Governments of the World

Political Science 141

Welcome to Governments of the World distance learning course. I am Professor Woods and the teacher assistant is Mr. Cardin. Our aim is to make this online course interesting, engaging, and a fruitful learning experience.

Email Protocol: Emails should begin with Professor Woods, or Mr. Woods. For the T.A., it should be Sir or Mr. Cardin. Don’t start an email with “Hey, Hello, or no formal salutations at all.” Absent a minimal of protocol emails will be ignored!

Office hours: only via email - Professor Woods, dwoods2@purdue.edu
Teaching Assistant P.R. Cardin, pcardin@purdue.edu

All students will be addressed by me and the T.A. as Sir or Madame. Once last names are known, Mr. Jones or Miss Janeway, for example, may be used as well.

Key university dates

- January 11 - Classes start
- January 18 - MLK holiday
- January 19 - Last day to register without a late fee
- January 25 - Last day to cancel a course assignment without it appearing on record.
- February 8 - Last day to withdraw a course with a grade of W or to add/modify a course with instructor and advisor signature
- March 14-19 - SPRING BREAK
- March 21 - Last day withdraw from a course with a W or WF grade
- March 21 - Last day to add/modify a course with instructor, advisor and department head signatures
- April 30 - Classes End
- May 2-7 - Final Exams

Course Description

This course introduces students to the basic theories, methods and concepts used by political scientists to explain and understand the functioning of governments, political regimes, political parties, electoral systems and social
and economic divisions within and across political systems. In the first half of the semester, students will be exposed to the key methods and theories of comparative politics. In the second half, we will apply many of the lessons learned from the first half to country studies. Our four countries studies are France, China, Russia and Nigeria.

In summary, students will get from the course

- An introduction to theories, concepts and methods used in political science and the sub-field of comparative politics
- An understanding of political and social conflicts
- Some comparative knowledge of party systems and electoral systems
- A comparative understanding of presidential and parliamentary governments
- A comparative understanding of different types of political regimes
- Substantive knowledge of four political systems: France, China, Russia and Nigeria, including their political culture and socio-political divisions and main political institutions

Learning Objectives and Acquired Skills

By the end of the course students should have obtained

- a good vocabulary of political science terms and concepts
- a good basis to analyze political and social dynamics
- some ability to analyze politics and identify bases of social and political conflicts in different political systems
- some substantive understanding of differences between France, China, Russia and Nigeria
- Critical thinking and writing skills

Course Organization, Assignments, and Grading

The course book is a customized ebook. It is only available online

Textbook: Governments of the World (Paulette Kurzer)

1. Go to http://create.mheducation.com/shop/

Stating the obvious: This is an online course. Thus, it is organized differently from a classroom course. It is based on the principle of interactive learning.
There are no formal lectures. The interactive learning takes place within learning modules. Within these modules, there are structured lesson plans and specified learning objectives. As you progress in the modules, you will be given an opportunity to assess what you have learned and how well you have grasped the material. Learning exercises follow each learning objective in each module. At the end of each learning module, there is a lessons learned, points earned assessment. The same questions you answer in the learning exercises are generally the same ones you will see on the learning assessment.

**Important Information**

1. You are given two chances to take the learning exercises (duration 60 minutes for each attempt that auto submits at the 60 minute point).
2. You **do not get any earned points** towards your grade for the learning exercises; the points you may see only indicate whether or not you answered the questions correctly.
3. You can take the lessons learned, points earned assessment only once; however, you will have 90 minutes to finish the assessment once you start (the clock does not stop if you decide to leave the exam and it will auto-submit once the time limit is up).
4. It is strongly recommended that you submit the lessons learned, points earned at the end of each module. In any case, the final deadline for submitting the lessons learned, points earned assessments is divided into two periods. In the first period, you can submit the first four lessons learned, points earned assessments at anytime up to the cut off time and date (**see course schedule**). In the second period, you can submit the next four lessons learned, points earned assessments anytime up to the cut off time and date (**see course schedule**). Once the deadline has passed, lessons learned, points earned assessments will not be accepted. **This is an ironclad policy: No exceptions!!**

At the end of the semester, all eight of the lessons learned points earned questions will be folded into a final exam. You will **have 480 minutes** to complete the exam. Recall however that once you start you can leave the exam but the clock will continue to run. The final must be submitted by May 6 before 11:30. **Please do not wait until the last minute.** Computer glitches and other extenuating circumstances will not be accepted as an excuse for work turned in after the deadlines!!! (**No Exceptions!!!!**).

All of the modules will be opened at the start of the semester. You can submit lessons learned points earned exams whenever you like. The same applies to any bonus point opportunities. However, bear in mind that once something is submitted, it is final and cannot be resubmitted or revised. **There are no exceptions to this rule!**

The eight lessons learned points earned assessments will count for **80 points** of your grade. The final exam will count for **20 points** of your grade. Bonus points opportunities made available during the semester can contribute an additional **15 points** to your final grade.
Grading Scale

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Some friendly advice: set a schedule with the lesson plans and stick to it! Taking an online course requires self-motivation and sticking to a learning schedule. I have developed detailed lesson plans and a course schedule. My advice is that you adapt it to your schedule. The deadline for when things are due is ironclad. Late assignments will not be accepted under any circumstances! The course is set up in a way that gives you ample time to do the assignments and submit them well in advanced of their due date and times.

University Policies

Students are encouraged to refer to Purdue's student guide for academic integrity (http://www.purdue.edu/odos/aboutodos/academicintegrity.php)

Cheating will be punished with a failing grade in the class and a report to the Dean of Students.

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Although in this distance course there is no attendance requirement, students are expected to keep up to date with all assignments.

To reiterate, late assignments will not be graded. Organize your time appropriately to meet the required deadlines for exams, course activities, and essays.