

**2053-3: Introduction to Comparative Politics**  
**MWF: 2:30 – 3:20pm.**  
**Location: 116 Stubbs**

**Instructor:** Dr. Yann Kerevel  
**Office:** Stubbs 230

**Office Hours:** MW 3:30 – 4:30pm or by appt.  
**Email:** ykerev1@lsu.edu

**Course overview:**

Comparative politics is more than just the study of foreign countries, it is an approach designed to answer interesting questions about the world. By studying and comparing nations, we can better understand how governments function and how to develop useful generalizations about complex political phenomena. At the same time, comparison also helps us understand our own political system better, and helps us evaluate other potential political arrangements. The bulk of the course is dedicated to the study of democracies, dictatorships and the transitions between these two types of regimes. We will also spend some time exploring how different political institutions influence economic development. The final part of course will ask you to then apply the material learned throughout the course as you develop a new constitution for an authoritarian country undergoing a transition to democracy.

**Required texts:**

All readings will be provided in PDF format on Moodle.

<u>Components</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Grading Scale</u>	
Class Participation/Homework	80	485-500	A+
Exam 1	50	465 - 484	A
Exam 2	50	450 - 464	A-
Exam 3	50	435 - 449	B+
World Values Survey Assignments	120	415 - 434	B
Final Paper & Simulation	150	400 - 414	B-
Total	500	385 - 399	C+
		365 - 384	C
		350 - 364	C-
		335 - 349	D+
		315 - 334	D
		300 - 314	D-
		0 - 299	F

**Attendance:** I expect students to attend all classes as part of the normal learning process. If you miss a class, please contact one of your classmates to find out what you missed. Please do not email me asking what you missed in class.

**Participation:** In-class participation is a major part of this course and will be taken into consideration in the calculation of your final grade. For in-class simulations and other activities, I will take attendance to record your participation. I may also ask you to complete short assignments based on class activities. If you fail to attend a class and you miss one of these assignments, you

cannot make it up.

**Exams:** There will be three exams throughout the semester that relate to the readings, lectures and videos. The exams are not cumulative. Prior to each exam I will provide you with a study guide. All exams must be taken on the specified date. If you have a DOCUMENTED illness, emergency or excused absence on the date of an exam, you may take an alternate exam during the scheduled final exam period.

**Final Paper and Constitutional Convention Simulation:** At the end of the course you will be provided with a prompt to develop a 4-5 page proposal for a new constitution for a fake country. The paper should draw on the material learned in the course along with outside readings to defend your proposal. The proposal is due on November 30<sup>th</sup>. During the final week of the course we will then simulate a constitutional convention as the entire class then attempts to agree on a single constitution. Students who do not come to class with a proposal on 11/30 will not be able to participate in the simulation. After the simulation is completed, you will be expected to write a 2-3 page reflection on the simulation experience. The reflection is due on the specified day and time of the final exam period.

**World Values Survey Assignments:** Throughout the course you will have the opportunity to examine how the attitudes and behaviors of people in the United States compare to those of other countries. At the beginning of the course I will introduce you to a public opinion data set with survey data from over 50 countries. I will teach you some very basic skills that will allow you to draw information from this very large data set using STATA. I will also show you how to create some tables and graphs within Excel to present this information. For each assignment you will be given a general question. To answer the question you must compare 3 different countries of your choice to the United States and present your answer in tables and graphs. There will be 3 assignments like this throughout the semester. We will be able to work on some of these assignments in class, but you will need to complete the majority of the assignments on your own time.

**Students requiring special accommodation:** Louisiana State University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments is requested to speak with the Disability Services and the instructor, as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. This publication/material is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact the Disability Services, 115 Johnston Hall, (225)578-5919.

**General Statement on Academic Integrity:** Louisiana State University adopted the Commitment to Community in 1995 to set forth guidelines for student behavior both inside and outside of the classroom. The Commitment to Community charges students to maintain high standards of academic and personal integrity. All students are expected to read and be familiar with the LSU Code of Student Conduct and Commitment to Community, found online at [www.lsu.edu/saa](http://www.lsu.edu/saa). It is your responsibility as a student at LSU to know and understand the academic standards for our community.

Students who are suspected of violating the Code of Conduct will be referred to the Office of Student Advocacy and Accountability. For undergraduate students, a first academic violation could result in a zero grade on the assignment or failing the class and disciplinary probation until

graduation. For a second academic violation, the result could be suspension from LSU. For graduate students, suspension is the appropriate outcome for the first offense.

**Plagiarism and Citation Method:** As a student at LSU, it is your responsibility to refrain from plagiarizing the academic property of another and to utilize appropriate citation methods for all coursework. Ignorance of the citation method is not an excuse for academic misconduct. Remember there is a difference between paraphrasing and quoting and how to properly cite each respectively. If you have questions regarding what is appropriate, please consult with the library's tutorials on avoiding plagiarism and proper citation formats (links are also provided on the course Moodle page).

### **Lectures and Readings:**

All assigned readings **MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE ATTENDING CLASS**. I reserve the right to alter specific readings or the timing of certain lectures, but I will announce any changes in class or through email with sufficient advance notice.

### **Week 1: Democratic Regimes**

Aug 24: Introduction to course

Aug 26: Schmitter and Karl. 1991. "What Democracy is... and is Not."

Aug 28: Samuels. 2013. "Democratic Political Regimes"

### **Week 2: Models of Democracy**

Aug 31: Lijphart. 2012. *Patterns of Democracy*, Chapters 2-3.

Sept 2: Parliamentary coalition simulation

Sept 4: Pereira, Power, and Raile. 2008. "Coalitional Presidentialism and side payments: explaining the Mensalão Scandal in Brazil."

### **Week 3: Models of Democracy**

Sept 7: LABOR DAY, NO CLASS

Sept 9: Mainwaring. 1993. "Presidentialism, Multipartyism, and Democracy: the Difficult Combination."

Sept 11: Bleich. 2013. France case study

### **Week 4: Models of Democracy**

Sept 14: Hale. 2010. "The Uses of Divided Power."

Sept 16: exam #1

Sept 18: electoral rules simulation #1

### **Week 5: Electoral Systems**

Sept 21: Denmark. 2001. "Choosing MMP in New Zealand."

Sept 23: electoral rules simulation #2

Sept 25: World Values Survey lab day (meet in Stubbs 102)

### **Week 6: Electoral Systems**

Sept 28: World Values Survey lab day (meet in Stubbs 102)

Sept 30: Carey and Reynolds. 2011. "The Impact of Election Systems"

Oct 2: World Values Survey lab day (meet in Stubbs 102)

**Week 7: Federalism & Ethnicity**

Oct 5: Stepan. 1999. "Federalism and Democracy: Beyond the U.S. Model."

Oct 7: Stuligross and Varshney. 2002. "Ethnic Diversities, Constitutional Designs, and Public Policies in India."

Oct 9: Ghai. 2002. "Constitutional Asymmetries: Communal Representation, Federalism, and Cultural Autonomy."

**Week 8: Gender Quotas**

Oct 12: Bruhn. 2013. "Whores and lesbians: political activism, party strategies, and gender quotas in Mexico."

Oct 14: Kerevel and Atkeson. 2013. "Explaining the Marginalization of Women in Legislative Institutions."

Oct 16: Exam #2

**Week 9: Authoritarian Regimes**

Oct 19: World Values Survey lab day (meet in Stubbs 102)

Oct 21/23: Bueno de Mesquita & Smith. 2011. *The Dictator's Handbook*, excerpt

**Week 10: Authoritarian Regimes**

Oct 26/28: Mertha. 2013. China case study

Oct 30 FALL BREAK, NO CLASS

**Week 11: Regime Change**

Nov 2: Stepan and Robertson. 2003. "An Arab More than a Muslim Electoral Gap."

Nov 4: Shehata. 2011. "The Fall of the Pharaoh."

Nov 6: Regime change simulation

**Week 12: Economic Development**

Nov 9: World Values Survey lab day (meet in Stubbs 102)

Nov 11/13: Acemoglu and Robinson. 2012. *Why Nations Fail*, excerpt

**Week 13: Constitutional Engineering**

Nov 16: Lijphart. 2004. "Constitutional Design for Divided Societies."

Dawisha and Dawisha. 2003. "How to Build a Democratic Iraq"

Nov 18: Younis. 2011. "Set up to fail: Consociational political structures in post-war Iraq, 2003-2010."

Nov 20: Constitutional convention simulation

**Week 14: 3<sup>rd</sup> Exam**

Nov 23: Exam #3

Nov 25/27 – THANKSGIVING, NO CLASS

**Week 15: Constitutional Convention Simulation**

Nov 30 – Dec 4: simulation

**Final Papers Due:** Wednesday, 12/9, 5:30-7:30pm