GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW FORM
SOCIAL SCIENCE  5/15

Please attach/submit additional documents as needed to fully complete each section of the form.

I. COURSE INFORMATION

Department:  Political Science (PSCI)  
Course Title:  Introduction to Comparative Government  
Course Number:  PSCI 220

Type of Request:  New  One-time Only  Renew*  Change  Remove

Rationale:

*If course has not changed since the last review and is taught by the same tenure-track faculty member, you may skip sections III-V.

JUSTIFICATION FOR COURSE LEVEL

Normally, general education courses will not carry pre-requisites, will carry at least 3 credits, and will be numbered at the 100-200 level. If the course has more than one pre-requisite, carries fewer than three credits, or is upper division (numbered at the 300 level or above), provide rationale for exception(s).

II. ENDORSEMENT / APPROVALS

* Instructor:  Christopher Muste  
  Phone / Email:  243-4829 / christopher.muste@umontana.edu
  Program Chair:  Ramona Grey  
  Dean:  Jenny McNulty

Signature  Date
Christopher Muste  2/12/16
Ramona Grey  2/12/16
Jenny McNulty  2/18/16

*Form must be completed by the instructor who will be teaching the course. If the instructor of the course changes before the next review, the new instructor must be provided with a copy of the form prior to teaching the course.

III. DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

General Education courses must be introductory and foundational within the offering department or within the General Education Group. They must emphasize breadth, context, and connectedness; and relate course content to students' future lives: See Preamble
IV. CRITERIA

BRIEFLY EXPLAIN HOW THIS COURSE MEETS THE CRITERIA FOR THE GROUP.

1. Systematically study individuals, groups, or social institutions;

   Readings, lectures, and review sessions systematically examine differences and similarities across national political systems.

2. analyze individuals, groups, or social problems and structures; and/or

   Readings and lectures utilize general theories and concepts to analyze national historical development, political cultures, economic structures, and political systems.

3. give considerable attention to ways in which conclusions and generalizations are developed and justified as well as the methods of data collection and analysis.

   Readings and lectures examine the development of theories, concepts and associated descriptive categories, how category classifications are measured, and what political outcomes the categories are related to.

V. STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

BRIEFLY EXPLAIN HOW THIS COURSE WILL MEET THE APPLICABLE LEARNING GOALS.

1. Describe the nature, structure, and historical development of human behavior, organizations, social phenomena, and/or relationships:

   Exams and a research paper require students to understand the development, structure, and functioning of a wide range of political cultures and political systems.

2. use theory in explaining these individual, group, or social phenomena; and/or

   Students gain experience applying theories and concepts about political development and system functioning in country-specific research papers and exams.

3. understand, assess, and evaluate how conclusions and generalizations are justified based on data.

   Students’ research papers focus on their acquiring data about political events in one country, then critically examining how well course theories and concepts apply to the country-level data.

VI. ASSESSMENT

A. HOW ARE THE LEARNING GOALS ABOVE MEASURED? Describe the measurement(s) used, such as a rubric or specific test questions that directly measure the General Education learning goals. Please attach or provide a web link to the rubric, test questions, or other measurements used.

1. Students take two midterm exams and one final exam. The exam structure follows the development of course concepts and theories, combining questions about fundamental concepts, such as the state, nation, demands (inputs), civic culture, colonialism, etc., with examples of their development in eight different countries. The exam format combines multiple-choice questions with written answers defining key concepts (e.g., democratic centralism) and short essays linking concepts to countries. An example of the latter is, “A. Political scientists studying different countries’ political systems have defined five criteria for measuring how democratic a state is. Name and briefly describe two of these five criteria for democracy. Next, compare development and current state of the two criteria you named and described, for either the U.S. and Great Britain, or the U.S. and France.”

2. Each student researches and writes an analytic paper that combines research on current news media sources’ reporting on political and social issues in a country not covered in the course readings, with course theories and concepts, to form an analytic
overview of the current political situation in that country. First, students are assigned different countries and receive detailed instructions about how to search for current, politically relevant information in three news sources (the Economist, NY Times, and Washington Post) using the Mansfield Library search tools. Students then evaluate this information about recent events in the country in terms of the course theories and concepts, for example theories of democratization, the capacity of the system to handle political demands, and the opportunities and constraints on people's ability to act politically and wield influence. The students then synthesize the descriptive material about country events with theory and concepts into an analytic framework developed by the student.

3. The course exams directly test students' ability to connect data and evidence with categorizations and conclusions by asking questions about the links between data and conclusions. For example, students are asked how the changes in the way that elections were conducted and power among governmental institutions was distributed in the French political system between the Third and Fourth Republics on the one hand, and the Fifth Republic, related to the greater degree of functionality but more restricted public influence in the Fifth Republic. The main intellectual challenge of the research paper described in #2 is to link data and evidence about one country with broader conclusions and generalizations across a range of countries.

A General Education Assessment Report will be due on a four-year rotating cycle. You will be notified in advance of the due date. This will serve to fulfill the University's accreditation requirements to assess general education and will provide an opportunity to connect with your colleagues across campus and share teaching strategies. Items VI.B-D will be helpful in compiling the report.

B. ACHIEVEMENT TARGETS
[This section is optional. Achievement targets can be reported if they have been established.]
Describe the desirable level of performance for your students, and the percentage of students you expected to achieve this:

1.
2.
3.

C. ASSESSMENT FINDINGS
[This section is optional. Assessment findings can be reported if they are available.]

What were the results/findings, and what is your interpretation/analysis of the data? (Please be detailed, using specific numbers/percentages when possible. Qualitative discussion of themes provided in student feedback can also be reported. Do NOT use course grades or overall scores on a test/essay. The most useful data indicates where students' performance was stronger and where it was weaker. Feel free to attach charts/tables if desired.)

D. ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK
[This section is optional. Assessment feedback can be reported if it is available.]

Given your students' performance the last time the course was offered, how will you modify the course to enhance learning? You can also address how the course could be improved, and what changes in the course content or pedagogy you plan to make, based upon on the findings. Please include a timeframe for the changes.

Student evaluations have been very positive; however I am concerned about new UM students' motivation, learning skills and study habits. There will be two review and discussion sessions each week, staffed by the Teaching Assistant. Students will be able to earn extra credit by attending at least two sessions during each of the three parts of the course. The publisher of the textbook used for the course no longer offers quizzes on each chapter's material, so in collaboration with my Teaching Assistant I will develop quizzes and post them on Moodle for students to assess how well they are learning the material and which material they need to study.
PSCI 220 -- INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT  
Fall 2014  
MWF 11:10 - 12:00, Social Science Building 356

Professor Christopher Muste 
Office: LA 416 (Liberal Arts Building, Room 416)  
Office Hours: Monday 12-1, Wednesday 12-2, and by appointment  
Political Science Department: 350 Liberal Arts, phone 406-243-5202

Teaching Assistants:  
Nimendra Mavalagedara: Office & office hours: Corbin 345, Monday 10-11  
Nick Potratz: Office & office hours: Corbin 347, Wednesday 12-1  
Weekly Review Sessions: Wednesday 10-11 (place TBA); Friday 12-1 (place TBA)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:  
The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the major types of political systems in different countries, and to examine the effects of different political systems on the way countries are governed and on the lives of their citizens. It will also introduce you to the main concepts and theories that political scientists use to make sense of the wide variety of political systems in the world.

The course begins by introducing and explaining the principal concepts used in comparative politics to study countries’ political systems. We will then apply these concepts to analyze the main characteristics of the political systems of industrialized democracies as a group, and then more intensively analyze the similarities and differences in the political systems of three industrialized democracies – the United States, Great Britain, and France – and the emerging European Union. Next, we will examine the political systems of communist and post-communist countries, and the changes taking place in Russia and China. Then we will examine the political systems of the large group of nations called “global south,” “less developed” or “third world” and focus on India, Iran, and Mexico. We will conclude by exploring some of the problems and opportunities cities and countries will likely face in the coming years.

In addition to addressing these questions, this course satisfies the General Education Social Sciences requirement. The learning goals of this requirement are to enable you to 1) describe the nature, structure, and historical development of human organizations and/or relationships, 2) comprehend the role of theory in explaining social phenomena, 3) generate and/or interpret social science data, 4) assess and evaluate the significance of social science phenomena.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES:  
Introductory courses are intensive by nature and build on the knowledge gained in earlier parts of the course, which means that your investment in keeping up with the class will pay off in terms of how much you will learn, how interesting class will be, and how well you will do on the exams and research paper. This requires doing the readings before each class and being prepared to contribute to class discussion and ask questions—in a large class such as this, intelligent questions and discussions are critical components of learning. There will be two midterms (each worth 25% of the course grade), an exam during finals week (25% of the course grade), and one research and analysis paper (25% of the course grade) due in mid-November. Grades will be assigned according to the following percentages:

A = 93-100  
B+ = 87-89.9  
B = 83-86.9  
B- = 80-82.9  
C+ = 77-79.9  
C = 73-76.9  
C- = 70-72.9  
D+ = 67-69.9  
D = 63-66.9  
D- = 60-62.9

below 60=F

* Makeup exams will be permitted only if I have been notified prior to the missed exam and if I agree that the absence was necessitated by a serious, documented emergency.
* All three exams and the research & analysis paper must be completed in order to pass the course.
* Check your calendar now to make sure you do not have any conflicts with the 3 exams scheduled.