COMPARATIVE POLITICAL CULTURE

A. Course Goals:
Although this course will study political culture, as conventionally defined within the discipline of political science, it will also go considerably further afield by considering alternative political realities and the definitions and understandings of the political arena which may flow from them. Does the study of the connections between the realm of politics and the realm of culture hold some hope for better understanding the political world around us? Does culture have a serious impact on politics and public policy, or is it merely another academic irrelevancy? Does culture actually explain anything?

The first goal of the course will expose students to several of the major scholarly approaches and orientations which have attempted to link cultural phenomena to the study of politics. Broadly comparative in scope, we shall focus on the intersections of politics and culture within various geographic regions (including the U.S.), as well as on various analytical patterns and configurations of politics and culture. What are the systematic linkages between the realms of politics and culture? What are their importance in the contemporary world? And how may we best study them?

The course has a second goal as well—to explore the notion of political legitimacy. Although in recent years, the various theoretical strands of political economy; social class analysis; ethnicity, cultural pluralism, and the politics of identity; and state-society relations have all contributed importantly to our understanding of political phenomena, they do not adequately address the question of what constitutes a politically legitimate order. Nor do these theoretical orientations probe the critical relationship between culture and political legitimacy. How do rarely articulated assumptions and understandings shape our views of political legitimacy? The question of political legitimacy should not be taken for granted. For example, we should not facilely assume that the construction of democracy and the construction of political legitimacy are necessarily identical processes. Nor should we assume that we even know what factors are likely to contribute to the construction of political legitimacy in any given society. Although, such cautions are especially important and relevant in those parts of the globe undergoing rapid political change since the end of the Cold War, they are equally important in established democracies (including our own) where notions of political legitimacy are continuously being refashioned and reconstituted.

B. Course Requirements:
There will be two lectures each week and it is expected that students will attend regularly. “Lecture” should not imply that your questions, comments, and observations are out of order. Far from it. Within the limits imposed by a moderately large class, time, and the necessity of
completing the course outline, student participation is actively encouraged for the instructor values dialogue more than monologue. It is thus essential that students do the reading on time (by Wednesday of each week), and appear in class ready to share their questions, thoughts, and observations. Please note that in order to facilitate a friendly and comfortable learning environment for all, recording devices of any sort will be permitted only with the instructor’s consent. With the same goal in mind, all cell phones, pagers, ipods, and other such devices should be turned off during our class sessions. Students wishing to use laptop computers to take notes may do so, but please observe the following simple rules of etiquette: a) be sure your sound is off at the beginning of class; b) please stay focused on the course: surfing, gaming, or checking out “Facebook” entries is distracting to those around you; and c) during certain periods laptops may be prohibited (during exams or films, for example), so please respect these limitations on personal electronics.

There will be a mid-term examination on Wednesday, 17 October 2012 as well as a two-hour final examination on Wednesday, 19 December 2012 starting at 10:05 a.m. (Sorry, the scheduling of the final on Wednesday morning was definitely not my idea. Please note well that since you have been alerted to this awkward and inconvenient bit of university scheduling on day one of the semester, and since it has been readily available on the web since last spring, requests to take the final at alternative times because of fear of sorcery, vampires, alien invaders, or winter break travel arrangements will not fall on sympathetic ears.) In addition, undergraduates will submit a 2,500 word (roughly 10 typewritten pages) term paper dealing with a contemporary aspect of comparative political culture. Graduate students (as well as undergraduate honors students) should submit a lengthier, more theoretically focused, paper of 5,000 words (or 20 typewritten pages). Honors students should treat the requirement of a lengthier paper as the “default” option. Other possibilities for fulfilling the honors requirement exist and the instructor will be happy to discuss them with you. All papers are due on Wednesday, 21 November 2012, but will be welcomed earlier. Late papers are a serious “no-no,” and will be penalized severely.

In addition, all students should submit a one-page, typewritten statement of the proposed topic which tentatively indicates some of the sources to be consulted. These paper proposals are due no later than Wednesday, 10 October 2012, but will also be welcomed earlier. Consultations will then be arranged for all students desiring, or needing, them. All term paper topics must be approved in this way. Although these paper proposal exercises will not be graded, students failing to submit them will not receive a passing grade. Similarly, all required work must be submitted to be eligible to receive a passing grade. (Students affiliated with the McBurney Center are warmly and strongly encouraged to see the instructor as soon as possible if they are going to need alternate arrangements.)

Finally, the all students should have a university e-mail address so that they will be able to receive and post messages of interest pertaining to the subject matter of the course. The list address for this course is: polisci657-1-f12@lists.wisc.edu.
C. Grading Criteria:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final examination</td>
<td>40%</td>
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Where possible, the instructor will reward exceptional cases of sustained, consistent, and intelligent class participation. Borderline cases will also be determined on the basis of class participation.

D. Readings:
The following books will be used extensively. In theory, the University Book Store and the reserve reading room of the College Library in Helen C. White Hall should have copies available. They are also all available online from various vendors. Please note: it is required that you read these books, not that you buy them.

David Art, *The Politics of the Nazi Past in Germany and Austria* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).


In the course outline which follows, some readings are required (*); others are recommended (#) for those wishing to pursue a subject further. Required books readings should be on three-hour reserve in the College Library at Helen C. White Hall. In addition, all required articles may be accessed both through Learn@UW and the following web link: [web]. (Throughout the remainder of this syllabus this will be abbreviated as [web].) Some of the recommended articles may also be accessed through other indicated links or directly through MadCat. You may need to access these from a UW email or web address, but the relevant journal articles should then be accessible. To facilitate easy access, I will send electronic copies of this syllabus (in WordPerfect, Word, Adobe pdf, and html) to the classlist. A copy of this syllabus will also be accessible through [web] and Learn@UW.
E. Course Outline:

1–Organization and Introduction 5 September 2012


2–Basic Concepts, 2: Politics, Culture, Legitimacy 12 September 2012

*Edelman, Constructing the Political Spectacle, entire (1-130).


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**3–Constructing Political Reality, 1**

*Art, *The Politics of the Nazi Past in Germany and Austria*, 1-100.


4–Constructing Political Reality, 2  
26 September 2012

*Art, The Politics of the Nazi Past in Germany and Austria, 101-212.


5–Other Political Realities? 1  
3 October 2012

*Bockie, Death and the Invisible Powers, 1-82.


##6–Other Political Realities? 2 10 October 2012

***1-PAGE PAPER PROPOSALS DUE: WEDNESDAY, 10 OCTOBER***


*Alan Kilpatrick, *The Night has a Naked Soul: Witchcraft and Sorcery among the Western Cherokee* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997).


7–Analytic Interlude, 1

***MID-TERM EXAM: WEDNESDAY, 17 OCTOBER 2012***

8–Cognitive Models, 1

24 October 2012


#Dorothy Holland and Naomi Quinn, eds., *Cultural Models in Language and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).


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### 9–Cognitive Models, 2
31 October 2012


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### 10–Culture under Construction, 1a: Music
7 November 2012


**11—Culture under Construction, 1b: More Music**  


12–Analytic Interlude, 2

***TERM PAPER DUE: WEDNESDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2012***

13–Culture under Construction, 2: Religion

**28 November 2012**


14—Everyday Culture, 1  
5 December 2012

*Eickelman and Piscatori, Muslim Politics, 108-164.  

#Karin Barber, Africa’s Hidden Histories: Everyday Literacy and Making the Self (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).  


15–Final Thoughts: Creating Political Legitimacy 6 May 2010


***FINAL EXAMINATION:***

***WEDNESDAY, 19 DECEMBER 2012, 10:05 a.m. - 12:05 p.m., LOCATION: T.B.A.***