Comparative Political Institutions

Course Day & Times:
- Lectures: Tues. 4th period Matherly Hall rm. 0012 (undergraduates) and Thurs. 4th-5th period, Matherly Hall rm. 0013) (everyone), plus an additional hour TBD (graduate students)
- Office Hours: TBD, Anderson Hall Rm. 211

Course objectives, description and goals:
The primary goal of this course is to assist students in better understanding the origin, influence and interconnectedness of political institutions in modern political systems and especially within the context of policymaking. This understanding will help students understand the functioning of diverse political systems and the potential costs and benefits and often-unanticipated consequences of institutional change. The course begins by examining a set of diverse analytical frameworks that can help to interpret the origins and influence of institutions. This is followed by a careful review of most major formal political institutions (although a few are not covered due to time constraints) as well as some informal institutions. The readings include both theoretical analyses and applied case studies. The goal is for the information covered in the course to be understood as generally applicable regardless of country or context. As a result there is no specific geographic focus to the course; readings and cases are drawn from Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia.

Prerequisites
A basic “Introduction to Comparative Politics” course (such as CPO 2001) is required, experience in other upper division political science courses is recommended.

Attendance
Note that class attendance is required for this course. Attendance will be monitored as necessary during lectures (roll) and through participation in in-class discussions, pop quizzes etc.. During lectures, the professor may also occasionally provide insider information for exams and otherwise incentivize regular attendance.

Repeated absences will unquestionably affect your performance on exams since they will be based on class lectures and discussions, as well as readings. Lecture notes and other related course materials discussed or distributed during class will NOT be posted online or otherwise distributed (except in the case of an excused absence).

According to the Office of the University Registrar, “acceptable reasons for absence from class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, and professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate. Absences from class for court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena) must be excused.”

For further information about the University of Florida’s attendance policy, please see the current Undergraduate Catalogue (http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationattendance.html).
**Academic Honesty**

Academic dishonesty, including cheating on exams and plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Any student engaging in such activities will be dealt with in accordance with University policy. It is your responsibility to know what constitutes plagiarism, and what the university policies are. If you have doubts, we please discuss with the professor immediately (after the infringement is too late). Please refer to the current Undergraduate Catalogue for more information on the Student Honor code (http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html). Students who have questions about these policies, should contact the undergraduate advisement center for additional information.

**Students with Disabilities**

If you have a disability that may affect your performance in this class, you should contact the Dean of Students Office so that special arrangements can be made to accommodate you. It is your responsibility to do so at the beginning of the semester and to communicate directly with the professor during the first week of classes (or as soon as the disability occurs).

**Grading & Assessment**

Students are responsible for completing all readings for the topic in question prior to attending the class.

- **Midterms** (25% each = 50%) UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY
- **Participation** (incl. country perspectives/info) (15%) UNDERGRADUATE
- **Response papers** (3 x 10% each = 30%) GRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY
- **Discussion leadership** (2 x 10% each = 20%) GRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY
- **Final Paper** (35% UG/50% Grad) ALL STUDENTS (to be discussed in class)

**Grading Scale**

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<th>Score</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>94% - 100%</td>
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<td>90% - 93%</td>
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<td>87% - 89%</td>
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<td>84% - 86%</td>
<td>B</td>
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***PLEASE NOTE THAT THE INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MAKE CHANGES TO THIS SYLLABUS AS NEEDED DURING THE COURSE OF THE SEMESTER. AS MUCH ADVANCE WARNING AS POSSIBLE WILL BE PROVIDED TO STUDENTS. CHANGES CAN BE MADE TO THE SCHEDULE, ASSIGNED READING OR OTHER ASPECTS AS DEEMED NECESSARY. NO CHANGES WILL BE MADE TO GRADING SCALE OR CORE UF POLICIES AS NOTED ABOVE. ***

**REQUIRED BOOK & MATERIALS**


- Various articles and book chapters assigned below in detailed syllabus. These will be available online and/or in a reader (Target Copy) as needed.

  **Bold = required for all students, not in bold = required for graduate students only**
COURSE SCHEDULE AND REQUIRED READINGS

WEEK 1 (August 25 & 27): Introduction to Comparative Political Institutions and Approaches to Institutional Analysis I
- What is a political institution?
- How and why do we study political institutions?

Readings:
1. Chapter 1 “Elaborating the ‘New Institutionalism’” OHPI

WEEK 2 (September 1 & 3): (New) Approaches to Institutional Analysis and Change I (continued)
- New Institutionalist approaches
- Rational Choice Institutionalism
- Historical Institutionalism

Readings:
1. Chapter 2 “Rational Choice Institutionalism” OHPI
2. Chapter 3 “Historical Institutionalism” OHPI
4. Thelen, Kathleen, “How Institutions Evolve: Insights from Comparative Historical Analysis” Chapter 6 in Comparative Historical Analysis, James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer (Eds), Cambridge University Press, 2003

WEEK 3 (September 8 & 10): (Newer) Approaches to Institutional Analysis and Change II
- New paradigms – Constructivist approaches to political institutions

Readings:
1. Chapter 4 “Constructivist Institutionalism” OHPI
WEEK 4 (September 15 & 17): The State and State Building

- The origin and impact of the state
- Defining the state
- The legitimacy of the state

Readings:
1. Chapter 7 “The State and State Building” OHPI

WEEK 5 (September 22 & 24): Constitutions

- Types of Constitutions
- The impact of constitutions (constitutional rigidity)

Readings:
1. Chapter 11 “Analyzing Constitutions” OHPI
2. Chapter 12 “Comparative Constitutions” OHPI

WEEK 6 (September 29 & October 1): Federalism and Territorial Institutions

- What is federalism
- Types of federal political systems
- Territorial Political institutions

Readings:
1. Chapter 14 “Comparative Federalism” OHPI
6. Chapter 25 “Comparative Local Governance” OHPI (optional)

WEEK 7 October 6 & 8): REVIEW AND MIDTERM I

WEEK 8 (October 13 & 15): Citizens, Civil Society and Other Social Actors
- Citizens and citizenship
- The role of civil society
- Other Social actors

Readings:
1. Chapter 8 “Development of Civil Society” OHPI

WEEK 9 (October 20 & 22): Elections and Electoral systems
- Types of electoral systems
- The impact of electoral systems
- Changing electoral systems

Readings:
1. Chapter 29 “Electoral Systems” OHPI

WEEK 10 (October 27 & 29): Political Parties and Party Systems
- Types of political parties
- Roles of political parties
- Structure of political parties and party organizations

Readings:
1. Chapter 28 “Political Parties in and out of Legislatures” OHPI

WEEK 11 (November 3 & 5): Legislaturess
- Internal organization of legislatures
- Roles of legislatures
- Structural characteristics of legislatures

Readings:
1. Chapter 22 “Legislative Organization” OHPI
2. Chapter 23 “Comparative Legislative Behavior” OHPI
3. Chapter 24 “Bicameralism” OHPI

WEEK 12 (November 10 & 12): Executives
- Presidents vs. Prime Ministers
- The “core” Executive
- Types of executives

Readings:
1. Chapter 17 “Executives in Parliamentary Government” OHPI
2. Chapter 18 “Executives – The American Presidency” OHPI

WEEK 13 (November 17 & 19): Executive-Legislative Relations
- The character of legislative-executive relations (independence vs. M.A.D.)
- Coalitions, divided government and the impact of legislative-executive relations on the political system

Readings:
1. Chapter 18 “Comparative Executive-Legislative Relations” OHPI

**WEEK 14 (November 24): Judiciary**
- Types of legal systems
- The role of the Judiciary
- Constitutional courts

*Readings:*
1. Chapter 26 “Judicial Institutions” OHPI
2. Chapter 27 “The Judicial Process and Public Policy” OHPI

**WEEK 15 (December 1 & 3): REVIEW AND MIDTERM II**

**WEEK 16 (December 8 – last day): Conclusions**
- Wrap up and **FINAL PAPER DUE**