

**PSCI 220: Introduction to Comparative Government (Section: 001)  
Fall 2018**

**MWF 9:20 a.m. – 10:20 a.m., LA 302**

**Department of Social Sciences and Cultural Studies  
Montana State University Billings**

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Office Hours: Mon. and Wed. 10:30 a.m. – noon, Tu. and Th. 2 p.m. – 3 p.m., or by appointment

**Course Description**

This course is designed to provide an overview of different political and economic systems around the globe. The American system, which is also not uniform across the states, is just one of many political and systems. This class provides an overview of how elections are conducted, how government is organized, how countries administer economic affairs, and the cause and effects of political violence. We will study these topics through case studies (countries) that feature different systems around the world. The goal of this course is to provide you with a better understanding of the world at large, and how the American system is just one of many.

**Course Objectives**

This course satisfies three credits of the university's Social and History General Education requirement. At the conclusion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the major theories and concepts that political scientists use to analyze the political, economic, social and cultural features of diverse countries;
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the major differences and commonalities between countries with different characteristics and be able to compare and contrast industrialized and developing countries' political institutions and actors;
3. Ability to use theories and concepts to understand the main factors that influence a country's political system and aspirations, and to understand how a country's political, social, and economic characteristics are related to one another and to the international environment.

**Required Text**

Orvis, Stephen, and Carol Ann Drogus. 2018. *Introducing Comparative Politics: Concepts and Cases in Context*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA.: CQ Press. (ISBN 978-1506375465).

The textbook is available online through the MSU Billings Campus store and other online retailers.

## **Student Responsibilities**

Please come to class prepared. This means you need to **read** and **take notes** on the assigned readings beforehand. Attending class and participating is important, as there will be material discussed only in lectures that will be tested on exams and quizzes. We will be discussing controversial issues throughout the semester, with some of you holding passionate opinions on these issues. Please treat your fellow classmates with respect. We each come to this course with diverse backgrounds and different ideas regarding various issues and how government should work. Please respect your classmates by not talking or interrupting when I or others are speaking. Late work will be accepted, however there is a **5 percent per day** late penalty. No late work will be accepted 72 hours after the original due date.

## **Technology Policy**

Use of electronics for web surfing and communicating with others is generally inappropriate, and distracting to both myself and other students. If you need to call or text someone in an urgent situation, quietly leave the room. I reserve the right to ask students to leave if you are using your cell phone or clearly not using a laptop/tablet for note-taking.

## **Grading**

Exam: 60% (Three at 20% each)  
Elections paper (15%)  
Social welfare policy paper (15%)  
Quizzes (10%)

**Final grade scale:** A = 94% and above, A- = 90%-93%, B+ = 87%-89%, B = 83%-86%, B- = 80%-82%, C+ = 77%-79%, C = 73%-76%, C- = 70%-72%, D+ = 67%-69%, D = 60%-66%, F = 59% and below (Note: I do not round up final grades if you are just below the cutoff, such as having a 93.8%. I have to define the scale at some point, and some people are always going to fall on the other side of the divide).

*Exams (Three at 20% each):* Three exams will be administered during the semester. These exams will not be cumulative. The format of the exams will be short answer and essay. Exams will be given in class and make-up exams are only allowed with an approved excuse.

*Elections paper (15%):* You will write a six- to seven-page paper (12-point double-spaced Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins) describing elections in a country that you must choose early in the semester. You will analyze the country's system of government, electoral system, recent elections, major candidates for president or prime minister, and major issues affecting the election. This paper is not just a description. You will need to make and support an argument how the political makeup of your country affects the election system and vice-versa. You will need to use reputable outside sources such as academic journals, newspapers, or reliable news websites such as the New York Times, Washington Post, The Economist, Foreign Affairs, BBC, or foreign news sites based in the country you chose. You must cite your sources using APA style and include a Works Cited section that does not count toward your page total. You will

need to pick a country on the discussion board on D2L by Friday, Sept 21.

*Social welfare/health policy paper (15%):* You will write a six- to seven-page paper (12-point double-spaced Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins) describing the social welfare system in a country that you will choose approximately midway through the semester. The country you pick must be on a different continent than the country you chose for the elections paper. This is not just a descriptive paper. You will need to make and support an argument on how the politics and demographics of your chosen country affect its social welfare policy choice. You will need to use reputable outside sources such as academic journals, newspapers, or reliable news websites such as the New York Times, Washington Post, The Economist, Foreign Affairs, BBC, or foreign news sites based in the country you chose. You must cite your sources using APA style and include a Works Cited section that does not count toward your page total. You will need to pick a country on the discussion board on D2L by Friday, Nov. 2.

*Quizzes (10%):* Several unannounced quizzes will be given throughout the semester. Quizzes will cover generally readings for that day and will measure how prepared you are for that day's lecture and activities. The lowest two quizzes will be dropped. Quizzes cannot be made up.

**Grading notes:** Proper spelling, punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure will be assessed as part of your exam and paper grades. Developing the ability to write clearly is an important skill for your future careers. You are expected to carefully read, edit, and proofread their written work. If you would like help with your writing skills, there are on-campus resources that are there to help you. The university offers help in various subjects through the Academic Support Center. Assistance is free and is available in the Student Union Building. Drop-in writing help is available from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Monday-Thursday.

### **Plagiarism and Academic Honesty**

Use of the intellectual property of others without attributing it to them is considered a serious academic offense, and I will generally fail students from the course for academic misconduct. It can also lead to a disciplinary hearing where sanctions can suspension or expulsion from the university. The university's policy on academic misconduct can be found in Section B of the student handbook. I will provide links to how to avoid plagiarism on D2L. I am available to help. However, you are responsible for learning how to properly cite your sources and avoid plagiarism.

### **Student Accessibility**

MSU Billings is committed to providing equal access. If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me so that we can discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that disability-related accommodations are necessary, please contact Disability Support Services (657-2283; located in Room 135 in the College of Education). We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations.

## **Registration Requirement**

University policy requires all students to be officially registered in each class they are attending. Students who are not officially registered for a course by published deadlines should not be attending classes and will not receive credit or a grade for the course. Please confirm enrollment in MyInfo. Registration errors must be corrected prior to university deadlines.

## **Class Schedule**

Readings will come from the *Introducing Comparative Politics: Concepts and Cases in Context* textbook, readings freely available online, and other readings I may post on D2L. You should be prepared to discuss the assigned reading on the day listed below. I may make changes to the schedule as needed.

### **Week 1 (Sept. 5 & 7)**

#### **Readings:**

- Chapter 1 (Introduction)

### **Week 2 (Sep. 10, 12, & 14)**

#### **Readings:**

- Chapter 2 (The Modern State)

### **Week 3 (Sep. 17, 19, & 21)**

#### **Readings:**

- Chapter 3 (States, Citizens, and Regimes)

### **Week 4 (Sep. 24, 26, & 28)**

#### **Readings:**

- Chapter 4 (States and Identity)

#### **Important Dates:**

- Submit name of country for elections paper (Friday, Sep. 28)

### **Week 5 (Oct. 1, 3, & 5)**

#### **Readings:**

- Chapter 4 (States and Identity)

#### **Assignments:**

- Exam #1 (Friday, Oct. 5)

### **Week 6 (Oct. 8, 10, & 12)**

#### **Readings:**

- Chapter 5 (Governing Institutions in a Democracy)

### **Week 7- (Oct. 15, 17, & 19)**

#### **Readings:**

- Chapter 6 (Institutions of Participation and Representation in Democracies)

### **Week 8 (Oct. 22, 24, & 26)**

#### **Readings:**

- Chapter 7 (Contentious Politics: Social Movements, Political Violence, and Revolution)

#### **Important dates:**

- Elections paper due (Friday, Oct. 26)

### **Week 9 (Oct. 29, 31, & Nov. 2)**

#### **Readings:**

- Chapter 8 (Authoritarian Institutions)

### **Week 10 (Nov. 5, 7, & 9)**

#### **Readings:**

- Chapter 9 (Regime Change)

#### **Assignments:**

- Exam #2 (Monday, Nov. 5)

### **Week 11 (Nov. 14 and 16)**

#### **Readings:**

- Chapter 10 (Political Economy of Wealth)

#### **Important dates:**

- Submit name of country for social welfare paper (Friday, Nov. 9)

#### **Important dates:**

- No class on Monday, Nov. 12 (Veterans Day observed)

### **Week 12 (Nov. 19)**

#### **Readings:**

- Chapter 11 (Political Economy of Development)

#### **Important dates:**

- No class Nov. 21 & 23 (Thank)

### **Week 13 (Nov. 26, 28, & 29)**

#### **Readings:**

- Chapter 11 (Political Economy of Development)

#### **Important dates:**

- No class on Wednesday, Nov. 21 or Friday, Nov. 23 (Thanksgiving break)

### **Week 14 (Dec. 3, 5, & 7)**

#### **Readings:**

- Chapter 12 (Public Policies When Markets Fail: Welfare, Health, and the Environment)

#### **Important dates:**

- Social welfare paper due (Friday, Dec. 7)

### **Finals Week**

#### **Important dates:**

- Exam #3 (8:00 a.m. – 9:50 a.m., Wednesday, Dec. 12)