

POL 446
COMPARATIVE POLITICAL ELITES

Fall Semester, August 23 – December 8, 2010
Tuesdays 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Social Sciences 206

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OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE:

This course surveys political elites and the policy-making arenas in which they operate. Our study will be comparative and cross-national as we assess commonalities and differences in elite composition, attitudes, and behavior across Western, Leninist and post-Leninist, and Third World settings. We will consider both democratic and authoritarian systems. We will begin by considering what we mean by political elite, overviewing the theories and arguments which have arisen in the scholarly literature. This means we will consider the earlier contributions of political and social theorists such as Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca, and Robert Michels as well as those of more contemporary political scientists such as Robert Putnam. We will illuminate the composition and structure of political elites, examining their backgrounds, socialization experiences, broad orientations, and relationship to the policy-making process. The processes of elite recruitment and mobility will be given special attention as we assess the role of elites in setting agendas and directing the policy process. We shall consider the bureaucratic settings and social milieu in which political elites operate. We will examine issues of elite transformation, with emphasis given to the impact of industrialization, the implications of societal and systemic revolutionary change, and the emergence of post-industrial technocratic societies.

This course's coverage of conceptual issues will be cross-national, with theoretical arguments intended to be relevant to the diversity of contemporary national settings. In such a comparative elites course, the choice of national case studies will vary by instructor; I will give special attention to the political elites of three national settings: France, Russia, and the U.S. The choice of these countries reflects both the strengths of the literature and my own scholarly interests. This choice also means we can consider more focused case studies of a diversity of regime types, spanning not only different types of democratic systems, but also systems in political transition. Readings and class meetings will be used to provide -- in an expeditious manner -- the background information necessary to appreciate the elites politics of different nation-states.

The emphasis in this course is on the comparative study of political elites, so my own in-class presentations will highlight comparisons of political elite attitudes and behavior across different systemic and cultural settings. Beyond the American, French, and Russian cases, I shall raise examples from other national settings (e.g., Finland and Iran) where appropriate. Course participants are encouraged to draw upon their own backgrounds and interests as they consider the theoretical arguments raised during the semester. The required research paper will permit course participants to focus on the country(s) of their choice in considering broad issues of elite composition, behavior and the functioning of the policy process. Our in-class roundtable panel discussions, to be conducted during the final weeks of the semester, will permit us collectively to further develop cross-national comparisons in the structure and behavior of political elites.

A central premise of this course is that familiarity with political elites, the decision-making processes which they direct, and the policy outcomes for which they are responsible is essential to the study of politics and to a liberal arts education in the 21st Century. It is hoped that each course participant will gain the requisite knowledge of political elites and policy processes to approach intelligently the complex issues of early 21st Century domestic and international politics.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Student obligations for the course include, (a.) doing a lot of reading, (b.) having the readings prepared by the time they are due, (c.) writing a term paper, and (d.) taking one

The readings are critical to the course because they will provide participants with the requisite conceptual and substantive grounding for better understanding the structure of elites, their attitudes and behavior, and the policy implications of their actions. The readings will be discussed on the day that they are listed. In other words, you should read them **prior** to the class that they are assigned for. This course assumes no previous background in either elite studies or the politics of any given nation-state, so for many of you this course will be the first formal exposure to political elites and policy making. This fact only reinforces the importance of the readings: especially those early on in the semester. All readings listed in the Schedule of Topics and Readings are required and will be tapped by the exams and the paper assignment. Note that there will be three quizzes for each of the three texts we shall be reading, with the quizzes given at the beginning of the class session in which we will consider the given country case. The quizzes will consist of short answer questions and are designed to encourage you to complete the readings on time so we can have richer in-class discussions. Each quiz will be worth 5 points, and there will be 6 questions (you can miss one and still get full credit).

The course grade shall be determined on the basis of the following graded components, all of which must be completed to earn credit in the course:

Midterm Exam, 30%

Term Paper (due in class, Tuesday, November 30), 35%

Readings Quizzes, 15%

Participation, 20%

Details regarding the term paper assignment will be given during the first week of classes. You should be aware that the assignment will involve your focused examination of the composition and structure of the governing political elite of one or two countries, with analysis of elite-mass relations and discussion of the prospects for elite transformation. You may examine a democratic or authoritarian country, a country in political transition (e.g., the post-Soviet states), or develop a comparative study involving two countries drawn from one or more of these categories. Your treatment should be contemporary (i.e., reflecting the social and political realities of the early 21st Century), with your analysis drawing upon not only American sources, but sources from that country. I encourage you to use whatever language skills you have as you undertake your research project. The narrative text of the paper should be no longer than nine, double-spaced, typed pages; this page total does not include supporting tables, diagrams, and bibliography. I also encourage you -- where appropriate -- to use endnotes to develop secondary or tertiary points. Endnote pages are not included within the nine-page limit.

Please note that the electronic version of the term paper must be uploaded to Turnitin.com by the date the paper is due. **You will need to attach a receipt from Turnitin.com to your term paper.** I will give specific details regarding this site early in the semester. I will not read or grade any term paper not uploaded to Turnitin.com.

The exam and term paper due dates are firm. I do not give makeup examinations except in the most extraordinary circumstances. Term papers turned in after the deadline will be penalized one letter grade for each day late. I strongly encourage you to plan to have the term paper finished at least one day before the due date. Last-minute computer or printer problems are not sufficient reasons for extensions or the waiving of the late penalty. Papers are to be handed in to me in class. I am not responsible for papers placed under my office door or in my mailbox. Be sure you have a backup hard copy of the paper.

Attendance at all class meetings is required. I anticipate lively and informed class discussions, with all course participants sharing thoughts. There will be occasional in-class exercises and breakout discussion sessions. In addition, I shall be organizing round-table, panel discussions in which all course members shall present the results of their term paper research. We will devote part of one class section to breaking down into the panel groups so each group can organize itself. Your attendance, active participation in class meetings, and involvement in the panel sessions shall be the basis for determining your course participation grade. No class participants shall earn academic credit for this course unless they present their research results during our in-class, round-table, panel discussions. Also, please note that I reserve the right to administratively drop anyone who misses two or more class meetings.

Contacting Me: I want to be as available as possible to help answer any questions you might have. In addition to my office hours, it is possible to contact me by email. I check my e-mail frequently, and normally respond to questions the same business day. However, please keep in mind that e-mails sent to me after 5:00 PM will be answered the next business day. Thus, please plan your schedule accordingly.

Proper Conduct: I want to avoid disruptions and noise during our class meetings. I occasionally receive complaints from students about distractions arising from class members talking, arriving

late, leaving early, etc. Please do not talk during meetings, read newspapers, drift in to meetings late, or walk out early. Please turn off your cell phones before our class meetings begin. If extraordinary circumstances require you leave early, please inform me before class begins and sit by the door. If you are late, please enter the room quietly, but don't make this a habit.

As this is a political science class, opinions are likely to be diverse and not everyone will share your view. Please keep online discussions respectful and focused on the issues at hand. Personal attacks will not be permitted at any time. If you would like more information on the university's policy against threatening behavior by students, please consult the following:

<http://policy.web.arizona.edu/~policy/threaten.shtml>

Moreover, I want to avoid disruptions to the class by students using their laptop computers inappropriately. Laptop computers are wonderful for taking notes on, but can often be distracting when not used for such a purpose. Therefore, if you want to use a laptop computer in class, please fill out a *POL 446 Computer Use Contract*, and return it to me **prior** to using your laptop computer in class. I will hand out the contract the first day of class, but you can also print a contract from our class website.

Writing: This is a writing intensive course. Writing standards are important in this course. Your ability to communicate clearly and concisely will directly affect your grade. If you think your writing skills need serious improvement, check with me and together we will come up with an appropriate plan for remedying the situation. You might want to consult William Strunk, Jr. and E. B. White, The Elements of Style (any edition).

The technical aspects of written communication are also important. Kate Turabian's book, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations (most recent edition), is one of the most widely used and easily accessible guides available. You might want to use this or some other manual of style.

Spelling and grammar are also incredibly important aspects of writing, and papers will be graded accordingly. Thus, please be sure to proofread your papers carefully. Also, please be very careful with choosing the appropriate words in your paper. For example, common student mistakes include not knowing whether to use *there* or *their*, *whether* or *weather*, *borders* or *boarders*, etc.

Students with special needs: If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me. I would like us to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that formal, disability-related accommodations are necessary, it is very important that you be registered with Disability Resources (621-3268; drc.arizona.edu) and notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations.

I would like to hear from any special needs students in this class who may require some modification of the seating, testing, or other class requirements. Please see me after class or during my office hours. I am happy to work with you and the University Disability Resource Center.

Academic Integrity: I take academic integrity very seriously, and hold all students accountable to the highest levels of academic integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action as prescribed by University of Arizona rules and regulations. If you have any doubts about what constitutes academic dishonesty, please consult the following:

<http://dos.web.arizona.edu/uapolicies>

BOOKS AND MATERIALS TO BUY:

The following required readings are available for purchase:

Robert D. Putnam, The Comparative Study of Political Elites, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976.

William Safran, The French Polity, N.Y.: Pearson Longman, 2009.

Stephen White, Richard Sakwa, and Henry E. Hale, eds., Developments in Russian Politics 7, Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.

We will be reading most of the Putnam text, which is now out of print. I have made arrangements to have a photocopied version available for purchase at the University of Arizona Bookstore. Apparently, there are minimal copyright costs for this volume, so I assume this required text should be inexpensive.

We will also be reading two other texts that overview the domestic political context of countries to which we will give special attention. White et al.'s account of Russian politics and decision making change nicely illuminates the complexities of the formal and informal dimensions of elite behavior in the Putin-Medvedev period. Safran's book is a more standard French politics text exploring the institutional arrangements of the Fifth Republic, but there is a good deal of material illuminating France's elite politics. These books are available at the University of Arizona and other local bookstores.

In addition, I encourage every course participant to acquire the habit -- or cultivate it if you already possess it -- of reading a major source of international and national news daily (e.g., The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Los Angeles Times, etc.). You will be surprised how quickly you gain a working knowledge of the full span of domestic and foreign political elite, institutional, and policy matters which are core to this class. You will come across much current material that is directly relevant to our readings and class discussions. I highly recommend that you take advantage of the discounted student program for The New York Times (the subscription price is approximately 50 cents per day compared with the one dollar cost when you buy the paper at the news stand). I will have subscription information early in the semester. Note there is a New York Times website (www.nytimes.com) which contains major headline news stories and other valuable supplementary information. The website version of The New York Times does not include all of the articles -- or the detail -- available in the daily hard copy. It does, however, have useful material relevant to our course and I encourage you to take out a

free subscription to this source while also subscribing to the daily hard copy.

I, as the instructor, reserve the right to modify the syllabus, with reasonable, advanced notice, if needed.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS FOR THE COURSE

8/24: The Study of Elites - Fundamental Concepts and Theoretical Orientations
Putnam, Robert D., The Comparative Study of Political Elites, 1976, Chapter 1.

8/31: Social Backgrounds and Psychological Explorations of Elites
Putnam, Chapter 2.
Stephen White, Richard Sakwa, and Henry E. Hale, eds., Developments in Russia 7, 2009, *passim*.

9/7: Socialization and Training
White et al., *passim*.

9/14: Elite Recruitment - Channels, Selectorates, Credentials, and Turnover
Putnam, Chapter 3.
White et al. completed (**QUIZ**).

9/21: The Structure of Elites
Putnam, Chapter 5.
William Safran, The French Polity, 2009, *passim*.
Term paper abstract due.

9/28: The Bureaucratic Setting
Safran, *passim*.

10/5: Elites' Beliefs, Attitudes, and Orientations
Putnam, Chapter 4.
Safran completed (**QUIZ**).

10/12: Reflections on Russia and France
Review all readings for Exam.

10/19: **Exam**

10/26: Elite-Mass Linkages
Putnam, Chapter 6.

11/2: Elites and Agenda Setting
Putnam, Chapter 7.

11/9: Elites and the Policy Process

Complete all readings.

11/16: Elite Transformation

Complete all readings. **(Quiz)**.

11/23: Roundtable Panel Discussions

Note: the term paper is due in class by November 30; upload to Turnitin.com.

11/30: Roundtable Panel Discussions

Term Paper Due (Don't forget to attach Turnitin.com receipt)

12/7: Course Wrap Up