CET Syllabus of Record

Program: CET Shanghai
Course Code / Title: (SH/POLI 130) Introduction to Comparative Politics
Total Hours: 45
Recommended Credits: 3
Suggested Cross Listings: Political Science / International Relations, History, Government
Language of Instruction: English
Prerequisites/Requirements: None

Description
How does one learn to think like a political scientist? Or to simply understand and form reasoned opinions about the many complex, current political issues that shape our lives? This course surveys the basic methods for and perspectives of comparative politics that allow students to build these skills. Four mainstream research approaches are introduced: rational choice, structural explanation, cultural perspective, and institutionalism. Topics covered include: What is comparative politics? Why and how do we make comparisons to understand politics? What is a theory and what is its role in making sense of the social world? How do we explain political and international puzzles from different perspectives? What are the determinants of democratization? Why do some countries get rich while others remain poor? Why do we have social movements and revolutions? Why and how do people participate in politics? Does political culture matter? How do international linkages interact with domestic politics? Critical thinking is stressed throughout the course, and students bring their own ideas into classroom discussions.

Objectives
In this course, students gain or advance the skills to:
- use theoretical frameworks and factual background to analyze international affairs and political events.
- understand the comparative method for the study of politics and master how to research basic questions in the field.
- think critically, engage in complex reasoning, and express their thoughts clearly through their written and oral work.
- recognize works by the principal protagonists of the field and understand why they are significant.

Course Requirements
Active and thoughtful participation is essential throughout this course. Students are expected to attend each class, as outlined in the CET Attendance Policy. Reading assignments average 50-80 pages per weekly class. Graded assignments include two short presentations in class that analyze assigned readings or apply them to current global events, an in-class midterm exam, and a final Policy Analysis Exercise (PAE). The PAE is a case study, where students identify a global political problem or puzzle, apply theoretical frameworks and specialized knowledge to analyze the problem, and offer solutions to the problem. Students will present their case studies, followed by
class discussion. The result is a policy analysis report (about 2,000 words) focused on analysis. A detailed case study guide will be provided in class.

**Grading**
The final grade is determined as follows:

- Presentations in class (2 at 10% each; one is part of the Policy Analysis Exercise): 20%
- Discussion in class: 20%
- Midterm exam: 25%
- Final Policy Analysis Exercise: 35%

**Readings**


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Outline of Course Content
Topic 1 – What is Comparative Politics? Why and How Do We Make Comparisons?
Topic 2 – Perspectives on Comparative Political Analysis
Topic 3 – States
Topic 4 – Nations and Societies
Topic 5 – Democratic and Nondemocratic Regimes
Topic 6 – Authoritarian Durability
Topic 7 – Democratization
Topic 8 – Resistance, Rebellion, and Revolution
Topic 9 – Political Participation
Topic 10 – Political Culture
Topic 11 – Political Economy
Topic 12 – Informal Politics
Topic 13 – International Linkages and Domestic Politics