Comparative politics explains why countries vary – in their domestic political institutions, in the political behavior and living conditions of their citizens, and in their public policies. In this course, we will focus on three questions that have long been central to research in comparative politics: a) the development of political systems and the relationship between economic and political development, b) how democratic countries vary in their political institutions and why these differences matter, and c) how democratic countries vary in their public policies. We hope to acquaint you with the debates on these issues, and to help you develop the tools to reach your own reasoned conclusions.

To understand the debates we will address, you will need some fundamental "vocabulary." This includes an understanding of what social science is all about, what political scientists mean precisely by the terms they use (e.g., development, democracy, proportional representation, industrial policy), and the kinds of institutions that countries have. Throughout, we will link the information we provide, and the work we give you, to the larger issues of comparative politics.

We will thus do our best to acquaint you with what comparative politics is all about. At the same time we want you to know it is not: a) it is not a continuation of high-school "civics" or "social studies" courses (although we do not want to discourage you from an interest in civic affairs); b) it is not a journalistic commentary on current events (no matter how enlightening such commentaries may be); c) it is not a travelogue through exotic lands or a survey of "foreign governments;" and d) it is not mere opinion, no matter how well expressed, when it is unsupported by theory or evidence.

Finally, this is an introductory course. It is designed to teach you concepts, approaches and, more broadly, methods of reasoning that should be applicable to any upper division political science course. You will not leave the course as an expert in the politics of a
particular country or countries. But you should leave with a set of analytical tools and theoretical understandings that you can use to examine the political systems of any country anywhere.

REQUIREMENTS:

The course requires two short papers (maximum length five pages), in each case on an assigned topic; an in-class midterm; and a comprehensive final examination. It also requires active participation in section discussions and the completion of section assignments, including mastery of each week’s readings.

Course grades will be calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>short paper 1</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>short paper 2</td>
<td>15 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>mid-term exam</td>
<td>20 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>final exam</td>
<td>35 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>section participation</td>
<td>20 percent</td>
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</tbody>
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Three books are required for the course:


All three books are available at the ASUCLA store. In addition, a sourcebook with additional readings should also be purchased from Westwood Copies at 1001 Gayley Ave. (208-3233).

**LECTURE TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

**PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS**

**April 2:** Introduction to the course

**April 4:** If every country is unique, how do we compare?

- Lave and March, *Introduction to Models in the Social Sciences*, ch 1, 2.
April 9: What are nation-states and where do they come from? [First short paper assignment distributed]

- Eagles and Johnston: ch 1, 6
- Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States*, Ch. 3

April 11: Why do differences among regimes and polity types matter?

- Eagles and Johnston: Ch 8
- Dahl: Ch 2, 3, 8-11

April 16: What kind of independent variables can explain differences among regimes and polity types?

- Eagles and Johnston: Ch. 2, 5
- Dahl: Ch 12

**PART II: DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS**

April 18: Why aren’t presidents the same as prime ministers? [First short paper due at start of class.]

- Eagles and Johnston: Ch. 9

April 23: How do different electoral systems produce different outcomes?

- Eagles and Johnston: Ch. 11
- Downs, pp 22-31.

April 25: Does the number of parties matter?

- Eagles and Johnston: Ch. 12
- Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy*, Ch. 5

April 30: Mid-term examination

May 2: How are federal systems different from unitary systems?

- Eagles and Johnston: Ch. 10
- Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy*, Ch. 10
May 7: How do politicians control bureaucrats?

- Eagles and Johnston, Ch. 13

**PART III: POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

May 9: Why are some countries rich and others poor?  [Second short paper assignment distributed]

- De Soto, Ch. 1-4

May 14: Why have some countries grown quickly and others slowly?

- De Soto, Ch. 5-7

May 16: Why are poor countries authoritarian and rich countries democratic?

- Dahl, chapters 13, 14

May 21: How do we study politics in non-democratic states?  [Second short paper due at start of class.]

- Jackson, *Cambodia 1975-78*, Ch. 2, 3

**Part IV: Selected Issues in Comparative Politics**

May 23: Why do some countries have large welfare states and others not?

- Eagles and Johnston, Ch. 15
- Esping-Anderson, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, Ch. 1

May 28: Globalization and Inequality


May 30: Why did communism collapse?
**June 4:** Why do states have civil wars?


**June 6:** What, if anything, can comparative politics tell us about 9/11/01? Recapitulation and course summary

- Dahl, chapter 15