



**PS 3220**

# **Comparative Politics**



(formerly International Relations and Comparative Politics in Theory and Practice)

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Spring Semester 2010  
Room: BAS 260  
Tuesday –Thursday 9:40 – 11:05  
Course web site: [www.elearn.mtsu.edu](http://www.elearn.mtsu.edu)

## **SYLLABUS**

### **Introduction/ Course Objectives**

Comparative politics is the study of politics within countries. It focuses on differences and similarities among nations, but involves more than just describing these political, economic or social differences and similarities. Instead, comparative politics tries to understand why such differences exist, and their significance, if any. Comparative politics addresses such questions as:

- Why does democracy prevail in some countries but not others? What is it about certain countries that make them more conducive to democracy?
- What triggers revolution, a military coup, an insurrection or political violence?
- Why do people vote the way they do?
- Why do government policies and programs differ among countries? What policies work and what policies don't?

The purpose of this course is to learn something about comparative politics and the politics of other countries. By the end of the course, you should understand many of the major differences in a variety of areas (different voting systems, different systems of representation, differences between democratic and authoritarian governments, differences among types of democracies, etc) some of the major theoretical approaches and explanations in the field (from economic to cultural theories), and basic methods of comparative research.

### **Texts**

- LeRoy, *Comparative Politics: An Introduction Using ExplorIt* (4th edition, 2007).  
**NOTE THAT YOU MUST BUY THIS TEXT NEW BECAUSE IT COMES WITH ACCESS TO A DATASET AND COMPUTER PROGRAM.**
- Lim, *Doing Comparative Politics: An Introduction to Approaches and Issues* (Lynne Rienner 2006).
- Additional reading will be made available.

### **Methods/ Assignments/Activities**

**1. Lectures, In-Class Activities.** The lectures and in-class activities will acquaint you with the basic tools of comparative politics, aspects of the political system, how and what to compare, and the major theoretical approaches in the field. Power-point presentations will be available on the course web page. You are expected to attend class and participate in the in-class activities. Roll is taken on a sample of days and excessive absences will affect your final grade.

**2. Lab Exercises from the LeRoy Text.** This text has limited reading, but comes with a complete data set and a series of empirical computer-based exercises that allow you to explore the nature of politics in countries around the world. We will review and discuss these exercises weekly. The computer program and worksheets in this unique text will help you learn about the politics of other countries, uncover patterns, and identify

cause-and-effect relationships. The computer program is very easy to use. The end of each chapter contains a WORKSHEET with a few easy questions and a series of computer activities. We will all do Chapter 1 together as a class. For the semester, everyone must complete and submit **8 Worksheets**. The WORKSHEETS must be submitted on the date due since we may take time to review these in class. Every worksheet **MUST** be accompanied by a page from your computer showing at least one graph or table from the assignment. Turning in more than one assignment late will reduce the grade of the assignment.

**3. Readings from the Lim Text.** The Lim text complements our in-class activities. We may not directly discuss the material in the book, but that material will find its way onto the exams. That means you are responsible for reading and understanding the material. See the schedule for the list of readings.

**4. Abstract Exercise and Research Design.** Both these exercises are like out-of-class exams. The abstract exercise will cover material in Part I of the course and takes the place of a formal, in-class exam. The Research Design represents the out-of-class portion of the final exam. Both assignments are explained and presented in more detail on the course web page.

**5. Exams.** They had to be in here somewhere. Right? Two in-class exams will be given. Both will cover in-class materials and the material from Chapters 4-9 of the Lim book. The final is not comprehensive. Format will be a combination of multiple-guess and short-answer essay.

**SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES/ASSIGNMENTS – GRADE DISTRIBUTION**

- Attendance, Class Participation (10% of the final grade)
- Abstract Exercise and Research Design (20%)
- Exams (20% each)
- 8 worksheets from ExplorIt text (30%)

**Extra Credit?**

Interested? Listen to NPR stories on recent political developments in a foreign country. The web site provides instructions. After you have listened to the story, send me a brief summary (one paragraph) and the full citation. Three stories are equal to 5 extra points on an exam; 5 stories for 10 points. Maximum 10 points extra per exam.

**OTHER**

Since all classes do not progress at the same rate, the instructor may wish to modify the above requirements or their timing as circumstances dictate. For example, the instructor may wish to change the number and frequency of exams, or the number and sequence of assignments. However, the students must be given adequate notification. Moreover, there may be non-typical classes for which these requirements are not strictly applicable in each instance and may need modification. If such modification is needed, it must be in writing and conform to the spirit of this policy statement.

**Inclement Weather and Class Cancellation Policy**

If Rutherford County Schools are closed (closings are posted by 6:00 a.m. and can be found on all local networks and at <http://newschannel5.com/snow/closings.html>), check your email before coming to

campus. I will announce class cancellations via email only. If you do not hear from me, we will meet as scheduled. If the university is closed for any reason, we will not have class.

### **Withdrawal and Drop Policy**

The deadline to drop this course without a grade is March 3. Scholarship recipients need to be especially cognizant of the impact of dropping a course on scholarship eligibility (see below).

### **ADA Accommodation Policy**

If you have a disability that may require assistance or accommodation, or you have questions related to any accommodation for testing, note takers, readers, etc., please contact the Office of Disabled Student Services (898-2783) with questions about such services.

### **Tennessee Lottery Scholarship**

To retain Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship eligibility, you must earn a cumulative TELS GPA of 2.75 after 24 and 48 attempted hours and a cumulative TELS GPA of 3.0 thereafter. You may qualify with a 2.75 cumulative GPA after 72 attempted hours (and subsequent semesters), if you are enrolled full-time and maintain a semester GPA of at least 3.0. A grade of C, D, F, or I in this class may negatively impact TELS eligibility. Dropping a class after 14 days may also impact eligibility; if you withdraw from this class and it results in an enrollment status of less than full time, you may lose eligibility for your lottery scholarship. Lottery recipients are eligible to receive the scholarship for a maximum of five years from the date of initial enrollment, or until a bachelor degree is earned. For additional Lottery rules, please refer to your Lottery Statement of Understanding form, review lottery requirements on the web at <http://scholarships.web.mtsu.edu/telsconteligibility.htm>, or contact the Financial Aid Office at 898-2830.

**Should the information in this paragraph conflict with the information provided by the State, the latter should be considered accurate and binding.**

### **D2L**

This course has an accompanying Desire to Learn (D2L) site where you can access the course documents, assigned readings, and internet links. You can access the course page by logging in with you Pipeline ID at <http://elearn.mtsu.edu>.

### **SCHEDULE**

<b>Week/Dates</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Activities</b>
Week 2: Jan 19/21	<b>I. Introduction:</b> What is comparative politics? What do we compare?	Lim, Chapter 1 LeRoy, Chapter 1&2	Starpower LeRoy, Chapters 1&2
Week 3: Jan 26/28	<b>I. Introduction:</b> What questions do we want to answer? How do we answer them? Political System Overview	Lim, Chapter 2 LeRoy, Chapter 3	Bruce's Road, Part 1 LeRoy, Chapter 3
Week 4: Feb 2/4	<b>I. Introduction:</b> Theoretical Perspectives <b>II. Political Inputs</b> Legitimacy and why obey the law	Lim, Chapter 3 LeRoy, Chapter 4	Bruce's Road, Part 2 LeRoy, Chapter 4  Abstract Exercise

Week 5: Feb 9/11	<b>II. Political Inputs, cont</b> Political cleavages Participation	LeRoy, Chapter 5	<i>Abstract Exercise Due</i> LeRoy, Chapter 5
Week 6: Feb 16/18	<b>II. Political Inputs</b> Parties Elections	Lim, Chapter 6 LeRoy, Chapter	Representation LeRoy, Chapter 6
Week 7: Feb 23/25	<b>III. Forms of Government</b> Democracy versus authoritarianism > theories of democracy: modernization theory, civic culture, social capital theory, religion	Lim, Chapter 8 LeRoy, Chapter 7	Electoral system LeRoy, Chapter 7
Week 8: Mar 2/4*	<b>III. Forms of Government</b> Different forms of democracy > majoritarian versus consensual > issues of accountability	Lim, Chapter 6 LeRoy, Chapter 8	Money & Politics LeRoy, Chapter 8
*March 3 – Last day to drop on RaiderNet with a grade of ‘W’ <b>SPRING BREAK</b>			
Week 9 March 16/18	<b>III. Forms of Government, continued...</b>	Enlarged Republic (reading on-line) LeRoy, Chapter 9	Enlarged Republic Debate LeRoy, Chapter 9
Week 10: Mar 23/25	Discussion/ Review <b>*Exam*</b>	(	
Week 11: Mar 30/Apr 1	<b>IV. Political Output</b> Policies and performance	Lim, Chapter 4 LeRoy, Chapter 10	Who should make the call Research Design LeRoy, Chapter 10
Week 12: Apr 6/8	<b>IV. Political Output, continued...</b> Policies and performance	LeRoy, Chapter 11	V: Capitol Crimes & Sick around the World LeRoy, Chapter 11
Week 13: Apr 13/15	<b>IV. Political Output, continued...</b> Policies and performance	Lim, Chapters 5 LeRoy, Chapter 12	Government Priorities LeRoy, Chapter 12
Week 14: Apr 20/22	<b>V. Extra</b> US in Comparative Perspective Globalization and Comparative Politics	Lim, Chapter 9 LeRoy, Chapter 13	Research Design LeRoy, Chapter 13
Week 15: Apr 27	Review	LeRoy, Chapter 14	LeRoy, Chapter 14
<b>*Final Exam* Tues, May 4, 10:0 (Research Design Due)</b>			