

PSCI 304 SU2014 Syllabus**Introduction to Comparative Politics, Summer 2014 (SUII)**

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Course:

PSCI 304 Introduction to Comparative Politics

Format:

Online

Catalog Description

This course focuses on the systematic relationship between social, economic, and political variables across the globe (although country-specific material is widely cited). Students will be exposed to research strategies, techniques, and terminology used by those in this discipline.

Prerequisites: PSCI 100 or 101 or permission of the instructor.

Required Course Materials

Clark, William R., Matt Golder, and Sona Nadenichek Golder. 2012. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Press. (hereafter referred to as Clark et al.). 2nd Edition.

Optional or Recommended Course Materials

Students should read credible news sources *International Herald Tribune* (www.ihf.com), *BBC* (www.bbc.com), and/or the *Economist* (www.economist.com), etc.) every day in addition to daily assignments. This will prove useful for in-class discussions as well as for paper topic ideas.

Expectations

Because this is an online, condensed course it is imperative that students possess the following traits: self-management skills, initiative, and a strong work ethic. This will not be easy given the timeframe and course content. Accordingly, should you have any questions you should speak to or contact your peers and/or the instructor.

More specifically, students are required to read and comprehend the assigned readings, complete all assignments by the designated due dates. Failure to do so will result in a significant decrease in points/grade earned.

In addition, we will frequently use Sakai throughout the semester. If you do not use your Shepherd email account as your primary email address then you should either arrange to have all emails forwarded to your primary email address or be sure to check the course Sakai page each day. This site will house the course syllabus, your grades, research paper-related assignments as well as other relevant materials. Furthermore, important class-related announcements will be posted on this site also.

As well, all written assignments MUST be submitted via the Drop Box tool.

Grade Determination

Assignment Type	Points Allotted
Test 1 (Midterm)	100
Test 2 (Final)	100
Literature Review – Introduction	25
Literature Review - Annotated Bibliography	25
Literature Review - Rough Draft	50
Literature Review - Final Draft	100
Discussion Forum Postings & Responses	100
Wiki Participation	100
Total points possible:	600

Grade Scale: A: 100-90 B: 89-80 C: 79-70 D: 69-60 F: 59-0

*Rounding Policy: I round at the .5 level, so an 89.5% would be rounded to an “A” while an 89.4% would be “B”. There will be no extra credit for this course.

Exam Policy

All exams in this course will consist of 50 multiple choice questions. All exams will be administered by and will be timed. Students are given 60 minutes to complete the exams.

As for the content of the tests, it will consist of questions from both the textbook and class lectures. Students should expect an even split between book and lecture questions.

Research Paper Details

Assignment	Description	Length
Introduction/topic:	This document should lay out the topic the student is interested in researching along with the student's theoretical argument. Student should show familiarity with research on given topic, hole in previous literature and knowledge of variables used to test his/her hypothesis.	1 page
Annotated bibliography:	<p>This is an exhaustive list of citations that includes a description of the works used. The description should describe in some detail the contribution of the work and why it is relevant to the current research topic. Bibliography should include only scholarly materials.</p> <p>This step should help you craft your literature review (which is a problem for a vast majority of you).</p>	3-5 page
Rough Draft:	<p>This is a dress rehearsal for the final draft of the literature review. The rough draft should include everything that will be in the final draft: introduction, statement of puzzle or question to be addressed, review of the literature on your topic, as well as an argument, hypotheses, and thesis. Finally, the rough draft should also include a conclusion and a bibliography.</p> <p>Following submission, I will give detailed comments and critiques of the paper that should be addressed in the final draft.</p>	5+ page

Final Draft:	The final draft should show significant improvement from the rough draft and should present a polished version of your research.	5+ page
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****All Research Paper Assignments are to be submitted via the Drop Box tool in Sakai.**

Discussion Forum Postings & Responses:

Students are required to submit 2 discussion questions of their own for 10 of the units (chapters). In addition, students are required to post 2 responses for 10 of the units (chapters) as well. The questions should be crafted to generate discussion; not simply to test others' knowledge of the chapter/unit. In addition, the question should not be structured to trigger 'yes/no' responses and, likewise, the responses should be thoughtful and detailed.

Wiki Participation

The final portion of your grade will be based on your participation in the class Wiki. This can be accessed via the URL below:

<http://robbins2014comparativeclass.pbworks.com/w/page/82519570/FrontPage>

A Wiki is essentially a piece of software posted online that allows users (in this case, the student) to add, edit, and delete postings. In this forum you can add text, files, link to articles, videos, internal pages, etc. The purpose of this exercise in this course is to generate collaboration and a sense of community (albeit a virtual one) in this course. In other words, you will work with your classmates to create detailed summary pages for each class we cover in this course.

To succeed with this assignment a number of things are required. First, you must read the assigned readings and lectures posted to the Sakai site. Second, you must possess a solid understanding of the lectures and assigned readings. Third, you are to collaboratively put together a Wiki that illustrates your understanding or comprehension of the materials. This can take the form of simple summaries, recapitulations, etc. but more creative contributions are strongly encouraged as well. For instance, linking to a video, article, or some other source that illustrates a concept or theory is particularly useful as this may help not only you but your classmates better understand and relate to the materials. And, as noted on the site's front page, those students who reference and discuss outside materials (whether this be news articles, videos, films, etc.) will receive extra points for their participation grade. The same is true for students who respond to these postings.

Wiki Reader's Guide to Comparative Politics (100 points possible):

For this part of the class students are required to contribute to the construction of a “reader” on comparative politics that should follow the structure and sequence of the course. Students should approach the assignment as if they were putting together materials for someone who is not part of the class and who lacks intimate knowledge of comparative political science. To do this, you are to collaboratively build a Wiki Reader's Guide (on the aforementioned site that I have created) for the course and the topics covered in the readings and lectures.

Some things to consider as you navigate this assignment:

What are the key points that you should convey to the ‘reader’? See the lectures (Powerpoint slides in particular) as this contains a list of summary questions that are likely to be especially helpful in guiding discussion.

This construction should be collaborative and students are encouraged to show their knowledge and understanding of the course material by not only citing or referencing the course materials but also by including/adding materials from other sources. I strongly urge you to think about how you would explain the material to a friend or someone your age. What materials (videos, books, films, news articles, etc.) would be most helpful in ‘teaching’ the material to someone else?

This is something that everyone is expected to contribute to and in this regard you are free to amend, revise, add, alter, etc. any other student's posting (albeit in a respectful, constructive manner). Feel free to challenge question others' postings and be prepared to explain your own postings. This, believe it or not, is an excellent way to learn and to make sure that you're on the right track.

This assignment is not designed to tear anyone down or disparage one another but it's meant to stimulate discussion, interaction, and application of knowledge. In other words, you are to build or construct this resource in an accurate, credible way where your peers are the “quality control” officers collaboratively overseeing the development of this resource.

Wiki Assessment:

Each week each student must contribute to the group's wiki. The host site sends the instructor (Dr. Robt) a daily report on your contributions. Your grade for this assignment will be based on two separate components.

Each student is required to spend 20 minutes per class week working on the Wiki site/reader. If you do this then you will earn 50 points.

- a. Your time on the website is to be productive and not simply idle log-in time. In this regard, your contributions will be assessed based on the changes or additions you make. In addition, logging in may help with the first part of the assignment but if you simply log in and do not contribute, you will not earn points.

changes then you will earn only half of the available points. For those making substantial contributions to the Wiki reader, the points earned will be 50 points (maximum).

Secondly, the entire class receives a grade on the overall quality of the finished product. This part of your grade will focus on the accuracy, credibility, and creativity of the completed Reader.

The goal of this exercise is to encourage teamwork and foster a sense of classroom (albeit virtual) and to the extent you are responsible for working through any hang-ups that may surface (of course, I'll monitor them daily). Furthermore, you are to express what you've learned in your own (collective) words. Additional students should think about and describe all course-materials in a way that is easily understood and easy to follow (remember: the audience is not political science scholars).

To learn more about Wikis, the PB site has a great deal of information available and I strongly urge you to review this prior to getting started.

Course Policies

Late Submission/Deadlines

The deadlines listed in this syllabus are firm; there is no wiggle room. Because this is a self-directed course, you must be cognizant of the assignments and their respective due dates. Late work will not be accepted in this course. Likewise, there will be no extra credit for the course either.

Interacting with Classmates & "Netiquette"

During political science courses, students are regularly asked to exchange ideas and share opinions. Due to the nature of the topics covered, debates can become spirited even if this is an online class. Despite this, you are required to remain respectful of others and their opinions at all times. No exceptions permitted. I will not tolerate anyone attacking another student for any reason whatsoever.

"Netiquette" is a portmanteau for internet etiquette and this is of paramount importance here. You are encouraged to exchange ideas and challenge one another but this is to be done in a respectful way that does not denigrate anyone else in the class. Failure to comply with this standard or policy will result in your removal from class should your behavior infringe on others' learning experiences.

For a lengthier discussion of my "Netiquette" expectations and how you should conduct yourself, please see the "Policies" page on the course Sakai site (Under the "Announcements" section).

Computer Usage

You are welcome to use your computer, textbook, and notes during tests and other assignments. However, be forewarned that all tests are timed activities administered through Sakai. As a result, you may be able to

these materials but you still must know the material in advance or else you will be unable to complete them in the allotted time which will result in a lower grade.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Any student with a learning disability or physical handicap that might affect class performance should notify the instructor as soon as possible. Shepherd University can make a variety of arrangements that help insure equal opportunity. For necessary accommodations to be made please let me know prior to the first exam.

Observance of Religious Holy Day

Any student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known to the instructor prior to the observance. A student whose religious practices coincide with due dates must make the instructor aware of this conflict 48 hours before an assignment is due. As long as students comply with this deadline, they shall be allowed to take an exam or complete an assignment from which the student is excused.

Academic Dishonesty

According to the Shepherd University Student Handbook (2003-04), academic dishonesty will not be tolerated at Shepherd University, and all instances of academic dishonesty will require an appropriate academic action by an individual faculty member and the administration of the college. Students guilty of academic dishonesty in a course shall receive, as a minimum penalty, a grade of F in that course. Such action shall be taken by the instructor with written notification to the vice president for academic affairs. Repeated offenses shall subject the student to suspension or dismissal from the University. Furthermore, students involved in facilitating academic dishonesty, among others, such as by the unauthorized dissemination of examination materials, will be subject to disciplinary action beyond that required for their own cheating in a course.

The Handbook states on page 130 (VII. Academic Integrity Procedures) that academic dishonesty “include but not limited to, cheating on examinations, falsifying records, submitting plagiarized work of any kind, or providing or receiving assistance in course work in a manner not authorized by the instructor.” Any evidence of academic dishonesty will be taken very seriously in this course, including plagiarism. Plagiarism is the act of stealing, using, as one’s own, the ideas or the expression of the ideas of another. Whether that other is another student or a published author, plagiarism is cheating! Do not risk plagiarism and an F in this course: cite your sources properly!!!!

Please refer to your Handbook, as well as to the Shepherd University Catalog, for a fuller description of academic dishonesty, the consequences for acts of academic dishonesty, and the process to be followed by students, faculty, and administration in the case of such an act. In addition, if you have any questions regarding these practices, please contact me.

you just want to safeguard against potential infractions, feel free to see or contact me with any issues you may encounter.

Suggested Course Schedule:

Week #	Topic	Assignment(s)
	Introduction	Chapter 1

Week 1	The Comparative Method and the “Science” in Political Science	Chapter 2
	The State	Chapter 4 <i>**Paper Introduction due 12 Ju 5.00pm (EST)</i>
Week 2	Conceptualizing Democracy	Chapter 5
	Determinants of Democracy	Chapter 6 & 7
	Determinants of Democracy, cont.	Chapter 6 <i>**Annotated Bibliography due 1 BY 5.00pm (EST)</i>
	Midterm Exam	Midterm Exam <i>**Midterm Exam Must be completed by 20 July BY 5.00pm (EST)</i>

Week 3	Does Democracy Matter?	Chapter 9
	Democracy and Regime Type	Chapter 11
	Democracy and its Components: Electoral Systems	Chapter 12
	Democracy and its Components: Cleavages and Parties	Chapter 13 <i>**Rough Drafts Due 26 July BY : (EST)</i>
Week 4	Democracy and its Components: Cleavages and Parties	Chapter 13, cont.
	Debating Democratic Structures	Chapter 15
	Paper revisions	--
Week 5	Paper revisions	<i>**Final drafts due Monday 2 August 2013 by 5.00pm (ES)</i>

Final Exam

***Final Exam Must be completed
2 August by 5.00pm (EST)*

6 August 2013 Class Ends

Grades Released on RAIL on 12 August 2014