

POLS 373 FOUNDATIONS OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS
Introduction to Method, Theory and Issues in Comparative Politics
SPRING 2010

Instructor:	Timothy C. Lim	Days/Time:	TTH 4:20-6:00
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<p>Office Hours: • M, 4:30-5:30; T/Th, 6:15-7:30 and by appointment To schedule an appointment online, please go to my Yahoo! Groups page at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Lim_csla</p>			
<p>Instructional Web Site (CourseSite): http://instructional1.calstatela.edu/tclim</p>			
<p>Please Read! I use e-mail as a major means of communication. It is imperative, therefore, that I have your correct e-mail address. I will circulate an e-mail sign-up sheet on the first day of class and send out a “test” message in the first week. If you do not receive an e-mail message from me by the beginning of week 2, contact me immediately! Do not let several weeks—or most of the quarter—go by.</p>			

COURSE OVERVIEW

The primary aim of this class is to make you a “good comparativist” – i.e., someone who is able to use various intellectual or conceptual tools in the field of comparative politics to better analyze, understand and/or explain significant events and processes in various countries and societies throughout the world. These significant or “big” events and processes include democratization, state-building, ethnic and/or domestic conflict (including “terrorism”), national poverty and capitalist development. The utility of comparative politics, however, is not limited to analyzing big events or processes; indeed, a good comparativist will be able to apply his or her knowledge and skills to a wide range of problems and issues, both big and small and at all levels—from the local, to the national, to the global. Being a good comparativist, in this regard, means knowing how to think about and analyze issues in a systematic and “scientific” manner.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON FURLOUGHS

As most of you are aware, the CSU has imposed a mandatory furlough on all faculty, staff and administrators for the 2009-2010 academic year.

Each quarter, faculty are required to take six furlough days, some designated by the university and others “chosen” by the individual faculty member. I have decided to designate **May 6** and **May 27** as two of my furlough days. This means that two class sessions (or 10 percent of this course) will be cancelled. You are strongly advised to use these days, however, to review course material and to catch up with the readings.

Does being a good comparativist also require knowing a lot about different countries, societies, and peoples? On one level, the answer is clearly “yes.” Certainly, most academic comparativists are “experts” or specialists on particular countries, societies, and/or regions; more importantly, it is from this in-depth knowledge of particular places that the raw material, or empirical evidence, of much comparative analysis comes. For the purposes of this course, however, it is important to understand that prior knowledge of a specific place is not a prerequisite to doing well. Indeed, on another level, simply *knowing about* places is not enough; one must also know *how* country-specific knowledge can be used comparatively to gain a better understanding of the world around us. *This will be a main focus of our class.*

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With that in mind, in the first part of our course, we begin with an examination of several basic, but extremely important (methodological) questions: Why compare? How should we compare? And what can or should we compare? We also spend some time examining the major strategies of comparative analysis—the case study, two-unit comparisons, multiple-unit comparisons, and “mixed” designs. Next, we will examine three major theoretical traditions in comparative politics, which can be roughly divided into *rationalist*, *cultural* and *structural* approaches. *You will be expected to “apply” one or more of the comparative strategies and theoretical approaches in various assignments.*

In the second part of our course, we’ll explore several central questions in comparative politics explicitly using the same methods and approaches studied in part one. These questions include, among others: Why are poor countries poor? Why is East Asia rich? What makes a democracy? The examination of these questions will be tightly structured and designed to help you gain a deeper and more substantial understanding of comparative political analysis.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

IMPORTANT NOTE: *Be advised that I reserve the right to make **reasonable** changes to the course requirements and reading schedule. This includes but is not limited to adding or eliminating assignments and reallocating the course percentage of various assignments. Any changes, however, will be announced and discussed in class.*

The details and requirements for each component of course grading are as follows:

1. Attendance [10% of course grade]. Students are expected to attend and to participate in all scheduled class sessions. To encourage timely and consistent attendance, attendance will be graded: you start off with 200 points for attendance, but after each missed class session, points will be automatically deducted. Deductions will be made according to the following schedule:

- 1-2 missed sessions: 10 points per session (on 2nd missed class, score will drop to 180/200)
- 3-4 missed sessions: 20 points per session (on 4th missed class, score will drop to 140/200)
- 5-6 missed sessions: 30 points per session (on 6th missed class, score will drop to 80/200)
- 7 missed sessions: 40 points (score will drop to 40/200 points)
- 8 missed sessions (4.0 class meetings): **attendance score will drop to 0.0 points**

MAKE SURE you read and understand the grading requirements for this course! This will help avoid misunderstandings and problems later in the quarter. This is **your** responsibility.

Arriving *immediately* after roll has been taken will result in an automatic 3-point deduction; students who arrive **after the lecture has started** will receive an automatic 5-point deduction (the deduction will increase as more time passes). Students who leave class early will also be assessed a comparable penalty. **Please be advised:** *students who text, read non-course material, or otherwise willfully “tune out” of the class lectures and discussions may also receive a deduction of up to 15 points (or more, depending on the number of absences).* I don’t give warnings (although I may ask your name); I will simply deduct points. If you don’t want to be “in” class, don’t come to class. **Engaged attendance is required!**

- ☞ **If you arrive after roll has been taken, it is your responsibility to let the instructor know you arrived late.** You must do this during the break or at the end of the class period. If you wait until the following class meeting or later, you will **not** receive credit for attendance.

2. Quizzes [17.5% of course grade]. During the quarter, there will be up to 10 quizzes (perhaps more), most of which will be given on an **UNANNOUNCED** basis. The quizzes will be based on the assigned readings and/or previous lecture or lectures (be advised that any material covered *in* our lectures is fair

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game for the quiz, as is any material covered in previous readings). The quizzes are not meant to be difficult: they will be composed of fill-in-the-blank, true/false, and short answer questions. Each quiz will be worth between 5 and 10 points. **There will be no ABSOLUTELY make-up quizzes, even if you have a justifiable reason for missing class.** I will, however, drop your lowest score when calculating the overall quiz score at the end of the quarter. Quizzes, when they are given, will typically be distributed right at the beginning of each class session: this means that if you are late, you will have missed the quiz for that day and your score will be 0.0.

- All quizzes will be OPEN NOTE but you may NOT use your textbook or any material prepared by the instructor (e.g., PowerPoint slides). **YOU MAY NOT USE YOUR LAPTOP COMPUTER OR ANY ELECTRONIC DEVICE WHILE TAKING THE QUIZ.** I realize this is an inconvenience, but it is the only way I can ensure that students are not using additional material during the quiz. The solution is to **print your notes** before arriving in class.
- **Be advised!** I do not record quiz scores for students who leave class shortly after taking a quiz. To reiterate: regardless of your score, you will receive 0 points on the quiz for that day if you do not attend the bulk of the class and if you do inform me that you need to leave early.

3. In-class Exam (“30-minute Test”) [12.5% of course grade]. We will have one or two in-class, *closed note, closed book* examinations during the quarter. These exams will include quiz-type and short answer/essay questions.

4. Take-Home Essay Assignments [25% of course grade]. During the quarter you will have 2 take-home essay assignments. These assignments will be relatively short (approximately 2 single-spaced pages). Additional details will be discussed in class. The first essay will each be worth 10% of your course grade, and the second 15%.

5. Final Examination [35% of course grade]. The final examination will be cumulative and comprehensive. It will cover material from the *entire* book and any other material discussed/covered in class, and will be comprised of **two parts**. The first part will consist of short answer, fill-in-the-blank, true/false and multiple-choice questions (very similar to the questions you receive on the quizzes; in fact, many questions will be drawn directly from the quizzes). There will also be a number of short answer and/or short essay questions on the exam. The second part will be take-home. On the take-home section, you will be required to write a **short essay** that demonstrates your mastery of the key concepts, principles and frameworks of comparative politics. **Part I of the final examination is worth 20% of your course grade; Part II will be worth 20%**

GRADING. Grading will be *strictly* determined by a *weighted average* of the scores you receive on the requirements above. The scale is as follows:

A: 90 percent and above	B-: 76~79 percent	D+: 63~65 percent
A-: 87~89 percent	C+: 73~75 percent	D: 60~62 percent
B+: 84~86 percent	C: 70~72 percent	D-: 55~59 percent
B: 80~83 percent	C-: 66~69 percent	F: 54 and below

** Note: Scores may be adjusted upward depending on the overall distribution of class averages (e.g., if the top score in the class is 90.8%, that score may earn an “A”) • Scores that fall between two cut-off points (e.g. 89.3) will be rounded.*

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COURSE TEXT AND REQUIRED MATERIAL

The following book is **REQUIRED** for the course:


- Timothy Lim, *Doing Comparative Politics: An Introduction to Approaches and Issues* (Boulder: Lynner Rienner Publishers, 2006)
- Additional readings distributed via Professor Lim’s CourseSite

READING SCHEDULE

BE ADVISED: While I make an effort to stay on track with the reading schedule, the discussion-based nature of our class means that it is very likely we will get behind, sometimes significantly behind. In other words, the reading schedule is **SUBJECT TO CHANGE!**

Session 1 March 30	Introduction to Course: A Primer on Comparative Politics In our first meeting, we will conduct a thorough review of the syllabus and of the requirements of the course. During this class, we will have a short lecture and view an excerpt from the film, <i>Bowling for Columbine</i> , directed by Michael Moore. A short lecture/discussion will follow. Students who miss this class must view the film on their own time (a copy is available in the library or readily available in video stores) Reading: Lim, ch. 1, pp. 3-19 (note: <i>please read this chapter immediately following our class meeting; for the April 1st class, you will be responsible for this chapter as well as the two other assigned chapters</i>)
Session 2 April 1	The Comparative Method: An Introduction Reading: LIM, ch. 1, pp. 20-28
Session 3 April 6	The Comparative Method, <i>continued</i> Reading: LIM, ch. 2, pp. 31-62
Session 4 April 8	Evaluating Arguments from a Comparative Perspective Reading: John Stossel’s “Stupid in America” (online article) is available at http://abcnews.go.com/2020/Stossel/story?id=1500338 ; “What Makes Finnish Kids So Smart?” (<i>Wall Street Journal</i> article); “How They Do it Abroad” (<i>Time</i> magazine article). Both articles are available online (also available on my CourseSite at http://instructional1.calstatela.edu/tclim/S10_Courses/373_materials.htm) • During class, we will view Stossel’s “Stupid in America”; a discussion will follow
Session 5 April 13	Theory in Comparative Politics: A Primer Reading: LIM, ch. 3, pp. 65-79 (finish the section on rationality)  Be prepared for your first “30-minute test” (covering chapters 1 and 2 primarily, although basic questions on chapter 3 may also be included)
Session 6 April 15	Theory in Comparative Politics: Major Research Traditions Reading: Lim, ch. 3, pp. 79-93
Session 7	Theory in Comparative Politics: Major Research Traditions

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<p>April 20</p>	<p>Reading: McDoom, “Rwanda’s Ordinary Killers” (available on Coursesite— see link above for 373 Course Materials page) • <i>In reading this article, focus on identifying the theoretical and methodological elements; be prepared to discuss these elements in class; be prepared for a short essay quiz on this article.</i></p>
<p>Session 8 April 22</p>	<p><i>The Questions: Why are Poor Countries Poor?</i> Reading: LIM, ch. 4, pp. 97-113</p>
<p>Session 9 April 27</p>	<p><i>The Questions: Why are Poor Countries Poor?</i> During this class, we will watch excerpts from the film <i>Life and Debt</i> by Stephanie Black. A discussion will follow. If you miss today’s class, you will be responsible for viewing this video on your own (a copy is available in the library).</p>
<p>Session 10 April 29</p>	<p><i>The Questions: Why are Poor Countries Poor?</i> Reading: LIM, ch. 4, pp. 113-124</p>
<p>Session 11 May 4</p>	<p><i>The Question: Why is East Asia Rich?</i> During class, we will watch an excerpt from the documentary, <i>Asia Rising</i>. This film is <i>not</i> available in the library, so make every effort to attend class (it is also very likely one of your WebCT assignments will be partially based on the contents of this film) Reading: LIM, ch. 5, pp. 125-140</p>
<p>Session 12 May 6</p>	<p>Furlough Day • No class meeting</p>
<p>Session 13 May 11</p>	<p><i>The Questions: Why is East Asia Rich?</i> Reading: LIM, ch. 5, pp. 140-156</p> <p> Be prepared for your second “30-minute test” (covering chapters 3 and 4 (and parts of chapter 5.)</p>
<p>Session 14 May 13</p>	<p><i>The Questions: What Makes a Democracy?</i> Reading: LIM, ch. 6, pp. 157-184</p>
<p>Session 15 May 18</p>	<p><i>The Questions: What Makes a Democracy?</i> Reading: LIM, ch. 6, pp. 185-200</p>
<p>Session 16 May 20</p>	<p><i>The Questions: What Makes a Democracy?</i> Readings: Filiatreau, “Christian Faith, Nonviolence and Ukraine’s Orange Revolution”; and Philpott, “The Catholic Wave” (both articles available on Coursesite— see link above for 373 Course Materials page)</p>
<p>Session 17 May 25</p>	<p><i>The Questions: What Makes a Terrorist?</i> Reading: LIM, ch 7, pp. 203-215</p>
<p>Session 18 May 27</p>	<p><i>The Questions: What Makes a Terrorist?</i> Reading: LIM, ch. 7, pp. 215-231; and Panitch, “September 11 and the American Empire” (available on Coursesite— see link above for 373 Course Materials page)</p>

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Session 19 June 1	Furlough Day – <i>No class meeting</i>
Session 20 June 3	<i>The Questions: Comparative Politics and Globalization</i> <u>Reading:</u> LIM, ch. 9
Final Examination	The final exam is scheduled for Tuesday, December 8 at 10:45 a.m.