
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

CREDIT UNITS: 3 UNITS

IRL 3000: COMPARATIVE POLITICAL SYSTEMS

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course seeks to help students analyze different kinds of political systems, including federal and unitary, parliamentary and presidential systems. The course also examines mechanisms within these systems including party politics and electoral systems. Emphasis will be placed on the political systems of the United States of America, Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia, China, Japan, South Africa, Saudi Arabia and Kenya.

1.1 Prerequisite: IRL 2000- Analysis of contemporary state systems; inquiry into national power, national interests, foreign policy and decision making, foreign trade issues, use of force, conflict resolution, and international organizations.

2. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The objective of the course is to introduce students to political systems across the world. By the end of the course, students shall be able to discourse fluently and knowledgeably about political systems. Students shall also have acquired a body of knowledge on differences between states and their systems.

3. COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to;

- Explain concepts and theories in comparative politics and how they relate to International Relations.
- Be able to produce quality research papers using appropriate research methodology for International Relations.
- Be able to deliver quality presentations and participate well in class by analyzing and responding critically to information.
- Critically analyze the similarities and differences between the countries we study in depth.
- Understand and evaluate how states politically respond to threats and opportunities to their national interests and form policies in response.
- Apply understanding of comparative political systems to analyze countries we have and haven't studied in depth; apply understanding of comparative political systems to explain issues in International Relations.

4. LINK TO PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES (PLOs):

Comparative Political Systems is linked to the following International Relations PLOs:

- Explain concepts and theories in International Relations
- Explain and use research methodology in International Relations
- Collect, collate, analyze and respond critically to information

- Critically analyze the dynamics of world politics
- Identify threats and opportunities to national strategic interests, and formulate policies in response
- Apply understanding of a global, multi-cultural and complex interconnected world to explain and predict issues in International Relations

COURSE OUTLINE:

Week 1:

a. learning outcome: the student should be able to

- explain what a state is
- define state, nation, political system...

b. The state

- Introduction to the course
- What is a state?
- Types of states

c. Readings: Newton, Kenneth and Jan W. Van Deth. *Foundations of comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern world*. Cambridge University Press. New York, 2005. pp.1-20

Week 2:

a. learning outcome: the student should be able to

- define democracy
- explain democratic states

b. The Democratic states

i. Great Britain

c. Readings: Newton, Kenneth and Jan W. Van Deth. *Foundations of comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern world*. Cambridge University Press. New York, 2005. pp.22-37

Week 3:

a. learning outcome: the student should be able to

- explain what constitutions are
- explain the functions of constitutions
- distinguish between presidential and parliamentary systems

b. Constitutions, Parliamentary and Presidential systems

i. United States of America

c. Readings: Newton, Kenneth and Jan W. Van Deth. *Foundations of comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern world*. Cambridge University Press. New York, 2005. pp.39-71

Week 4:

a. learning outcome: the student should be able to

- define government
- identify the levels of government
- explain policy making and legislative processes

b. Levels of government, federalism

- Legislative and executive branches
- Germany**

c. Readings: Newton, Kenneth and Jan W. Van Deth. *Foundations of comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern World*. Cambridge University Press. New York, 2005. pp. 72-115

Week 5:

a. learning outcome: the student should be able to

-explain the role and power of bureaucrats

b. Bureaucracy

i. France

c. *Readings:* Newton, Kenneth and Jan W. Van Deth. *Foundations of comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern World*. Cambridge University Press. New York, 2005. pp. 117-130

Week 6:

a. learning outcome: the student should be able to

- explain what influences political behavior and culture
- explain the determinants of pressure groups work and influence

b. Citizen political behavior and political cultures

Pressure groups and social movements

i. South Africa

c. *Readings:* Newton, Kenneth and Jan W. Van Deth. *Foundations of comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern World*. Cambridge University Press. New York, 2005. pp. 133-179

Week 7:

- **MIDTERM EXAM**

Week 8:

a. learning outcome: the student should be able to

- explain the role and impact of media in democracies
- explain voting patterns

b. Media, Elections and Voting

i. Kenya

c. *Readings:* Newton, Kenneth and Jan W. Van Deth. *Foundations of comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern world*. Cambridge University Press. New York, 2005. pp.181-219

Week 9:

a. learning outcome: the student should be able to

- explain the role of political parties in democracies

b. Political parties

i. Japan

c. *Readings:* Newton, Kenneth and Jan W. Van Deth. *Foundations of comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern world*. Cambridge University Press. New York, 2005. pp.221-237

d. group 1 & 2 presentation –Britain and USA

Week 10:

a. learning outcome: the student should be able to

- define ideology
- explain the main democratic ideologies

b. Political ideologies

i. Russia

c. *Readings:* Newton, Kenneth and Jan W. Van Deth. *Foundations of comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern world*. Cambridge University Press. New York, 2005. pp.239-260

d. group 3 & 4 presentation- Germany and France

Week 11:

a. learning outcome: the student should be able to

- explain the phases of policy development

b. Decision making

i. Nigeria

c. *Readings:* Newton, Kenneth and Jan W. Van Deth. *Foundations of comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern world*. Cambridge University Press. New York, 2005. pp. 263-283

d. **group 5 & 6 presentation- South Africa and Kenya**

Week 12:

a. **learning outcome: the student should be able to**

-explain the tasks of governments

b. **Defence, security, and Welfare**

i. China

c. *Readings:* Newton, Kenneth and Jan W. Van Deth. *Foundations of comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern world*. Cambridge University Press. New York, 2005. pp. 284-327

d. **group 7 & 8 presentation- Japan and Russia**

Week 13:

a. **learning outcome: the student should be able to**

-analyze the significance of the state in an increasingly globalized world

b. **Future of the democratic states**

i. Review

c. *Readings:* Newton, Kenneth and Jan W. Van Deth. *Foundations of comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern world*. Cambridge University Press. New York, 2005. pp. 329-344

d. **group 9 & 10 presentation- Nigeria and China**

Week 14:

FINAL EXAMINATIONS

RESEARCH TOPICS (TERM PAPER) (PICK ONE)

1. Is democratic government always better than the alternatives? (Use case studies)
2. The "resource curse" how does it affect governments? (use case studies)
3. Discuss the role of non-governmental organisations, think tanks and pressure groups in policy processes. (use case studies)

University policy

Students are expected attend all the sessions regularly and complete all the readings in a timely fashion as specified by the class schedule. An attendance roster is kept and students are expected to attend all sessions on time and as scheduled. Prior permission **MUST** be obtained from the instructor if a class is to be missed for circumstances beyond the student's control. **As per the university rules, any student who misses more than seven (7) sessions will receive an F grade.**

NB: Please switch off your mobile phones during class and exam time.

ASSIGNMENTS SPECIFICATIONS: Times New Roman, font size 12, spacing 1.5, justify

Class/Group assignments

Students will be divided into groups and are expected to work with their group members on a case study that will be assigned by the instructor. Each presentation will be followed by class discussions and input from instructor. Students will be graded individually on how effectively they have mastered and communicated the subject matter to the class during their presentation. The group report is due on **Week 8, 4th March 2015.**

Individual assignment

Students will individually write a term paper (maximum 7 pages excluding title page, 1.5 spacing, and Times New Roman font size 12). The **due date** for the **Term Paper** is **WEEK 10 (18th March 2015)** and should be submitted through blackboard. The essay should be analytical in nature.

QUIZ – WEEK 6, 18th February 2015

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

The course will be conducted through lectures, interactive class discussions, group work and presentations.

EXAMINATION REGULATIONS

I. INVIGILATION

1. The supervisor should take the following steps prior to the commencement of the examination:
 - i) Ensure that there are no materials on the board, walls, floor or furniture that might facilitate cheats.
 - ii) Ensure that the seating plan does allow sufficient distance between candidates.
2. Candidates will be allowed into the examination room no earlier than 5 minutes before the commencement of the examination.
3. Only candidates with valid USIU student identity cards will be admitted into the examination room. A candidate is required to wear his or her identity tag throughout the duration of the examination. The invigilator should check the cards to ensure that they are authentic and that nothing is scribbled on them.
4. As candidates enter the examination room they must surrender the following before they take up their seats:
 - * Bags
 - * Overcoats
 - * Caps/hats
 - * Books
 - * Notes
 - * Papers
 - * Cellphones
 - * Calculators
 - * Scientific watches
 - * Portable audios and
 - * any other objects that might be used for cheating
5. Calculators, log tables and geometrical sets shall not be allowed unless otherwise directed by the instructor.
6. The invigilator reserves the right to confiscate any unauthorized materials.
7. No candidate will be allowed into the examination room 20 minutes after the commencement of the examination.
8. No candidate will be permitted to leave the examination room while the examination is in progress except in cases of emergency. Such emergencies will not include bathroom visits.
9. Invigilators must ensure that absolute silence is observed in the examination room.
10. At least 5 minutes prior to the commencement of the examination invigilators will:
 - (i). Take a roll call using the official class list.
 - (ii). Send away any student whose name is not on the official class list.
 - (iii). Ask the candidates to surrender any unauthorized material.
 - (iv). Draw the attention of the candidates to the consequences of cheating in an exam
 - (v). Draw the attention of the candidates to the instructions on the front cover of the answer books and in the question papers.
11. Once the question paper is issued an invigilator must be alert and in attendance until the scripts are collected.

Below are some of the cheating methods in order of popularity:-

- (i). Swapping and substitution of answer sheets or booklets
- (ii). Swapping question papers
- (iii). 'microchips' or condensed/minimized notes smuggled using devices such as

- * ball pens
- * pencil pouches
- * shoes
- * ties
- * shirt/blouse sleeves
- * limbs, especially palms, arms and thighs
- * chairs
- * calculators (especially sliding)
- * cell phones
- * spectacle cases
- * walls and roof
- * walkman

- (iv). Stealing a glance at other candidate's answers.
- (v). Feigned bathroom 'emergencies'
- (vi). Candidate substitution
- (vii). Whispers and gestures.

12. There must be at least one invigilator for every 40 students in an examination room.

13. To thwart cheats, the invigilators should:

- (i). Monitor the candidates continuously.
- (ii). Never bring reading material or own work to the examination room.
- (iii). Never return assignments, quizzes or term papers during the exam.
- (iv). Walk around the room from time to time, inspecting pencil sets and other items that could be used to hide 'microchips'. Invigilation from the back is particularly effective in a room with many candidates and having 2 or more invigilators.

14. If an invigilator directly observes or otherwise determines (based on other evidence) that an act of cheating or misconduct has been committed or attempted s/he should take the following steps:

- (i). Caution the candidate(s) involved that they are suspected of cheating.
- (ii). Confiscate or take note of the **suspected** material but allow the candidate to continue with the examination.
- (iii). Make a description of the suspected misconduct with specific date, time and circumstances and witnesses.
- (iv). Send the report to the Dean with a recommendation as to whether the suspected misconduct is a serious violation or an infraction under USIU academic code of conduct.

II. MISSING EXAMINATIONS

In the past some students have failed to present themselves for scheduled examinations without good cause. All students must ensure that they familiarise themselves with the examination timetable so as to report for each examination at the appointed time and place.

THERE ARE NO MAKEUPS FOR MISSED OR FAILED EXAMS.

However, in the event of serious illness, bereavement or accident the victim should report the matter to the appropriate Dean and instructor as promptly as possible. Only those cases reported immediately and supported with evidence will be considered.

COURSE EVALUATION

Attendance/participation	- 5%
QUIZ	- 10% WEEK 6 (18th MARCH 2015)
Group work / presentation	- 15% WEEK 9 - 13 ON WEDNESDAY (report deadline WEEK 8/ 4TH MARCH 2015)
Term paper	- 20% WEEK 10 (18TH MARCH 2015)
Mid-Term Examination	- 20%

Final Examination
Total

- 30%
100%

GRADING SYSTEM

A	90 - 100
A-	87 - 89
B+	84 - 86
B	80 - 83
B-	77 - 79
C+	74 - 76
C	70 - 73
C-	67 - 69
D+	64 - 66
D	62 - 63
D-	60 - 61
F	0 - 59

Course Texts:

1. Newton, Kenneth and Jan W. Van Deth. Foundations of comparative Politics: Democracies of the Modern world. Cambridge University Press. New York, 2005.
2. McCormick, John. Comparative Politics in Transition. 4th edition 2004