**Comparative Politics Term Paper Guidelines**

*F2020*

Term Paper or Argumentative Paper replaces a written Final Examination. It is worth 30 points of your final grade. Paper presentation is worth 10 points (see separate Presentations Guidelines).

Paper must be uploaded to GDrive no later than 23.59 on 11 December 2020. Link is on Moodle. Late submissions will be penalized by deducting 3 points/hour. Beware of plagiarism; plagiarized works will receive zero for the assignment and reported to College Disciplinary Committee. If unsure about plagiarism, talk to your instructor.

A Term Paper is an argumentative essay, not a pure primary research. Good argumentative papers must have a good argumentative topic. We discussed this in class. Avoid descriptive tone. Instead see if your argument sparks debate, controversy, agreement/disagreement, etc. Obvious, universalistic and highly generalizable arguments should be avoided. Aim at advancing an argument that is fresh, thought-provoking, controversial, debatable, and can be tested empirically. For example, ‘foreign aid creates dependency of South Asian countries on Western donors’. Such an argument is quite debatable because there are various theories and opinions contesting it. Take one of the sides and provide ample evidence in its support.

As you now know, Comparative Politics is all about comparing countries to explain political phenomena. Consequently, start by picking a phenomenon that is interesting for you; then, brainstorm and speculate about a) whether this phenomenon occurs equally across all countries, or b) whether this phenomenon occurs only in a specific range of countries. Such mental exercise should start the thinking process and help you land on an interesting and curious topic. Differences in how phenomena manifest themselves in different or similar countries can be attributed to myriad of factors such as colonial legacy, political culture, political system, recent military conflict, territorial disputes, education, etc. See how these and other factors may be affecting your selected phenomenon.

For exactly how comparisons can be made see our last class’s topic. An argument without evidence is not an argument at all. Pay careful attention to what you present in your paper as evidence. Not everything that you come across during the literature review process is scientific, objective, and credible.

**Grading criteria**

Argumentation: does the work possess an argumentative tone and genre or is it merely a description of the process or phenomenon? Description is, of course, necessary, but only within the argumentative context.

Case(-s) justification: do not leave reader guessing why you selected countries you selected. Demonstrate logic and rationale for doing so. Refer to comparison designs (MSSD and MDSD).

Evidence: is the provided evidence relevant and sound? Where does it come from? Who produced it and how? You are free to use any sources, both scientific and not. However, assess credibility, recency and applicability of this evidence for your work. For example, I would be concerned if you demonstrate country’s current literacy rate from a newspaper article from early 2000s. First, literacy rate could be gauged from more authoritative and accessible sources than a newspaper. Second, early 2000s data is too old for contemporary analysis.

Style, structure and formatting: avoid contractions such as ‘don’t’ and ‘they’ll’ as they do not look academic. You are free to use your personal tone such as ‘I’, ‘my’. See below for formatting guidelines. Paper structure should be comprehensive, logical and consistent.

References: you should use at least 5 references in your paper. What references you used; how recent they are; how scientific and credible they are? References must be formatted to APA style. List of references should come in the end of the paper.

Theory, concepts and terminology: do you use any theories or concepts to illustrate your points? Do you demonstrate fluent use of political science/IR terminology? I must be able to tell that you’ve completed the CP course by receiving positive answers to above questions.

**Formatting**

* Times New Roman, 12 pt, double-spaced line interval, 2.5 cm page margins
* No need for a cover page, but the top of your paper should have your name, ID, paper title and word count
* Do not forget to include page numbers and indicate the word count on top
* Word Limit: 2500 words (excl. references, footnotes) +- 10%
* Figures and Tables must have captions and sources indicated

Good luck!