

Political Science and International Relations Programme

POLS 114: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Trimester One, 2 March to 1 July 2009

What can we learn by comparing the politics and government of different countries? In this course we tackle two of the central areas of debate in comparative politics: why do some states have authoritarian regimes and others have democratically elected governments, and why are some states strong while others are weak? We will examine competing explanations for regime type and state strength including economic, cultural and institutional theories of state development. We will then apply these theories to eight case studies: Botswana, Colombia, Iran, Ireland, North Korea, Spain, Turkey and Zimbabwe. Students will undertake comparative analysis of two additional states in the written assignments for this course.

Lectures:	Monday, Wednesday, Friday 12-12:50 in MCLT 101
Tutorials:	One hour per week, sign up at https://signups.victoria.ac.nz
Coordinator:	Hilary Pearse
Contact:	By email at Hilary.Pearse@vuw.ac.nz or telephone 463 9495
Office hours:	Wednesday 1-3 in MY 506 or by appointment.
Required texts:	<i>POLS 114 Coursebook 2009</i> available from Student Notes Heywood, Andrew. <i>Politics</i> . Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 3rd edition, 2007.
Workload:	12 hours per week, including class contact hours
Assessment:	Two 1500-2000 word essays, each worth 25% of grade Final three hour examination worth 50% of grade
Mandatory requirements:	Submission of both essays in paper and electronic format Submission of final examination script
Course website:	http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz This site will be used for communication of all additional information about the course e.g. marking criteria for assignments

Purchasing course texts

The Heywood textbook can be purchased new for \$79.95 or used from Vicbooks. Vicbooks is located on the top floor of the Student Union Building, Kelburn Campus. Be sure to check out sales of second hand books on campus in the first week of trimester. Although the 3rd edition is preferred, the second edition is fine too and will be cheaper. There are also multiple copies of the Heywood text in the library (Rankine Brown building, Kelburn campus).

The *POLS 114 Coursebook* is for sale from the Student Notes Shop on the ground floor of the Student Union Building.

You can order textbooks and student notes online at www.vicbooks.co.nz or you can email an order or enquiry to enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz. Books can be couriered to customers or they can be picked up from the shop the day after placing an order online.

Bookstore opening hours are 8.00 am – 6.00 pm, Monday – Friday during term time (closing at 5.00 pm in the holidays), 10.00 am – 1.00 pm Saturdays. Phone: 463 5515

Learning Objectives

Knowledge

Students passing this course will

- 1) classify and compare political systems according to regime type and state strength;
- 2) assess the strengths and weaknesses of three alternative theories of state development;
- 3) understand the purpose and limitations of the comparative method and use it in their own research to identify cause and effect;
- 4) be familiar with the political regimes of ten country cases and be able to apply this knowledge as evidence to support theoretical arguments;
- 5) recognise that the central concepts of comparative politics are being constantly challenged and redefined; and
- 6) understand that the processes of classification, comparison and analysis are subjective and the results of our research are debatable rather than definitive.

Skills

Students passing this course will

- 1) be able to read original political research in order to identify the central arguments and key piece of supporting evidence;
- 2) develop their capacity to question as they read, rather than accepting arguments and evidence without challenge;
- 3) distil and synthesise definitions of key concepts and interpretations of central ideas from lectures, tutorials and readings;
- 4) conduct independent research on their own country cases; and
- 5) construct persuasive arguments and express these clearly and concisely.

Graduate Attributes

As with all POLS and INTTP courses, learning objectives of this course contribute to the attainment of specific attributes in the areas of critical thinking, creative thinking, communication and leadership. Please consult page 10 of the Programme Prospectus 2009 for more details or on our website <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/pols/>

Course Format

The content of this course is divided into eight topics, most of which include both theory and a country case study to illustrate the application of the theory. Lectures will introduce you to the key theoretical concepts and provide an overview of the case studies. Tutorials will focus on the course readings and provide more opportunity for discussion and interaction. Questions to think about as you read in preparation for the tutorial will be available each week on Blackboard.

Course Assessment

The assignments in this course require you to apply concepts from the readings and lectures to country case studies of your own selection. Using these abstract ideas to analyse countries that we are interested in helps us to understand both the political systems of the country and the ideas themselves more clearly. The final three hour examination will consist of essay questions that test your understanding of these ideas and your capacity to evaluate them using evidence from the eight country case studies covered in lectures. This exam will take place during the examination period, 8 June – 1 July 2009 (exact date, time and venue TBA).

Essay One: Due Monday 30 March at 12 noon

Select ONE modern state that is NOT one of the eight states that we study in this course (Botswana, Colombia, Iran, Ireland, North Korea, Spain, Turkey, Zimbabwe).

Would you classify your country as a weak or strong state? Why?

Would you classify it as a democratic or authoritarian regime? Why? (1,500 words)

Essay Two: Due Monday 18 May at 12 noon

Select ONE of the three causal factors we have studied in this course (economic development OR political institutions OR political culture).

Select TWO modern states to compare. One state should be more democratic than the other. You can select any two states EXCEPT the eight that we study in this course (Botswana, Colombia, Iran, Ireland, North Korea, Spain, Turkey, Zimbabwe).

Does your selected causal factor help to explain the different levels of democracy in the two states you have chosen to compare? Why or why not? (1500-2000 words)

Submission of essays

Essays must be submitted in TWO forms.

A **paper copy** of the essay with the Programme Cover Sheet attached must be **submitted in class at the beginning of the lecture** on the due date. The cover sheet is available on Blackboard if you prefer to print and complete it when you print your essay. Alternatively, cover sheets and a stapler will be available at the beginning of the lecture.

In addition an **electronic version** of the essay must also be submitted to **turnitin.com** by 12 noon on the due date. You will need to submit the electronic version before you come to the lecture to hand in the paper copy of the essay.

Turnitin instructions

To submit your essay electronically, you will first need to enrol in the class on turnitin.

Go to <http://www.turnitin.com>

Click on 'enrol in a class'

Enter the class/section ID: 2620915

Enter the enrolment password: pols114

A screen with the name of this course and the name of the instructor should appear

Click on the link: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Click on the icon under the word submit (a piece of paper with a green arrow)

Choose the 'file upload' from the dropdown box

Enter your first and last names and the title of the essay

Click on browse, then double click on the electronic file containing your essay

Check that the file path for your essay is now in the box next to the browse button

Click on the submit button

Penalties for late submission

Students will be penalised for late submission of essays – **a deduction of 5% for the first day late, and 2% per day thereafter, up to a maximum of 8 days**. Work that is more than 8 days late can be accepted for mandatory course requirements but will not be marked. However, penalties may be waived if there are valid grounds (for example, illness [presentation of a medical certificate will be necessary] or similar other contingencies). In all such cases, prior information will be necessary.

Return of assessed work

Essays are marked by your tutor and will be **passed back in your tutorial**. Any essays that have not been collected by the end of the semester will be available for collection from the lecturer. Examination scripts are marked by the lecturer. Exam scripts are not automatically returned to students but these can be requested at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Office on Level 4 of the Murphy Building.

Academic integrity and plagiarism

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

Statement on the use of Turnitin

Student work provided for assessment in this course will be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine <<http://www.turnitin.com>>. Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention tool which identifies material that may have been copied from other sources including the Internet, books, journals, periodicals or the work of other students. Turnitin is used to assist academic staff in detecting misreferencing, misquotation, and the inclusion of unattributed material, which may be forms of cheating or plagiarism. At the discretion of the head of School, handwritten work may be copy typed by the School and subject to checking by turnitin. You are strongly advised to check with your tutor or the course coordinator if you are uncertain about how to use and cite material from other sources. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted materials on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions will not be made available to any other party.

GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND STATUTES

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the *Victoria University Calendar* or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

This website also provides information for students in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates.

Date	Topic	Reading
2 March	Course overview	
4, 6, 9, 11 March	Strong states and weak states <i>Case study 1: Colombia</i>	Heywood chapter 5 Rotberg Bejarano and Pizarro
13, 16, 18, 20 March	Authoritarianism <i>Case study 2: North Korea</i>	Heywood chapter 2 Levitsky and Way Kihl
23, 25, 27 March	Democracy	Heywood chapter 4 Diamond
Monday 30 March: Essay One due by 5pm		
30 March, 1, 3, 6 April	Democratisation <i>Case study 3: Spain</i>	Huntington Gunther et al.
8, 27, 29 April, 1 May	Economic development and democratisation <i>Case study 4: Botswana</i>	Lipset Bauer and Taylor
10-26 April: Mid-trimester break		
4, 6, 8, 11 May	Political institutions <i>Case study 5: Zimbabwe</i>	Heywood chapters 15 & 17 Makumbe
13, 15, 20, 22 May	Political culture <i>Case study 6: Ireland</i>	Heywood chapter 10 Coakley
*Monday 18 May: Essay Two due by 5pm		
25, 27, 29 May, 1 June	Comparing states <i>Case study 7: Turkey</i> <i>Case study 8: Iran</i>	Baran Milani
3, 5 June	Course review	
8 June – 1 July: Exam period		