POLI 130: Introduction to Comparative Politics
Recitation Section, Spring 2013

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 10AM-1PM, Global Cup Café

Recitation Requirements

The recitation grade will count for 30% of your overall course grade. 1/3 of your recitation grade is based on your consistent attendance and regular participation in recitation. Missing more than half of the recitation sections without prior notice and a valid excuse will mean that you fail the course. Please note that your attendance grade will be affected after your third unexcused absence. You are also required to submit two five-page papers. Together, the paper grades will make up 2/3 of your recitation grade.

Each week, you will be expected to email a discussion question to me at mukherjp@email.unc.edu by 5PM on Monday. The questions can cover topics from the readings, lectures, or videos from that day or the previous Wednesday. The discussion questions will be incorporated into study guides for the exams and final. You are also expected to come prepared each week to discuss one current international news article on a country of your choice.

Discussion Guidelines

Students are required to be active and informed participants in recitation discussions. Please bring the readings to class - we will frequently refer to passages during our discussions. The following are some guidelines to help you get started:

- **Do the readings!** You cannot participate well without having done the readings. I may occasionally give pop quizzes on the material.
- **Ask questions:** Questions are as important as comments, and I encourage you to come to class with a set of both.
- **Be on time:** Late arrivals are distracting and disruptive. An excess of late arrivals will affect your participation grade.
- **Be respectful:** Differences of opinion are likely and also desirable while discussing political issues. I encourage such discussions, but I also expect students to respect one another.
Important Dates

- **February 18**: Short Exam #1
- **April 3**: Short Exam #2
- **May 6**: Final Exam

Country Paper Assignments and Guidelines

You are required to submit two five-page papers. You will select one country to analyze in both papers. Refer to the 2012 *Freedom in the World* report from Freedom House ([http://www.freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world](http://www.freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world)). Select a country that 1) is not one of the country cases covered in class and 2) is rated “partly free”. A rating of “partly free” indicates that your country is somewhere between a functioning liberal democracy and a wholly authoritarian regime. Democratic institutions may be present, but they are not functioning properly.

The topic of the first paper is regime classification and challenges to democracy. To effectively complete the assignment, consider the following questions: How would you classify the current regime in your country, and why? Is it closer to a consensual democracy, a majoritarian democracy, or a non-democratic system? What are the main problems for democracy? Draw on historical details as necessary.

In the second paper, you will examine ways that your country can become more democratic in the future, with a focus on political institutions – presidential vs. parliamentary systems, electoral systems, constitutional design, and any additional political institutions that may impact the state of democracy. To effectively complete the assignment, consider the following questions: How would you suggest that the country move toward improving democracy given its own unique history? Would the country be better suited to a presidential or a parliamentary system? What electoral system would be likely to function well given the demographic breakdown and political cleavages? Are there other institutional changes that would improve the quality of democracy?

Each of the papers have to be five pages in length, double-spaced, and in 12-point Times New Roman font. Each paper must include a works cited with at least three academic sources. You can use whatever citation format you like, as long as you use it consistently throughout the paper. The due dates for the papers will be announced in recitation.

The Writing Center ([http://writingcenter.unc.edu/](http://writingcenter.unc.edu/)) is an excellent resource at any stage of the writing process.
Electronic Devices Policy

No electronic devices, including cell phones and laptops, are permitted during the recitation section. Please speak to me if you require the use of a laptop during class for educational purposes.

Contact Policy & Office Hours

Please contact me via e-mail or stop by my office during office hours with any questions about the course or the course materials. If you have concerns about grades or about an issue that requires significant time, please e-mail to set up an appointment.

Honor Code

The UNC Honor Code applies for all course work. Familiarize yourself with the Code online at http://studentconduct.unc.edu/.