POLS 385: Comparative Political Institutions
Emory University
Summer 2014

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Course Description
This course will provide students with an introduction to comparative political institutions. We will focus on how the rules that organize political communities influence social cooperation, order, representation and rights. We will also introduce key institutions of the European Union and consider how they have influenced European politics. We will discuss the role of domestic and European institutions with policy-makers in Berlin, Madrid, and Budapest.

Grading
Your final grade is a weighted average of the following components:

Participation (15%) Active participation is essential to our course. I expect you to be present. I expect you to be prepared. Preparation means that you have read the assignment before class and that you are ready to discuss it. In the event that you do not understand all that you have read, you need to be prepared to ask questions. You will be assigned to two readings during the course. You will be responsible for posing three questions about the reading on the day that we discuss it.

Exam (30%) You will take a single exam for our course. It will be administered on June 19.

Site log (15%) Please keep a log of your experiences at each of the institutions we visit. After each visit, you should write a summary of the things you learned about the subject of the visit. These are intended to help you compile research for your final paper, so pay particular attention to anything relevant to your topic. For each visit, I will compile a few short readings designed to put the subject(s) of the visit in an institutional context. Use these, as well as what you've learned so far in the class, to formulate at least one question in advance you might ask the speaker(s) at the site. Record this prepared question(s) in your log, and you should attempt to ask these questions during our meetings for participation points. This can be an opportunity to ask questions that are relevant to your particular paper topic, or are otherwise interesting to you. I'll also accept, as part of your log, any notes you take during the site visits. Your entries should be no shorter than a few paragraphs. Your log is due July 5.

Final paper (40%) You will seek to answer a research question concerning comparative political institutions. You may use information derived from site visits (including your site log) course material, as well as outside material, including data that you uncover from established sources or which you construct yourself. The paper is due via email by July 31.
Readings

With one exception, all readings are available via your Emory library account or the course DVD. I will supplement the readings with lecture material when appropriate. I would like to ask that you purchase the following book. It will serve as a reference for us.


Incomplete Grades

No incomplete grades will be given unless there is an agreement between the instructor and the student prior to the end of the course. The instructor retains the right to determine legitimate reasons for an incomplete grade.

Integrity of Scholarship

I will follow the guidelines established by Emory College, which can be found at [http://www.college.emory.edu/current/standards/honor_code.html](http://www.college.emory.edu/current/standards/honor_code.html). In short, dont cheat. The benefits are small. Even if the probability of getting caught is tiny, the costs of getting caught are huge.

Students with Disabilities

Students requiring any type of academic accommodation should consult with the Office of Disability Services ([http://www.ods.emory.edu/](http://www.ods.emory.edu/) or 404-727-6016) and discuss the issue with the instructor within the first week of class.

Class schedule

**May 26: The Making of States**  What are states? How do they emerge? Are they solutions to great social dilemmas or are they protection rackets, as Tilly argues? Are they both?


Notes: Please read the Monkey Cage’s Crimea coverage. This is a good article to get you started ([http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/03/18/what-is-motivating-putin/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/03/18/what-is-motivating-putin/))

**May 27: Governance in Europe Conference**


Notes: Attend conference. Read Chapter 1 of Hix and Høyland.

**May 28: Governance in Europe Conference**  Notes: Attend morning session, 9:00 am to 11:00 am
May 29: Sachsenhausen

May 30: The EU (as a state?) An introduction to the institutions of the EU. Is the EU a state? If it is not, will it be?


   Notes: Read Chapter 6 of Hix and Høyland.

June 2: Pathologies of Preference Aggregation Democratic choice is about finding the group’s will by aggregating the preferences of many individuals? What are the properties of this process? Do particular rules for aggregating preferences do better than others at finding the group will?


   Notes: The Van Deemen paper is important and I’d like you to focus on it. The Kurrild-Klitgaard paper can be skimmed if you are pressed for time. That said, you must be familiar with the Condorcet paradox example given.

June 3: Visions of Democratic Representation How do electoral rules advance or undermine proportional or majoritarian visions of democratic representation? Is there such a thing as an ideal electoral system?


June 4: European Representation In what ways does the multi-tiered nature of representation in Europe influence the process by which parties attempt to advance group interests?


June 5: Europe and Crisis We will devote a class to considering how national political institutions have been affected by the 2008 global financial crisis. We also consider how national processes have influenced Europe’s response. We will take a particular interest in the experiences of Germany, Hungary and Spain.

   Note: Reading TBA
June 10: European Legal Architecture  Introduction to European and national legal systems.


Notes: Read Chapter 4 of Hix and Høyland.

June 11: The ECHR


Notes: Before class, check out the following sites: Council of Europe: (http://www.coe.int) and European Court of Human Rights (http://www.echr.coe.int/)

June 12: Seeking Pinochet: The Spanish application of universal jurisdiction and its consequences  We will devote a class to the legal concept of universal jurisdiction and consider its use and implications in the famous Spanish effort to seek the extradition of Augusto Pinochet.

Notes: Readings: Jiménez Cortés

June 16: Transitions  Why do democracies emerge? Why do they survive? Why do they collapse? Why do authoritarian states endure? This class introduces research on regime survival. Why was the fall of communism such a shock?


June 17: Democratic Backsliding  What does it mean for a democracy to slide toward authoritarianism? How do you know it when you see it? What explains it and what can be done about it? Why do some countries that are expected to slide nevertheless hold steady?


June 18: Course Review

June 19: Exam