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ZERO Textbook Cost Syllabus for PLSC 2260 (Introduction to Comparative Government)

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PLSC 2260: Introduction to Comparative Government

Fall 2017 at Baruch College
Mon & Wed 5:50p-7:05p
Room:

Instructor:
Email:
Office Hours: By Appointment Only

"Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly and applying the wrong remedies." ~ Groucho Marx

Course Description

Why do states wield violence against its citizens? Does the expansion of state power always threaten individual freedom? When do ordinary people create social change peacefully, and when do they go to war? Is democratization an inevitable force in our world? Is there a trade-off between economic growth and economic equality? These are the types of puzzles we will be exploring through various theoretical and methodological lenses. We will compare variations in political behaviors, processes, and structures at work in different countries around the world. Each week, we focus on a different topic in comparative politics, then dig deeper into a few country cases related to that topic using the assigned readings and in-class discussions and activities. We begin with states, regimes, and ideologies; move on to social movements and political violence; then end with debates on development and globalization.

Learning Objectives

- Identifying the main arguments of texts and critically evaluating their merits
- Explaining political phenomena using different theoretical lenses
- Critically thinking about the origins and effects of power disparities at the levels of individuals, groups, states, and international systems
- Expressing all the above in thoughtful and well-organized written form

Grading

- Attendance/Participation: 30%
- Reading Assignments: 35%
- Exams: 35%
- Extra Credit Paper: +5%



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Class Requirements

- **Attendance/Participation:** You can get up to 5 points each day you attend class and meaningfully participate in the activities and discussions. If you have to miss class in the event of an emergency, email me ahead of time. Being tardy causes you to lose 1 point for the day. You are responsible for obtaining missed announcements and notes from your classmates due to tardiness or absences. Per CUNY rules, if you miss more than 6 classes for the semester, you will automatically fail the course.
- **Open-Note Exams:** There will be an in-class midterm and final exam. For the exams, you will critically synthesize several topics that we have covered in class in response to an essay prompt (2 questions for the midterm worth 20 points total, 3 questions for the final worth 30 points total). You can look at hard copies of your notes and readings during the exam, but no electronics are allowed for the exam.
- **Reading Assignments:** This is a reading and discussion-intensive class. To help you prepare for class discussion and exams, you will respond to a few questions designed to draw out each reading's main argument and deepen your comprehension. Each assignment is worth 5 points, due before class starts according to the class schedule. Check the assignment prompts for hints on where to skip or skim sections of the reading. At the end of the semester, I will take your lowest 3 grades on the reading assignments and give you full points for them (equating to 3 "free passes"). I do not accept late work for any reason, so if you are having trouble uploading your answers on Acadly, email the document to me instead.
- **Preparing for Class:** This course is structured to alternate between lecture and discussions of the readings. On lecture days, there will be Powerpoint slides that you should print off and bring to class to make it easier for yourself to take notes. On the days when we discuss readings, make sure to bring printed copies of the readings and the reading assignment, or load these onto a tablet. Some tips for effective reading:
 - Reading from printed copies and marking up the text helps you better retain the information and engage with the ideas
 - Highlight important arguments and note where the author provides evidence
 - Jot down your reactions and questions as you read
 - Look up words you don't understand

All Things Related to Technology

- You will need a smartphone to get the most out of this class, but this is not mandatory. If you don't have a smart phone, or forget it on any given day, talk to me before or after class so that I can mark you down for attendance.
- You will receive an invitation to set up an **Acadly** account once I enter your email into the system. As soon as possible, download the Acadly app on your phones and/or visit **app.acadly.com**. This is the platform you will be using to access all class materials,

including Powerpoints, readings, videos, polls, and in-class activities. If you have trouble accessing Acadly, email me for the materials.

- Do not abuse your smartphone privileges during by doing anything other than checking Acadly!
- No laptops allowed in this class!
- If you email me, you can expect a response usually within a few hours. You can also ask myself or your classmates questions through the Acadly app.

Accommodations for Students with DisABILITIES

If there is a special need you have that will prevent you from getting the most out of this class, please first register with the Office of Disability Support Services, then set up a meeting with me so that we can discuss how I can accommodate you.

Academic Integrity

CUNY has a zero-tolerance policy towards cheating and plagiarism; you will fail the course if you are caught doing either of these things. Cheating is defined as “the unauthorized use or attempted use of material, information, notes, study aids, devices or communication during an academic exercise,” and plagiarism constitutes as “the act of presenting another person’s ideas, research or writings as your own.” For specific examples of what constitutes as cheating and plagiarism, consult CUNY’s Policy on Academic Integrity.

Class Schedule (subject to change)

8/28 Mon	--Syllabus --Using Acadly --Lecture: BASICS OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS & SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS
8/30 Wed	NO CLASS—Prof. out of country
9/4 Mon	NO CLASS—Labor Day
9/6 Wed	--Continue lecture
9/11 Mon	--Due: 1. “Karl Popper, Science, and Pseudoscience” (Crash Course Philosophy) 2. "Is Science Value-Free?" (Noë) 3. Selections from "On the Reception and Detection of Pseudo-Profound

	Bullshit" (Pennycook, et al.) --Lecture: ORIGINS & TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE STATE
9/13 Wed	--Continue lecture
9/18 Mon	--Due: 1. "Evade, Corrupt, or Confront? Organized Crime and the State in Brazil and Mexico" (Bailey & Taylor)
9/20 Wed	NO CLASS—Rosh Hashanah
9/25 Mon	--Lecture: IDENTITIES, ATTITUDES & IDEOLOGIES
9/27 Wed	--Continue lecture
10/2 Mon	--Due: 1. "Bad Feminist or Bad-Hejabi?" (Naghbi) 2. Interview w/ Robert Paxton, "Is Donald Trump a Fascist?"
10/4 Wed	--Lecture: DEMOCRATIC REGIMES
10/9 Mon	NO CLASS—Columbus Day
10/11 Wed	--Due: 1. "India: Running the World's Biggest Elections" (Gill) 2. "Neoliberalism and Democracy in Latin America: A Mixed Record" (Weyland)
10/16 Mon	--Lecture: AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES
10/18 Wed	--Continue lecture
10/23 Mon	--Due: 1. "Paradoxes of the New Authoritarianism" (Krastev) 2. "Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring" (Bellin)
10/25 Wed	MIDTERM EXAM
10/30 Mon	--Go over midterm --Lecture: COLLECTIVE ACTION & SOCIAL MOVEMENTS
11/1 Wed	--Continue lecture
11/6 Mon	--Due: 1. "Reversing the Gun Sights: Transnational Civil Society Targets Land Mines"

	(Price) 2. "New Technologies and Social Movements" (Earl, et al.)
11/8 Wed	--Lecture: CIVIL WARS & REVOLUTION
11/13 Mon	--Continue lecture
11/15 Wed	--Due: 1. Selections from <i>On Guerilla Warfare</i> (Mao) 2. "The Rehabilitation of Violence and the Violence of Rehabilitation: Fanon and Colonialism" (Kebede)
11/20 Mon	--Lecture: ETHNIC CONFLICT
11/22 Wed	--Continue lecture
11/27 Mon	--Due: 1. <i>Anomie and Violence: Non-Truth and Reconciliation in Indonesia Peacebuilding</i> Ch1, "Healing a Fractured Transition to Democracy" (Braithwaite et al.)
11/29 Wed	--Lecture: GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT
12/4 Mon	--Continue lecture
12/6 Wed	--Due: 1. "India, China, and the East Asian Miracle: A Human Capital Development Path to High Growth Rates and Declining Inequalities" (Charles, et al.) 2. "Sport-for-Development and the 2010 Football World Cup" (Levermore) --Lecture: GLOBALIZATION & ITS DISCONTENTS
12/11 Mon	--Due: 1. Selections from "Jihad, McWorld, Modernity," pg. 88-100, 105, 113-114, 115-117
12/20 Wed	FINAL EXAM 10:30-12:30

Instructions for Extra Credit Paper

Pick any one of the themes we cover in class and use the theories, concepts, and cases within it to analyze a fictional movie, TV show, or book of your choice. Basically, you are using a pop culture artifact as a case study for your chosen theme. Feel free to take theories/concepts/cases from multiple themes if they are relevant to your movie/TV show/book.

You must (1) explain the major theories and concepts of your chosen theme(s); (2) discuss how the movie/TV show/book fits or does not fit into those theories and concepts; and (3) compare the movie/TV show/book to the cases we discuss or read in class. Be sure to mention what movie/TV show/book you pick, but do not give a synopsis of the plot. Your paper should start immediately with the analysis. Your analysis should as thorough as possible, meaning 4-5 double-spaced pages, in 12-point Times New Roman font. The paper is due at any point in the semester that you want. The last day to turn it in is the beginning of our final meeting on December 18th. I only accept hard copies turned in during class, not electronic copies via email!

You will be graded on the following elements (5 points each):

- Clear & comprehensive knowledge of major theories, concepts, and cases
- Thoughtful and creative connections between the chosen theme(s) and the movie/TV show/book
- Organization and clarity of the writing (for help with this, make an appointment with Baruch's Writing Center: <http://writingcenter.baruch.cuny.edu/>)

Some suggestions for your pop culture "case study":

Movies: Last King of Scotland, Equilibrium, Snowpiercer, Gattaca, Hunger Games, Elysium, Beasts of No Nation, Captain America: Civil War, Leviathan, State of Mind, Hotel Rwanda, Milk, V for Vendetta, Platoon, Full Metal Jacket, Serenity, The Kite Runner, West Side Story, City of God, Traffic, Doctor Zhivago, Manchurian Candidate, Les Miserables, Pan's Labyrinth, the Bourne series, American History X, The Outlaw Josey Wales, Schlinder's List, Black Hawk Down, Children of Men, Lord of War, Blood Diamond, Star Wars

TV Shows: Game of Thrones, Star Trek series, Battlestar Galactica, Man in the High Tower, House of Cards, The Giver, Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood, Firefly, Orphan Black, West Wing, Deadwood, MASH, Parks & Recreation

Books: 1984, Animal Farm, Brave New World, Fahrenheit 451, Hunger Games, The Giver, His Dark Materials trilogy, Lord of the Flies, Alien Chronicles, Ender's Game series, Seeing, The Trial, The Castle, The Handmaid's Tale, The White Guard, Darkness at Noon, Lincoln, Democracy: An American Novel, It Can't Happen Here, The Way We Live Now, The Prime Minister, No Telephone to Heaven, Les Miserables