

Course: POL 1 Introduction to Comparative Politics (in Social Justice Perspective)

1. Date of Application: 12/1/2011
2. Name, Dept of Proposer: Ron Ahnen, Politics
3. Name of Dept/Program housing course: Politics
4. Name of Chair/PD: Mindy Thomas
5. How often is the course taught:semesterly
6. Course Prerequisites:None
7. Unit value of course:1
- 8: Normal Class Size: 25
9. Number of sections expected Fall 2012:2
10. Number of sections expected Spring 2013:1
11. Is the course appropriate for first-year students: Yes
12. Relevant Learning Goal(s):Social, Historical, Cultural Understanding, Common Good
13. Chair will oversee submission of student work: Yes
14. Chair will oversee instructor participation in norming/asst: Yes

15. Teaching: "Social, Historical, and Cultural Understanding: This course is an introduction to the study of politics in countries outside of the US. The course is taught with an emphasis on the basic elements of methodology including independent and dependent variables, operationalization, assumptions, theory, hypothesis testing, and research design. We review several theories of economic and political development, including modernization theory, dependency theory, Marxist theories, and several theories of democratization and democratic consolidation. This course emphasizes major political shifts from World War II to the present in five or six case studies (Great Britain, Japan, Russia, Mexico, and Nigeria (sometimes Iran)).

Common Good: This course includes an explicit presentation of seven different social justice frameworks which we apply to public policies in our five or six case studies. We discuss issues of social justice in light of these frameworks throughout the semester, and focus exclusively on social justice issues in politics during the last two weeks including sex and racial discrimination, and development and poverty.

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16. Learning: "Social, Historical, and Cultural Understanding: Several assignments demonstrate the students ability to analyze politics in this class. First, the midterm and final exams require essays that link theoretical understandings to outcomes in specific cases. Second, there are two paper assignments. The first paper assignment asks the students to describe a major public policy of a foreign country (eg, gay marriage in Canada, health care in Sweden, Education policy in France, tax policy in China) and then evaluate that policy according to one of the seven frameworks of social justice presented in the class. The second paper assignment requires the student to review a peer-reviewed journal article by first summarizing the main argument (indicating independent and dependent variables, the major hypotheses and theories presented, and the research design), and then critiquing the article both on its strengths and shortcomings.

Common Good: In the first paper assignment, students are required to analyze a major public policy in another country according to one of the frameworks of social justice presented in the class. In addition, class discussions frequently refer back to these models as we go through our case studies. For example we talk about welfare with respect to budget cuts in Great Britain, gender discrimination in Japan, libertarian values in Russia, etc.

