PM Office: AH 4132
NH 131
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Description
This course intends to provide students with a broad understanding of comparative politics sub-field in terms of covering both major theories, such as, culturalist, ideational, rational choice, structural materialist, and institutionalist perspectives, and main themes, such as nationalism, citizenship, state-society relations, democracy and authoritarianism, socio-economic development, and state-religion relations. Comparative politics is the only sub-field of political science that is defined with a method (“comparative”). Its focus on domestic politics makes it different from International Relations, its emphasis on comparing countries differentiates it from American Politics, and its extensive usage of empirical data is a distinction from Political Philosophy.

Each student will present one book to the class. Moreover, students will write one-page (single space) response papers every week. Participation to the class discussions through questions and answers is a significant part of the learning process.

Student Learning Objectives:
In this course, students will:
- Utilize basic approaches, perspectives, theories, and methods of Comparative Politics
- Define, explain, and illustrate by contemporary examples various theories of political regimes, addressing their origins, evolution, institutions, processes, and effects
- Compare and contrast key concepts of political ideologies, as systems of organizing political movements and institutions
- Exercise skills in critical thinking, close reading of texts, verbal and written communication, organization and integration of ideas, and problem-solving

Grading
Response Papers 20 %
Class Participation 20 %
Paper 60 %

Disability Accommodation
If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.
**Academic Dishonesty**

Students caught engaging in cheating or plagiarism will receive an automatic F for the course and will be reported to the appropriate university authorities. According to the SDSU Senate “Plagiarism shall be defined as the act of incorporating ideas, words, or specific substance of another, whether purchased, borrowed, or otherwise obtained, and submitting same to the University as one’s own work to fulfill academic requirements without giving credit to the appropriate source. Plagiarism shall include but not be limited to (a) submitting work, either in part or in whole, completed by another; (b) omitting footnotes for ideas, statements, facts, or conclusions that belong to another; (c) omitting quotation marks when quoting directly from another, whether it be a paragraph, sentence, or part thereof; (d) close and lengthy paraphrasing of the writings of another…and (f) submitting as one’s own work papers purchased from research companies.”(http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/senate/policy/pfacademics.html#cheating)

**Required Readings**


**SCHEDULE**

**August 26 Syllabus**

**September 2: Comparative Method**


Recommended:

I. THEORIES
September 9: Culture

Recommended:

September 16: Ideas and Ideologies

Recommended:

September 23: Structure

Recommended:

September 30: Rational Choice

Recommended:

October 7: Institutions

Recommended:

II. THEMES

October 14: Nationalism


Recommended:


October 21: State-Society Relations


Recommended:


October 28: Development


Recommended:


November 4: Citizenship


Recommended:


November 11: Veterans Day
November 18: Democratization

Recommended:

November 25: Thanksgiving

December 2: Authoritarianism in the Middle East and Central Asia

December 9: Peer-Review

December 17: Paper due date