

Course Outline
POLS 131
Comparative Government and Politics
3 Credit Hours

The Community College of Baltimore County

Description

Comparative Government: Modern Political Systems

Introduces comparative government and politics; examines several modern political systems, including those of Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia, China, and selected developing nations in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

Prerequisite: (RDNG 052 or LVR 2); (ENGL 052 or LVE 2); (MATH 081 or LVM 1)

Overall Course Objectives (Learning Objectives)

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Describe the origins of the comparative study of government and politics among the Ancient Greeks and assess the development of that study to the present;
2. Describe the process by which modern nation-states emerged in the 16-17th centuries, and analyze how these systems were different from previous political organizations;
3. Explain the importance and analyze the major elements of the concept of the “political environment,” including “political culture” and the “material environment”;
4. Explain the idea of “interest articulation” and analyze the various forms of political groups which may engage in articulation in different political systems;
5. Explain the idea of “interest aggregation” and analyze the organizations which may engage in it, especially different sorts of political parties in various party systems;
6. Describe and assess the sorts of contemporary representative assemblies;
8. Describe and assess the forms of contemporary executive leadership structures;
9. Describe and assess the various systems of contemporary administrative bureaucracies and judicial systems;
10. Use the structural/functional categories above to describe and evaluate the basic elements of the political systems of modern constitutional democracies (e.g., the U.S., Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan); modern post-communist states (e.g., Russia); contemporary authoritarian states (e.g., China, Iraq, Iran); and developing nations in Latin America, Asia and Africa (e.g., Mexico, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, South Africa).
11. Describe and evaluate the major patterns of behavior and assess the public policies that characterize the governments studied: e.g. civil rights and liberty, equality, economics, welfare, law & order, national security, etc.

Major Topics

1. The Comparative Study of Government and Politics
2. Structures and functions of national political systems
 - (a) The political environment: material environments and political cultures
 - (b) Interest articulation: participation and political interest groups
 - (c) Interest aggregation: political parties, party systems, and electoral systems
 - (d) Representative assemblies
 - (e) Governmental leadership: executives and cabinets
 - (f) Administrative bureaucracies
 - (g) Judicial systems
 - (h) Local government and politics
 - (i) Policy outputs and outcomes
3. Contemporary national political systems: institutions, behavior, policies
 - (a) Modern constitutional democracies: e.g., the U.S., Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan
 - (b) Transitional post-Communist systems: e.g., Russia
 - (c) Authoritarian systems: e.g., China, Iraq
 - (d) Developing nations: e.g., India, Nigeria, Mexico, Brazil, India, Nigeria, South Africa

Course Requirements

Students will be expected to demonstrate learning through the following:

1. Two or more extensive in-class examinations, including lengthy analytical essay questions;
2. Participation in class discussions, debates, oral presentations and/or collaborative reports; {NOTE: All students will be expected to participate in at least one oral presentation and at least one collaborative project during the Course.}
3. Additional written exercises (e.g., quizzes, term papers) at the instructor's discretion, including at least one exercise requiring the collection of information through the Internet.

Other Course Information

1. This course satisfies a College General Education requirement in the category, Social and Behavioral Sciences--Diversity.
2. Regular attendance and participation in class is a requirement for this course.
3. Students will be expected to have regular access to a required text and such additional learning material as an instructor may assign.
4. The instructor, at his/her discretion, may arrange for guest lecturers, audio/video presentations, and/or attention to current events as a part of the Course content;
5. The instructor will be available to assist students through regular office hours, telephone, and in some cases voice mail and Internet email.

5/25/00