

LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Political Science 2339, W2021

Intro to Comparative Politics

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COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, you will understand and explain the domestic politics of one industrialized and one industrializing state, in this case Germany and India.

You will be exposed to and learn about different elements of domestic politics (among others) such as:

- the constitutional framework;
- legislative and administrative processes, including budgets;
- political parties, political culture, structure and cleavages;
- political issues and cleavages;
- elections, electoral law and reform and voting behavior;
- economic, social, and other domestic policies; and
- media.

You will consider the following questions (among others):

- How and why do people vote?
- How does a leader of a political party do his job?
- What is the role of the media in elections?

You can find more information in the “Learner Outcomes” section below.

COURSE CONTENT

Using role play simulation and individual written exercises, the course content will answer the following questions for the two countries to be studied.

For the political system:

- What are the main characteristics?
- What are elements of its political culture?
- What is the type and composition of the executive branch? The legislative

- branch?
- How is society stratified? What are its social cleavages?
- What are the main issues?

For each political party:

- What is the party's name? Who is the party leader?
- Where is the party on the political spectrum? Who are the party's main supporters?
- What is the party's present standing in each of the legislative chambers? In public opinion?
- What is the party's electoral history?
- What are the party's main issues?
- What is the party's platform? Social? Health care? Domestic and foreign policy? National Security?

For the electoral process:

- What is the type of electoral process? When is the next election?
- What is the length of the term in the upper house? The lower house? The executive?
- How many ridings are represented in the upper house? The lower house?

Using instructor-generated worksheets, political analysis will allow you to answer the following questions:

- Who are the significant political actors in the country, individuals or groups?
- How does the analyst distinguish between significant and insignificant actors?
- What influence do various actors have on a particular action?

TEXTS AND READINGS

- Readings as indicated on course calendar on Courselink (COURSELINK), to be retrieved through Zotero;
- *Ten Core Worksheets*, by Laure Paquette, available on COURSELINK;
- extra material on reserve or on COURSELINK; and
- all available relevant material, and supplementary and further supporting information found through your own research.

COURSE FORMAT

To support your learning the Course Content, you will be provided with:

- classroom instruction;
- access to research materials and instructor-prepared worksheets;
- opportunities to participate in role-playing exercises; and
- individual and group written assignments.

TYPICAL COURSE SCHEDULE

NOTE: THIS COURSE SCHEDULE MAY CHANGE BECAUSE OF HOLIDAY SCHEDULES, UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES OR OTHER REASONS WITHOUT NOTICE. Periodic topical talks from the librarians at Paterson Library is part of the course. Consult the course calendar available on COURSELINK for details.

Week 1-2	Introduction to the course structure and requirements, theory and history of comparative politics
Week 3	Research
Weeks 4-6	Role play simulation I
Week 7	Research
Week 8-11	Role play simulation II
Week 12	Skills grid workshop

LEARNER OUTCOMES

In this course, you will learn:

- ***independent critical thinking*** through the use of research and written assignments;
- ***social awareness*** by requiring that you know the social and environmental policies of the countries studied, how those policies are advocated by different political parties, and how it affects voting behavior; and
- ***leadership*** through the team work required of role play simulations.

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- ***collect authoritative information about*** a political party of an industrialized liberal democracy and an industrializing liberal democracy;
- ***identify*** its history, position on the political spectrum, main supporters, standing in the legislative and executive branches, and its economic, social and other policies;
- ***identify and assess*** the mains issues in the polity, elements of political culture, social cleavages and other political characteristics;
- ***identify*** the type of electoral system and process for each branch;
- ***distinguish*** between significant and insignificant political actors, and what influence each wields;
- ***apply*** these skills research and analyze political parties and election campaigns.

GRADING

COMPONENT	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL MARK
Role Play Simulation I Test, 2	50
Role Play Simulation II presentations and	50
Bonus Assignment: Skills Grid	Up to +5% of final grade
TOTAL	100

In general, the instructor awards grades on assignments and presentations on the following criteria:

- The student did an excellent job: 8/10
- When reading the student's work, the instructor learns something: 9/10
- The student's work is better than the instructor could have produced: 10/10

ASSESSMENT AND ROLE OF THE INSTRUCTOR

I believe that you learn only through what you yourself say, do, write or read, so I will use classroom time as much as possible to help you learn what you cannot learn any other way on your own. For more about my approach to teaching, background information is available in Annex 1: Scholarly Foundations of Course Delivery.

My responsibilities on this course are to:

- design the course and course requirements;
- set clear expectations for you to meet;
- coach you during your course work (developing strategies, role plays);
- help you prepare for components listed in the "Grading" section above, as well as exams and classroom participation; and
- resolve any conflicts or answer any questions regarding student activities in the course.

My performance is assessed through:

- formal student evaluations done at the end of the course;
- ongoing monitoring of your performance and that of other students in the class in all your work.

I commit to:

- ongoing reflection on my practice as a teacher;
- creativity, innovation and experimentation in the classroom;
- taking chances and making mistakes while I try to find the best way for you to learn; and
- being accountable to you and other students regarding these commitments.

IF YOUR WORK IS LATE...

If there is no date stamp each page of any late assignment (available from the Department secretary or from the Lakehead University Security Services office), the applicable date/time penalties will be assessed based on when I receive the assignment.

Late penalties are as follows:

- 50 percentage points deducted for submissions up to 24 hours late;
- 100 percentage points deducted for later;

ONLY if I have not completed grading for all assignments handed in. Once all assignments are handed in are graded, I will not accept late assignments.

Less participation in class work will result in a lower participation grade. However, if you are responsible for a significant task as part of group work, and you do not fulfill that task, you will fail the course.

CHEATING

When you registered at Lakehead University, you agreed to follow the University's *Code of Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures* (you can find a version online here <http://policies.lakeheadu.ca/policy.php?pid=60>, but it's your responsibility to ensure if this is the most up-to-date version). Handing in any work under your name where you are not the author (either by yourself or part of a group) is considered academic fraud.

Handing in the same piece of work, or a significant part of the same piece, for more than one course without the written permission of the professors or departments concerned is considered academic fraud. Any professor who discovers academic fraud and does not apply for sanctions under the Procedures is negligent in his/her professional obligations.