Course concept:

The political world is highly complex, and yet we interact with it on a daily basis. At the international level, leaders gather to discuss issues that affect them individually and collectively, while the impact of their decisions on the people of their country depends enormously on the style of government and its representativeness. This course serves as the introduction to the sub-discipline of political science known as comparative politics. The course introduces the student to key concepts in the comparative study of political systems, including these key questions: why do we compare and how do we compare?

Required readings:

The required text for this course is Michael J. Sodaro, Comparative Politics: A Global Introduction (Third Edition) (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2008) [hereafter Sodaro]. There will also be various supplementary academic journal, magazine, and newspaper articles. Average reading load will be around 40 pages/class, with some lighter and some heavier classes.

Assignments and grading:

This class will have two midterm exams and a final exam. Each exam will be worth 25% of your overall grade.

There will be two homework assignments that will be due during the first part of the course. These are designed to familiarize yourself with the comparative method of political science. There will also be five quizzes which will occur over the course of the first term. Collectively, the quizzes will count for 5% of your overall grade. Although unlikely, there may also be opportunities for extra credit that will be interspersed throughout the first term. These opportunities are entirely voluntary but can be of benefit to you both academically and personally. Extra credit will require attendance and a one-page summary of the event. Properly completed extra credit opportunities will replace a quiz grade or, if all quizzes are 100%, add 1% to your overall grade, up to a maximum of 5%.

Because this both an introductory course and a first-term summer course, I will stress even more strongly than usual the importance of class attendance. I strongly encourage you to attend every
class and be prepared for lively and stimulating discussion. To that end, I will allow no more than three unexcused absences from class for the duration of the course. Exceptions may be made for extraordinary circumstances, and will be judged on a case-by-case basis. Participation and attendance (either in class or online via the Blackboard discussion forum) will count for 20% of your overall grade.

Missed exams for documented reasons (illness, family emergency) can be made up until 5 days post-exam with no penalty. Missed exams for any non-documented reason can be made up until 3 days post-exam but will accrue a 10% penalty for each missed day before grading.

Student Learning Outcomes:

At the conclusion of this course, students will have a basic understanding of comparative politics, including both the comparative method and country studies. Students will understand differential routes to democratization and will examine whether democracy is necessary and sufficient condition for global politics.

Suggested news sources:

- Financial Times: [http://www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com)
- The Economist: [http://www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com)

Grading standards:

I will use the following grade standards. All grades given during the first term will be converted to a 100-point scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>75-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Plagiarism/Academic Misconduct:

Don’t do it. Minimum penalties for cheating are zeros on quizzes or exams where the cheating takes place, and a grade of F on a paper that has been plagiarized. Questions about what constitutes academic misconduct should be brought to my attention. The University of Texas at Austin honor code is available at [http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html](http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html).

Students with disabilities:

The University of Texas will make reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (Video Phone) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.
Course calendar

**Part One: Concepts and Critical Thinking**

**Thursday 6 June:**
- **Topic:**
  - Introduction to the course and the instructor
- **Readings:**
  - None required

**Friday 7 June:**
- **Topics:**
  - Comparative Politics: What Is It? Why Study It?
  - Major Topics of Comparative Politics
- **Readings:**
  - Sodaro, Chapter One (pp. 3-30)
  - Sodaro, Chapter Two (pp. 31-59)
- **Requirements/Notes:**
  - First homework assignment handed out today

**Monday 10 June:**
- **Topic:**
  - Critical Thinking about Politics: Analytical Techniques of Political Science – The Logic of Hypothesis Testing
- **Readings:**
  - Sodaro, Chapter Three (pp. 60-97)
- **Requirements/Notes:**
  - First homework assignment due today

**Tuesday 11 June:**
- **Topic:**
  - Power
- **Readings:**
  - Sodaro, Chapter Four (pp. 98-123)

**Wednesday 12 June**
- **Topics:**
  - The State and Its Institutions
  - States and Nations: Nationalism—Nation-building—Supranationalism
- **Readings:**
  - Sodaro, Chapter Five (pp. 124-146)
  - Sodaro, Chapter Six (pp. 147-170)

**Thursday 13 June:**
- **Topics:**
  - Democracy: What is It?
Democracy: How Does It Work? State Institutions and Electoral Systems

- **Readings:**
  - Sodaro: Chapter Seven (pp. 171-193)
  - Sodaro: Chapter Eight (pp. 194-220)

**Friday 14 June:**
- **Topics:**
  - Democracy: What Does It Take?
- **Readings:**
  - Sodaro, Chapter Nine (pp. 221-241)
- **Requirements/Notes:**
  - Second homework assignment handed out today

**Monday 17 June:**
- **Topic:**
  - People and Politics: Participation in Democracies and Nondemocracies
- **Readings:**
  - Sodaro, Chapter Eleven (pp. 270-292)
- **Requirements/Notes:**
  - Second homework assignment due today

**Tuesday 18 June:**
- **Topics:**
  - Political Culture
  - Ideology
- **Readings:**
  - Sodaro, Chapter Twelve (pp. 293-311)
  - Sodaro, Chapter Thirteen (pp. 312-341)

**Wednesday 19 June:**
- **Topic:**
  - Political Economy: Laissez-Faire—Central Planning—Mixed Economies—Welfare States
- **Readings:**
  - Sodaro, Chapter Fourteen (pp. 342-365)

**Thursday 20 June**
- **Topic:**
  - The Politics of Development
- **Readings:**
  - Sodaro, Chapter Fifteen (pp. 366-394)

**Friday 21 June:** – **MIDTERM EXAM ONE**

Part Two: Countries and Leaders
Monday 24 June:
- Topic:
  - The UK
- Readings:
  - Sodaro: Chapter Sixteen (pp. 395-443)

Tuesday 25 June:
- Topic:
  - The UK (part 2)
- Readings:
  - Sodaro: Chapter Sixteen (continued)
  - View “Prime Minister’s question time” via BBC (in-class)
- Requirements/Notes:
  - Quiz One today

Wednesday 26 June:
- Topic:
  - France
- Readings:
  - Sodaro, Chapter Seventeen (pp. 444-497)

Thursday 27 June:
- Topic:
  - France (part 2)
- Readings:
  - Sodaro: Chapter Seventeen (continued)
  - Other readings to be announced in class
- Requirements/Notes:
  - Quiz Two today

Friday 28 June:
- Topic:
  - Germany
- Readings:
  - Sodaro, Chapter Eighteen (pp. 498-

Monday 1 July:
- Topic:
  - Germany (part 2)
- Readings:
  - Sodaro: Chapter Eighteen (continued)
  - Other readings to be announced in class

Tuesday 2 July:
• Topic:
  o Japan
• Readings
  o Sodaro, Chapter Nineteen
• Requirements/Notes:
  o Quiz Three today

Wednesday 3 July: **MIDTERM EXAM TWO**

Thursday 4 July: **NO CLASS**

Friday 5 July:
• Topic:
  o Mexico and Brazil
• Readings:
  o Sodaro, Chapter Twenty-Two (pp. 702-761)

Monday 8 July:
• Topic:
  o India
• Readings:
  o India readings will be placed on Blackboard by Dr. Mosser
• Requirements/Notes:
  o Quiz Four today

Tuesday 9 July:
• Topic:
  o China
• Readings:
  o Sodaro, Chapter Twenty-One (pp 652-701)

Wednesday 10 July:
• Topic:
  o China (part two)
• Readings:
  o Sodaro, Chapter Twenty-One (continued)
  o *Economist* and other news source articles on China
• Requirements/Notes:
  o Quiz Five today

Thursday 11 July:
• Topic:
  o Nigeria and South Africa
• Readings:
  o Sodaro, Chapter Twenty-Three (pp. 762-798)
Final Exam:
Friday 12 July 9:00 – 12:00