

PLS 205—Introduction to Comparative Government  
Dr. M. Gobeyn (Bradley Hall 434/677-2497)

This course is designed to introduce you to the political science sub-field of comparative government and politics. During the course of the semester we will be examining the governmental institutions, policy making processes, and ideological foundations of some of the world's most important and influential countries. While much of our time will be accorded to the major parliamentary democracies of Western Europe, considerable attention will be given to recent developments in Central and eastern Europe and to the increasingly important developing nations of the "Third World." Additionally, we will examine in as much detail as time permits the political economic system of Japan.

There will be THREE exams (of the essay/short answer variety) during the course of the semester. These exams are worth 75 percent of your final grade. The remaining 25 percent of your course grade will be based upon the grade you receive on an evaluative essay that will be assigned during the final month of the semester (details on this assignment will be provided in class).

360-400=A  
320-359=B  
280-319=C  
240-279=D  
below 240=F

Because much of the material to be presented in class is not addressed in great detail in your reading assignments, attendance at all class sessions is strongly encouraged.

ONE book is required for this class. It can be purchased at the Bradley Bookstore.

Mahler, *Comparative Politics: An Institutional and Cross-National Approach*

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WEEK 1 (1/21-1/23)

Comparative politics: Key concepts and analytical approaches  
Readings: Mahler, ch. 1

WEEK 2 (1/26-1/30)

Constitutions  
Legislatures  
Readings: Mahler, chs. 2 & 4

WEEK 3 (2/2-2/6)

The executive in parliamentary and presidential systems  
Parliamentary and presidential systems compared  
Systems of interest intermediation and policy making  
Readings: Mahler, chs. 5 & 7

WEEK 4 (2/9-2/13)

Political ideologies  
Variants of democracy: liberalism and democratic socialism

WEEKS 5 & 6 (2/16-2/20) (2/23-2/27)

The Government of Great Britain  
-political institutions  
-The Thatcher legacy and the Post-war consensus  
-political culture  
Readings: Mahler, ch. 9

EXAM 1, Friday, Feb. 27

WEEK 7 (3/1-3/5)

The Government of France  
-political institutions  
-the “socialist experiment”  
-political behavior  
Readings: Mahler, ch. 10

WEEK 8 (3/8-3/12)

The Government of Germany  
-political institutions  
-political economy  
-political culture  
Readings: Mahler, ch. 11

WEEK 9 (3/22-3/26)

The government of the European Union  
-history and development  
-economic integration and political unification

WEEK 10 (3/29-4/2)

Marxism, Leninism, and Stalinism

WEEK 11 (4/5-4/9)

The collapse of the Soviet model  
Economic and political reform in Central and Eastern Europe

Readings: Mahler, ch. 16

EXAM 2, Friday, April 9

WEEK 12 (4/12-4/16)

Government and politics in developing countries  
“Third World” ideologies

WEEK 13 (4/19-4/23)

Political development  
Political change in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East  
Readings: Mahler, ch. 3

WEEK 14 (4/26-4/30)

Political change in Latin America and the Caribbean Basin

WEEK 15 (5/3)

Political change in Latin America and the Caribbean Basin (cont.)

FINAL EXAM: SECTION 1, Saturday, May 8, 9-10:30  
SECTION 2, Saturday, May 8, 2:30-4:00