POSC 2300
Introduction to Comparative Politics, Fall 2015
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30-11:45pm
Room: ED2018A

Course Instructor
Karlo Basta
Office & Hours: SN2038; Thursdays, 1:30-3:30pm, and by appointment.
Email: karlo.basta@gmail.com (USE THIS EMAIL ADDRESS EXCLUSIVELY)

Course Summary
Comparative politics is quite possibly the broadest field of political science, covering all aspects of domestic politics. Because of this, no single course can adequately address all the issues of interest to comparative political scientists. Rather than try to cover as many theoretical traditions and topics in comparative politics, this class will prioritize the understanding of some key concepts (state, nation, political economy, institutions of governance), after which it will provide an overview of the political institutions and dynamics in several key cases (countries). The course is explicitly designed to be comparative, as students will be encouraged to compare political systems and processes across a significant number of cases. At the same time, at the end of the term, successful students will possess the basic understanding of specificities of each particular case we will have covered. This way, while the class will foster the familiarity with theoretical and conceptual elements of comparative politics, it will at the same time develop a broader understanding of the political world we inhabit.

Readings
The class textbook is Jeffrey Kopstein and Mark Lichbach, Comparative Politics, 4th Ed. During the first several weeks, readings will be drawn mostly from scholarly journals. They are all available either online or through the library catalogue. Make sure you have these readings with you in class, either in an electronic or a hard-copy format. If you have difficulty obtaining readings from the library, contact the librarian. The course outline also contains a list of recommended readings. These are offered in order to facilitate your research in preparation for essay writing. You do not have to read them, but they might be a convenient starting point if you choose to pursue one of the topics we will cover in the class.

Email policy:
In order to contact the course instructor, use only the designated email, unless instructed otherwise. Do not attempt to contact me via D2L. I will usually respond to your questions within 24 hours. I will not respond to emails during the weekend, unless otherwise specified. If you have questions regarding course material, ask them in the class. In fact, you are encouraged to ask such questions in the classroom. If you need guidance on your paper, come see me during my office hours.
Keep your email correspondence short, and to the point. Also, I expect that everyone understands the rules email etiquette. I will not respond to disrespectful emails, including those in which I am not addressed by first/last name, or in which I am not addressed at all.
“Dear Karlo/Prof. Basta” or “Hi Karlo/Prof. Basta” will do. Always sign email messages with your full name, so I know with whom I am dealing.

Grading scheme (you must opt for one before the first assignment is due):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheme A</th>
<th>Scheme B</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance: 10%</td>
<td>Attendance: 10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term exam (October 15): 20%</td>
<td>Mid-term exam (October 15): 20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay (due November 17): 40%</td>
<td>Test (November 10): 20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam (take-home, exam period): 30%</td>
<td>Article analysis (due November 20): 20%</td>
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Guidelines for mid-term and final exams (common to both Scheme A and B)

Mid-term exam:
The exam will consist of 8-10 terms. Students will be required to select 5 and provide an extended definition, relating their answers to readings and in-class discussions. The exam will be 1 hour and 15 minutes long.

Final exam:
The exam will be held during the exam period, and will be cumulative. In other words, all the material that will be covered on mid-term exam might also show up on the final one. We will discuss the final exam format toward the end of the term.

Guidelines for Scheme A essay
A major component of your grade will consist of a 10-12 page (double spaced, bibliography excluded) essay. You will be provided with a list of topics and questions early in the semester. These are there to help you find your way to a more specific research question. However, if you are interested in a topic not on the assigned list, you are free to select it, provided that you have cleared your topic and question with me first. You will be given evaluation criteria for the essay at a later date.

The paper will be between 10 and 12 pages in length, double spaced, with standard font (12 pt size, Times New Roman) and standard margins. DO NOT insult your instructor’s intelligence by trying to meet the length requirements via manipulation of margins. Extensions will be granted only in cases of illness or serious emergencies, and only with proper documentation, before the due date. Do not expect to receive a retroactive extension. Each late day will carry a penalty of 2% of the essay grade, with the exception of the weekends. Maximum penalty will be 20%. The essay must be submitted via email to the above email address. If you do not receive a confirmation within 24 hours, contact me again. If you do not, you cannot assume that your paper has been received.

Guidelines for Scheme B test and article analysis

Test
The test will replicate the mid-term exam format, but will include more recent material.

Article analysis
Students will be given an assortment of articles and expected to provide a 5-7 page analysis for one of these. The article titles will be provided a week before the due date, so the time to write the assignment will be limited. Students will be expected to undertake
their analysis on their own, rather than work in groups. You will be given instructions for this assignment well in advance.

**Policy on Plagiarism**

Plagiarism means offering the words or ideas of another person as one's own. The material copied or paraphrased may consist of a few phrases or sentences, or an entire passage or paper. Whatever its form and extent, plagiarism constitutes two kinds of failure: 1) Failure to perform the basic tasks expected in any paper -- original mental effort and expression; 2) Potentially, the moral failure of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism may be deliberate (as in the submission of a paper written in whole or part by another student, purchased from an essay bank, or cut and pasted from web sites) or the result of carelessness through failure to provide proper documentation.

All directly copied or quoted material must be enclosed in quotation marks and the source must be clearly identified in a footnote. The source of any paraphrased material or ideas must also be properly documented. Failure to do so is plagiarism.

The procedure for handling cases of suspected plagiarism at Memorial University is set out in the [University Calendar](http://www.mun.ca). All cases of suspected plagiarism must be reported to the [Department Head](http://www.mun.ca) in accordance with the [University Calendar General Regulations](http://www.mun.ca). Depending on the circumstances and the degree of plagiarism involved, the Department of Political Science normally handles first offenders in accordance with the [Procedures for Informal Resolution](http://www.mun.ca). The Department maintains a list of students who have been found guilty of plagiarism, and in the case of a second offence or in particularly serious cases of plagiarism, the [Procedures for Formal Resolution](http://www.mun.ca) will be followed. The penalty in these cases may be probation, suspension or expulsion in addition to the grade of 0 for the work concerned.

If in any doubt about what plagiarism consists of, consult with your instructor or refer to any standard work on writing essays and research papers. The Faculty of Arts [Writing Centre](http://www.mun.ca) (SN2053) can also provide relevant information. The notes on proper documentation below may be of assistance.

**Other Policies**

Supplementary instructions that constitute part of this syllabus are available online at [http://www.mun.ca/posc/courses/policies.php](http://www.mun.ca/posc/courses/policies.php). This includes information about campus support services, a statement about equity and instructions regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. Students are expected to review this online information and to be familiar with this course’s policies surrounding academic honesty, classroom demeanour, the conduct of examinations, the requirement to use a university email account and the use of recording devices in classrooms.

**Tips for Succeeding in Political Science at MUN**

eTips ([www.arts.mun.ca/etips/](http://www.arts.mun.ca/etips/)) is a website created by MUN political science students with tips about how do to well in political science courses. In addition to written tips there are audio clips and YouTube videos about research and writing, life in the classroom, undergraduate planning and tips for applying to graduate programs. Check out this 24/7 support tool and consider submitting tips of your own to share with others.
COURSE OUTLINE
(Subject to change over the course of the semester)

Week 1

SEPT. 10 – Intro Class
- Optional readings (retroactively): Kopstein & Lichbach, Ch. 1

Week 2

SEPT. 15 – Comparative Politics as Field and Method
Readings
Recommended

SEPT. 17 – The State (1)
Readings
- Kopstein & Lichbach text, Ch. 2
Recommended

Week 3

SEPT. 22 – The State (2)
No Readings

SEPT. 24 – National Identities and Comparative Politics
Readings
Recommended

**Week 4**

**SEPT. 29 – Comparing Regime Types**

Readings

Recommended

**OCT. 1 – Comparing Political Institutions**

Readings

Recommended

**Week 5**

**OCT. 6 – Political Economy (1)**

Readings

**Recommended**

**OCT. 8 – Political Economy (2)**

**Readings**
- “Special Report: State Capitalism,” *The Economist*, Jan. 21, 2012, available on D2L (read all 7 short articles, starting with the ‘Visible Hand’, and ending with ‘And the Winner Is…’, all available from the menu on the web-page provided)

**Recommended**

**Week 6**

**OCT. 13 – Mid-term break**

**OCT. 15 – Mid-term exam**

**Week 7**

**OCT. 20 - The United Kingdom**

**Readings**
- Kopstein/Lichbach text, Ch. 3

**Recommended**

**OCT. 22 - France**

**Readings**
- Kopstein/Lichbach text, Chapter 4
Recommended

**Week 8**

**OCT. 27 – Germany**
Readings
- Kopstein & Lichbach text, Ch. 5
Recommended

**OCT. 29 – Japan**
Readings
- Kopstein & Lichbach text, Ch. 6
Recommended

**Week 9**

**NOV. 3 - Russia**
Reading
- Kopstein & Lichbach text, Ch. 7
Recommended

**NOV. 5 – China**
Reading
- Kopstein & Lichbach text, Ch. 8
Recommended

**Week 10**

*NOV. 10 – In-class test for those opting for Grading scheme B (day off for those opting for Grading scheme A)*

*NOV. 12 – India*

Reading
- Kopstein & Lichbach text, Ch. 10

Recommended

**Week 11** (Article analysis due at the end of the week)

*NOV. 17 - South Africa (ESSAY DUE)*

Reading
- Kopstein & Lichbach text, Ch. 12

Recommended

*NOV. 19 – Nigeria*

Reading
- Kopstein & Lichbach text, Ch. 14

Recommended

**Week 12**

*NOV. 24 – Political Integration - The European Union*

Reading
- Kopstein & Lichbach text, Ch. 13

Recommended

**NOV. 26 – Political Disintegration – Iraq**

**Reading**

**Recommended**
- Documentary film *No End in Sight*

**Week 13**

**DEC. 1 and 3 – Review Sessions**