1. Catalog Description:
PLS 5033 Comparative Institutional Analysis (3-0-3) S Comp Inst Analys. This course provides a comparative analysis of political systems focusing on various political institutions. Prerequisite: Nine semester hours in the social sciences or permission of the instructor.

2. Objectives of this Course:
The goal of this course is to provide graduate students with an understanding of some of the important institutions of the political system (such as the electoral and party system as well as regime type) and how these institutions influence political behavior (for example voting, party formation and cabinet stability). These issues are explored within a comparative perspective not restricted to any one region.

3. Outline of the Course:
This course will be organized into fifteen weeks of fifteen separate 150 minute class periods.

- Week One – Introduction to the Course
- Week Two – Introduction to Electoral Systems (presentation)
- Week Four – The Impact of Majoritarianism on the Electoral System (presentation) (Journal 1 due)
- Week Five – Proportional Representation Systems and Their Effects (presentation)
- Week Six – The Electoral System and the Effective Number of Parties (presentation)
- Week Seven – Disproportionality in Electoral Systems (presentation)
- Week Eight – The Impact of Mixed Electoral Systems on Voting and Party Development (presentation) (Journal 2 due)
- Week Nine – The Effect of Electoral Systems on Gender (Paper 1 due)
- Week Ten – The Political Consequences of Presidential Regimes (presentation)
• Week Eleven -- The Political Consequences of Parliamentary Regimes (presentation)

• Week Twelve – Some Final Considerations on Presidential and Parliamentary Regimes (presentation)

• Week Thirteen – Premier-Presidential and Presidential-Parliamentary Regimes (presentation) (Journal 3 due)

• Week Fourteen – The Cabinet-Formation Implications of Institutional Choice (presentation)

• Week Fifteen – The Policy-Making Implications of Institutional Choice (paper 2 due)

• Methods of Evaluation: Students will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

  Papers: Students are required to write two, ten to twelve page (3,600 to 4,300 words), double-spaced, typewritten research papers. Each paper is worth 35% of their final grade. Students can examine a single case study or compare political institutions and behavior. Students will be required to present their papers on the due date. The presentations should be between ten to fifteen minutes.

  Presentations: Students will make at least three presentations of the reading assignments. The presentations are worth 15% of their final grade. The presentations should summarize the reading assignments and should be no more than fifteen to twenty minutes.

  Journals: Students are required to keep a typewritten journal in which they record an entry for each reading assignment. Journals will be collected three times during the semester. The journals are cumulatively worth 15% of their final grade. The length of the entries depends on the specific reading, but are expected to be between 1 to 2 pages.

4. Implementation:

• This course will initially be assigned to Steven D. Roper.

• There are no additional costs to students.

• Texts and supplementary materials (available through Textbook Rental):


  Additional readings will be made available at the Library Reserve Desk.

• Term first offered: Spring 2002
5. Rationale:

- Purpose and need: This course is a revision of an existing course (PLS 5033 Policy Problems in Industrialized States). For the past several years, the focus on this course has been on institutions and the policy process in West and East Europe. The proposed revision eliminates the specific regional and policy issue focus in order to make the course more truly comparative and more comprehensive of political institutions.

- Justification of the level of the course: The issues addressed, workload and grading criteria in this course are at the graduate level. The prerequisite of the course is nine semester hours in the social sciences or permission of the instructor.

- Similarity to existing courses: This course will replace Policy Problems in Industrialized States. The proposed course is not similar to any other course offered at the graduate level in the Department. It does not overlap with the content of any other graduate course in other departments. It will not affect any other University graduate program.

- Required or elective: This course may be chosen by political science graduate students to fulfill the requirements for the Comparative/International Relations concentration (major or minor). It will count as an elective in other cases.

6. Community College Transfer: Not relevant

7. Date Approved by Department: March 21, 2001

8. Date Approved by the College of Sciences Curriculum Committee: April 6, 2001

9. Date Approved by the Council on Graduate Studies: April 17, 2001

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