

PLCP 1010: INTRO TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS (Fall 2011)
MW 12:00-12:50 in Nau 1010

Prof. Len Schoppa
South Lawn S461 (tel: 924-3211)
Hrs: M and W 3:30-4:30 or by appointment
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Americans, separated by the Atlantic, Pacific, Mexico, and Canada from the rest of the world, have often been prone to a kind of ethnocentrism when it comes to thinking about politics. We have the "separation of powers," "judicial review," a "two party system," and all those other wonderful things we learned about in high school government class, and we often find ourselves telling other countries that they ought to have all of these things too.

This course is designed, first, to show you that there are other ways of running politics besides the American way. We will be looking closely at the governments of Great Britain, Japan, Brazil, India, and China, examining parliamentary systems, multi-party systems, one-party dominant systems, communist party dominated systems, and systems seeking to establish themselves.

At the same time, the course is designed to introduce you to the field of "comparative politics" where we seek to understand *why* different countries have developed different kinds of governments and *whether all of this makes any difference*.

REQUIREMENTS:

Students are expected to do all of the reading on a timely basis. Don't procrastinate because the reading gets heavier later in the semester! Your grade will be based on the following components: an in-class blue-book **midterm**, worth 25% of your grade, a **seven page essay** (30%), an in-class blue-book **final** (25%), and **participation in your discussion sections** (20%). Your discussion grade will depend, as noted, on "participation," which means it will be an assessment of the degree to which you attend and contribute in a lively and **informed** fashion. The paper requirement asks you to reflect on several readings assigned in the second half of the course.

READINGS:

The following books will be read in full, or in large part. Copies are available in the book store. In addition, it is strongly recommended that you purchase a reader composed of the starred (*) articles, available at the Copy Shop, 5b Elliewood Avenue.

Kesselman, Krieger, and Joseph, Introduction to Comparative Politics, 5th Edition (Wadsworth, 2010).

Robert Putnam, Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy (Princeton University Press, 1993).

Aravind Adiga, White Tiger (Free Press, 2008).

SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

INTRODUCTION (8/24)

THE COMPARATIVE METHOD (8/29)

KKJ, Intro to Comparative Politics, chapter 1.

Putnam, Making Democracy Work, chapters 1, 3, and 4 **(This book will be discussed in section 9/1 – 9/2 with a focus on the question: what is Putnam’s general argument and how does he prove it?)**

GREAT BRITAIN (8/31, 9/5, 9/7, and 9/12)

KKJ, Intro to Comparative Politics, chapter 2. In addition, students who have not taken a high school or college class on American Politics should read Chapter 3.

*Anthony King, “Running Scared,” The Atlantic Monthly (January 1997): 41-61. **(This article will be discussed in section 9/8 – 9/9 with focus on the question: should the U.S. adopt British political institutions?)**

JAPAN (9/14, 9/19, 9/21, and 9/26)

KKJ, Intro to Comparative Politics, chapter 4.

*Ellis S. Krauss and Robert Pekkanen, “Explaining Party Adaptation to Electoral Reform: The Discreet Charm of the LDP?” Journal of Japanese Studies 30:1 (Winter 2004): 1-34. **(This article will be discussed in section 9/15-16, do the results of Japan’s experiment with electoral reform prove that institutions trump culture?)**

*Leonard Schoppa, “Residential Mobility and Local Civic Engagement: How Communities Preserve Neighborhood Walkability,” manuscript under review at a journal. **(This article will be discussed in section 9/22-23, with a more general discussion of why Americans and Japanese behave differently in politics and policy—is it culture or institutions?)**

WHICH IS MORE IMPORTANT: CULTURE OR INSTITUTIONS? (9/28)

Section 9/29-30 we will be devoted to review for the midterm.

MIDTERM (10/3) BRING A BLUE BOOK WITH YOU!! No section meetings on 10/6-7 to allow time for grading blue books

THREE-WAY DEBATE: SHOULD THE UNITED STATES ADOPT BRITAIN’S PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM OR CHANGE ITS ELECTORAL SYSTEM TO PRODUCE BETTER POLITICS (10/5)

We'll need six volunteers (two to advocate for parliamentary system, two to advocate for electoral reform, and two to defend American institutions—nominated by sections and TAs).

BRAZIL (10/12, 10/17, 10/19, and 10/24)

KKJ, Intro to Comparative Politics, chapter 5.

*Samuel P. Huntington and Joan M. Nelson, No Easy Choices: Political Participation in Developing Countries (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976): 17-41. **(This article will be discussed in section 10/13-14, with a focus on the question: is there a trade-off between democracy and growth for developing nations?)**

Discussion Section 10/20-21 has no specific reading attached. Continue discussing the relative influence of poverty, culture, history, and institutions on the stability of democracy in Brazil.

*Peter Evans, "The State as Problem and Solution: Predation, Embedded Autonomy & Structural Change," in Stephen Haggard and Robert Kaufman, eds., The Politics of Economic Adjustment (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992): 139-181. **(This article will also be discussed at section 10/27-28 where you will be asked: is embedded autonomy the secret to economic development?)**

WHAT KIND OF POLITICS PRODUCES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT? (10/26)

INDIA (10/31--no class on 11/2--11/7, 11/9, and 11/14)

KKJ, Intro to Comparative Politics, chapter 6.

Aravind Adiga, White Tiger (Free Press, 2008), all. – **This book will be discussed in your take-home essay, not in discussion section.**

*Steven Ian Wilkinson, "India, Consociational Theory, and Ethnic Violence," Asian Survey 40:5 (2000): 767-791. **(This article and the next will be discussed at section 11/3-4, with a focus on the causes and consequences of ethnic cleavages in India and elsewhere)**

*Ashutosh Varshney, "India Defies the Odds: Why Democracy Survives," Journal of Democracy 9:3 (1998): 36-50. **(This article and the preceding one will be discussed at section 11/3-4, with a focus on how exactly India has overcome challenges to maintaining democratic stability)**

*Daniel Byman, "Constructing a Democratic Iraq: Challenges and Opportunities," International Security 28:1 (Summer 2003): 47-78. **(This article will be discussed at section 11/10-11, with a focus on the question: does India offer lessons for how to build democracy in places like Iraq?)**

ESSAY QUESTION FOR TAKE-HOME ESSAY WILL BE DISTRIBUTED (11/9)

No Discussion Sections The Week of 11/17-18. Take the Time to Read White Tiger.

CHINA (11/16, 11/21, 11/28, 11/30)

KKJ, Intro to Comparative Politics, chapter 7.

*Baohui Zhang, "Corporatism, Totalitarianism, and Transitions to Democracy," Comparative Political Studies 27:1 (April 1994): 108-136 **(This article will be discussed at section 12/1-2, with a focus on the question: can Zhang's argument explain why Brazil, and not China, has seen a transition to democracy?)**

*Yuanzheng Cao, Yingyi Qian, and Barry R. Weingast, "From Federalism, Chinese Style to Privatization, Chinese Style," Economics of Transition 7:1 (1999): 103-131. **(This article will also be discussed at section 12/1-2, with a focus on the question: can this theory explain why China, and not Brazil or India, has seen sustained 10 percent growth rates?)**

TAKE-HOME ESSAY DUE ON 11/21 AT 12 noon.

WRAP UP LECTURE (12/5)

EXAM (Thursday, December 8, from 1400-1530 pm in our usual classroom)

PROF. SCHOPPA's CLASS RULES

MISSED TESTS

You should notify me before the exams if, for some reason, you will not be able to make it on that date. Permission will only be given in exceptional cases, and make-ups will be scheduled either before or after the regularly scheduled date--at professor's convenience. Note that final exams can only be rescheduled under strict conditions established under College rules.

LATE PAPERS

The final grade on the paper will be docked one letter for every day it is late unless delay has been approved by me (based on a very good reason) at least a week before the due date. Last minute computer problems are not an excuse!!! Back-up your work on disks to avoid losing it, and leave time for you to deal with last minute hitches (like a broken printer, a line in the computer lab) by aiming to finish well before the deadline.

PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING

Taking the words and ideas of another and presenting them as your own (without proper use of quotation marks and citation) constitutes "plagiarism" and is considered grounds for trial and expulsion from the university through the Honor process. I take all cases of this type seriously and urge students to uphold the honor code.