Instructor: Dr. Antonio Castanha  
Meeting Times: 19 de Enero – 10 de Mayo, MJ 2:30-3:50pm  
Office Hours: TBA, or email me to make an appointment: castanha@hawaii.edu

DESCRIPTION

This course provides an introduction to comparative politics by examining basic principles, concepts, theories and methodologies surrounding the study. Students will gain a firm understanding of the historical development of this subfield of political science as well as its important themes and contemporary issues and debates taking place. Some themes explored include analyses of political economy, the state, political culture and organizations, identity politics, the paradigm of development and dependency theory. The latter points will probe the political, cultural and economic reasons for the sharp disparity in global resource distribution and wealth that particularly affect “third world” and indigenous peoples. Students are encouraged to write comparatively on these themes and/or in terms of nation to nation relations.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

1) Understand the meaning of the political science subfield of comparative politics.
2) Know the relationship between political institutions and processes in regard to social and economic changes between countries.
3) Analyze theories and perspectives that have enhanced comparative politics.
4) Understand the different facets of government and complexities of political parties and systems.
5) Realize the function of the paradigm of development in relation to globalization policies and its effects especially on indigenous peoples and peoples of the global south.
6) Analyze and think critically in regard to functions and processes of comparative politics.
7) Apply these objectives and concepts to the case of Puerto Rico.

REQUIREMENTS / EVALUATION

1) Participation (10%) and Attendance (10%)  
   You are expected to attend class and participate in discussions. Classroom discussions will lead to group work, and vice versa. You must bring the book with assigned readings or print out and bring assigned readings from Moodle with you to class for discussion. Do not come to class late – this interrupts the class. Thus two tardies will equal one absence. If your situation warrants it, come and explain to me why you have to be late.
2) Assignments – Homework Questions, Summary/Reflection Papers, and Quizzes (30%)
You are expected to complete readings and assignments before class. “Homework Questions”
are to be answered in writing. However “Discussion Questions” are only for discussion in class.
Quizzes will be short answer type or asking for your opinion/analysis of a topic from specified
readings. Quizzes are scheduled and unscheduled.

3) Mid-Term Paper (3-5 pages) - 20%
Final Paper (3-5 pages) - 20%
You will write two short original papers for the course. The papers should reflect the themes
and concepts stressed in relation to the material discussed. You should choose topics you are
personally interested in and that have meaning in your lives. Papers should be three pages
minimum in length.

4) Final Presentation - 10%
You will give a 5-10 minute oral presentation on one of your papers, preferable the final paper.

PROCEDURES

*Política de acomodo - Los/as estudiantes que reciben servicios de Rehabilitación Vocacional
deben comunicarse con el profesor durante la primera semana de clases para tener conocimiento de
cualquier tipo de acomodo razonable pertinente y el equipo de asistencia necesario conforme con
las recomendaciones de la Oficina de Asuntos para las Personas con Impedimentos (OAPI) del
Decanato de Estudiantes de la UPR. También aquellos estudiantes con necesidades especiales que
requieren algún tipo de asistencia o acomodo deben comunicarlo al profesor para su conocimiento.
Tenga presente que el profesor no asume las responsabilidades de OAPI.

*Plagiarism - You must do your own work throughout the semester. Copying sentences “word-for-
word” from any particular source, in whole or in part, is not allowed. You must either paraphrase in
your own words or use quotation marks to express your points and ideas. A general rule is that no
more than four words can be used consecutively without quotes. Both paraphrased and quoted
material must be cited, with quoted material not making up more than 20 percent of a particular
assignment or paper. The recycling of papers (or submitting the papers of others) is of course
prohibited. Any of the above misfortunes can result in failure for the assignment, the course, or
disciplinary action that may include suspension or expulsion from the university. Please see the
“Reglamento de Estudiantes” for more information.

*All cellular phones and other devices must be turned off and put away unless directly related to the
material being studied.

*For help with English writing, you are encouraged to visit the tutoring center: Centro de
Competencia Lingüística (edificio ERA).

REQUIRED TEXTS

There is one textbook required for the course. It can be purchased at Librería Norberto González
(Ave. Ponce de León 1012), or online, at amazon.com for example.

**READINGS / MATERIAL**

The additional readings below will be made available on Moodle. The material and books listed can also be used as supplementary sources for assignments and term papers.


**SCHEDULE (subject to change)**

**Introduction to Comparative Politics**

**Week 1**

*January 19 - Introductions: Syllabus/Course Requirements/Personal Introductions.*
*January 21 - Kesselman, Krieger and Joseph, “Introducing Comparative Politics,” in *Introduction to Comparative Politics* (handout).*
*Discussion Questions for Jan. 21: What are “collective identities”? What do “comparativists” do? What are some “levels of analysis”? Think of an example of a
“causal theory” related to a political, social or economic situation.

Week 2
*January 26 - O’Neil, Chapter 1, “Introduction,” in Essentials of Comparative Politics.
Film: How Your Genetic Code Might Decide Your Vote.

Comparative Political Systems

Week 3
*Homework Questions for Feb. 2 - LEWELLEN: What are some dilemmas with the classification of human groups? What are differences between uncentralized, centralized, and state political systems? Discussion Questions for Feb. 4 - JAIMES: In what ways were indigenous societies sophisticated? Why are our perceptions of indigenous ways of life based on myth (or societal inventions) and so inherently contradictory?

Week 4
*February 11 - Weatherford, “The Founding Indian Fathers,” in Indian Givers; Film: Vanishing Prayer.
*Summary/Reflection Paper (one page) for Feb. 11 - WEATHERFORD: Regarding the important ways the Iroquois League influenced the beginnings of the U.S. federal government and system, summarize the main points of the reading and reflect on why this history is essentially blanketed in our schools.

Power Politics

Week 5
*Quiz for Feb. 18 on Machiavelli and O’Neil readings.

Week 6
*February 25 - Film: The Corporation.

Week 7
Democratic and Nondemocratic Regimes

Week 8
*March 8 - O’Neil, Chapter 5, “Democratic Regimes,” in Essentials of Comparative Politics; Film: The Tribunal.
*March 10 - Martí, “The Truth About the United States” and “To the Editor of the New York Evening Post: A Vindication of Cuba,” in Reader; Film: The Tribunal.
*Homework Questions for March 10 - MARTÍ: How does Martí depict the United States? What do you agree or disagree with? In his letter to the editor, does Martí’s sentiment relate in any way to today? How?

Week 9
*Paper due March 17.

Week 10 - Recesso Académico

The Development Paradigm and Political Violence

Week 11
*March 29 - O’Neil, Chapter 10, “Less Developed and Newly Industrializing Countries,” in Essentials of Comparative Politics; Film: Life and Debt.
*Discussion Questions for March 29 - O’NEIL: What common elements resulted from the imposition of imperialism on less developed countries? Describe some challenges of post-imperialism. According to the author, what are some future prospects for democracy and development?

Week 12
*April 7 - O’Neil, Chapter 7, “Political Violence,” in Essentials of Comparative Politics; Eqbal Ahmad on “Terrorism: Theirs and Ours.”
*Summary/Reflection Paper for April 5 - ESCOBAR y ILLICH: Summarize the readings and reflect on the discourse of development as “planned poverty.” Agree or disagree? What might be some remedies to this issue?
Ritual and Globalization

Week 13
* April 12 - O’Neil, Chapter 9, “Communism and Postcommunism,” in Essentials of Comparative Politics.
* Quiz for April 14 on O’Neil and Kertzer readings.

Week 14
* April 19 - O’Neil, Chapter 11, “Globalization and the Future of Comparative Politics,” in Essentials of Comparative Politics; Film: A Place Called Chiapas.
* Homework Questions for April 21 - SEN AND STIGLITZ: According to the authors, what are some misperceptions, benefits and detriments of globalism? How can globalization be a more positive instrument in terms of the distribution of wealth, reducing poverty, and creating a more socially just society, both globally and in Puerto Rico?

The Latina/o Comparative Future

Week 15
* April 26 - Selected chapters from Anzaldúa, Borderlands; Film: Un día sin mexicanos.
* Discussion Questions for April 26 - ANZALDÚA: Describe life for Mexicans on the “US side” of the border after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hildago. What personal perspective is the author writing from and discuss her rebellion. What is the significance of the serpent in Mexican/Chicano culture? Outline for paper due April 28. You can write on any topic of interest from Weeks 8-16.

Week 16
* Discussion for May 5 on political future of Puerto Rico.

Week 17
* May 10 - Preparation for final presentation.

*Final presentation / Final paper due - May 16–24.