

University of Arkansas – Fort Smith
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General Syllabus

POLS 3103 Comparative Political Institutions

Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Laboratory or Other Type of Hours: 0

Prerequisite: POLS 2753 American National Government

Effective Catalog: 2019-20

I. Course Information

A. Catalog Description

A study of governments around the world.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

A. Subject Matter

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

1. Examine the major schools of thought used in comparing political systems including structural functionalism, political-economy approaches, social choice theory, and political culture.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the connections between political institutions and economic forces.
3. Examine the nature of political ideologies including democracy, communism, and socialism.
4. Examine various concepts of power and its use.
5. Define and describe nation-states, nationalism and supra-nationalism.
6. Examine the variety of conditions, which foster or inhibit the growth of political institutions.
7. Examine the politics of political development.
8. Differentiate the various tools one uses to analyze the modern nation state.
9. Examine the developmental history of The United Kingdom, France, Germany, Japan, Russia, China, Mexico, and Nigeria and South Africa.

B. University Learning Outcomes

This course enhances student abilities in the following areas.

Analytical Skills

Students will enhance their ability to critically think about and analyze major issues/features related to the political structures of various countries.

Communication Skills (oral and written)

Students will develop the ability to clearly articulate and defend their opinion in front of their peers as well as during the exams.

Ethical Decision Making

Students will explore the moral quandaries that countries face in dealing in a globalized context.

Global and Cultural Perspectives

Students will examine the spectrum of political systems around the world and how they compare to and function within the world community, represented by the United Nations, and various military, economic, and ethnic connections.

III. Major Course Topics

- A. Defining politics
- B. Democracy and authoritarianism
- C. Political processes
- D. Sources of political conflict
- E. Empirical political analysis
- F. Quantitative processes
- G. Power (Haiti)
- H. Authority and its use (profile of Saddam Hussein)
- I. The State and its institutions
- J. Nation States, Nationalism and Supranationalism
- K. The ten conditions for democracy
- L. People and politics (voters, parties, interest groups)
- M. Political culture and political psychology
- N. Ideology
- O. Political economy