Dr. John W. Cotman  
POLS 170-01 (CRN 19382)  
Office: Douglass Hall, Room 142  
Government & Politics of Central  
America & the Caribbean  
Office: Phone/ Voice Mail: 202.806.6848  
Spring 2011  
E-mail: jcotman@howard.edu  
Mon-Wed-Fri  9:10 - 10:00 AM  
Secretary: Ms. Taylor  
Douglass Hall Room 0126  
Office Hours: Mon: 10 AM - 1 PM  
Wed: 10 AM - Noon

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course examines contemporary politics and society in Central America and the Caribbean. We will look into key issues facing the nation-states and peoples of the region: special problems facing women, role of political parties, democracy and democratization, foreign policy and impacts of international actors in the region, politics of environmental decay, dilemmas of instability and authoritarianism, reform and revolution, politics of “race” and ethnicity, the military, and the political economy of development and underdevelopment.

**Prerequisites**

This is an advanced undergraduate research seminar. Students – at a minimum – should have taken “Introduction to Comparative Politics” (POLS–003) and “International Relations” (POLS–128).

**Course Goals**

1. To familiarize students with contemporary interdisciplinary scholarship regarding the political challenges confronting peoples of the Greater Caribbean.
2. To help undergraduate students engage in empirically grounded, theoretically informed and methodologically aware analysis of state–society relations in the Greater Caribbean.
3. To encourage students to apply the ideas and methods of comparative political analysis to important domestic and global issues.
4. To approach the class as a collaborative “community of scholars” that facilitates the mastery of class materials, and respects differences of opinion.

**Course Objectives (Students should gain or improve)**

1. Ability to read, comprehend, and analyze contemporary social science research on the region – paying particular attention to theory, method and contending visions of the “good society.”
2. Capacity to write succinct and persuasive book and movie review essays.
3. Capacity to write succinct and persuasive take home essay examinations.
4. Ability to write annotated bibliographies.
5. Ability to write an original research paper of publishable quality.
6. Master the class discussion rubric to develop presentation skills used in scholarly conferences.
7. Integrate knowledge from previous courses to better appreciate the cumulative basis of knowledge.
8. Gain a better understanding of core concepts and issues in the comparative analysis of politics, such as authoritarianism, culture, democracy, equality, development, justice, political participation, reform, revolution, race, ethnicity, gender, class, and transnational relations.

**Teaching Approach**

1. This course utilizes a pedagogy based on graduate seminars. Students are expected to complete assigned readings before class, and utilize formal class discussion to enhance understanding of course materials.
2. This course requires active participation and consistent work. There is no formal lecturing or passive time for students.
3. Students receive exam questions at the outset of class as a guide to the course content they are expected to master.
4. Regular collaboration with the instructor during office hours is crucial for successful class performance.
Required Course Texts @ Howard University Bookstore


Other Required Readings


Highly Recommended


READINGS ON RESERVE AT UNDERGRADUATE LIBRARY
1. Also see reserves by Cotman. “Caribbean Political Systems” POLS-222-01.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
<th>(pts.)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Art of Political Murder review essay</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>(10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Log of Christopher Columbus review essay</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>(10)</td>
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<td>3. Two meetings with instructor</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
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<td>4. Examination #1</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
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<td>5. Examination #2</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>(40)</td>
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<td>6. Annotated Bibliography for research paper</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
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<td>7. Research Paper</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>(30)</td>
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<td>8. Class presentation of readings</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
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<td>9. Attendance</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>(05)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Participation</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
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The Art of Political Murder Review Essay

Log of Christopher Columbus Review Essay
Read the book The Log of Christopher Columbus. Write a 1000-word essay on your impressions of the book and why you think I assigned it. Essay Deadline: Friday March 25.

ATTENDANCE POLICY
Howard University's attendance policy reads as follows:
"All students are expected to attend classes regularly and promptly. Students who are absent from classes [...] are held responsible, nevertheless, for the entire work of the course. Members of the faculty will hold students responsible for regular and prompt class attendance."
Students allowed one absence without penalty. Attendance counts 2.5% of your grade or 5 points:

3 absences or less: 5 points  
4 absences: 2.5 points  
5 absences or more: 0 points

Absence is defined as missing class or arriving after 9:15 AM. Policy strictly enforced!

PARTICIPATION
Students are expected to have read and be prepared to discuss assigned materials. Readings are to be brought to class whether or not you are a discussion leader. Students will be penalized for not being in class to lead assigned class discussions, or for not being prepared to lead class discussions. Students will also be penalized for not bringing assigned readings to class. Participation is worth 2.5% of your grade, or 5 points.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS
All work is due no later than the deadlines printed on this syllabus. All work must be turned in no later than the end of my office hours or the end of class on the date indicated to receive credit. Exceptions to this policy will be made only with prior approval. Unless you obtain an extension from me in person prior to a deadline no credit will be given for late assignments. Extensions will not be granted over the phone. As a rule, I do not give incompletes. If you are having difficulty with an assignment or making a deadline see me as early as possible.

PROSPECTIVE GRADUATES
Those students who expect to graduate this spring are to perform at the same level of excellence required of all my students. Political Science majors who receive a grade less than "C" in this class will not be eligible for graduation. Students from other departments should familiarize themselves with the appropriate minimum grade requirements for graduation. Prospective graduates whose performance in this class is not at the minimum necessary to graduate will not receive any special consideration. If you plan to graduate, do the work!

PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING
Students must abide by Howard's Academic Code of Student Conduct:
Howard University is a community of scholars composed of faculty and students both of whom must hold the pursuit of learning and search for truth in the highest regard. Such regard requires adherence to the goal of unquestionable integrity and honesty in the discharge of teaching and learning responsibilities. Such regard allows no place for academic dishonesty regardless of any seeming advantage or gain that might accrue from such dishonesty. To better assure the realization of this goal any student enrolled for study at the University may be disciplined for the academic infractions defined below.

Definitions of Academic Infractions
1. Academic cheating — any intentional act(s) of dishonesty in the fulfillment of academic course or program requirements. This offense shall include (but is not limited to) utilization of the assistance of any additional individual(s), organization, document, or other aid not specifically and expressly authorized by the instructor or department involved. (Note: This infraction assumes that with the exception of authorized group assignments or group take home assignments, all course or program assignments shall be completed by an individual student only without any consultation or collaboration with any other individual, organization, or aid.)
2. **Plagiarism** — to take and pass off intentionally as one’s own the ideas, writings, etc. of another without attribution (without acknowledging the author).

I expect students who witness cheating to confidentially inform me. I will handle the matter from there. *Those who cheat or plagiarize can expect -- at a minimum -- to fail this course.*

**Howard University Compliance with Americans with Disability Act (ADA)**

Howard University is committed to providing an educational environment that is accessible to all students. In accordance with this policy, students in need of accommodations due to a disability should contact the Office of the Dean for Special Student Services (202-238-2420; tsamuels@howard.edu) for verification and determination of reasonable accommodations as soon as possible after admission and at the beginning of each semester as needed.

**Teaching–Learning Environment**

To maintain the integrity of the learning environment all students are expected to refrain from: tardiness, eating in class, unexcused absences, talking during class presentations, class disruptions, and bringing uninvited guests without the instructor’s prior approval. Use of the following in class is prohibited: cell phones, beepers/pagers, MP3 players. Use of recording devices, laptop computers and iPads must be approved in advance on a case–by–case basis.

**GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH PAPER & ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Each student is required to write an original research paper upon approval of the topic by the instructor. *Topic must be approved by Wednesday January 26.* Each student will provide an annotated bibliography (see details p. 6). *Bring six books/scholarly articles for the annotated bibliography on the approved topic to my office no later than Monday February 14.* The annotated bibliography with a minimum of six books/scholarly articles is due no later than *Monday February 28.* The *first draft of the paper is to be reviewed during regular office hours no later than Wednesday March 23.*

Research papers are to be no more than thirty typed, double-spaced pages (plus final bibliography). Note: final bibliography attached to research paper need not be annotated. *Research papers will be turned in no later than Monday April 18.* To receive credit for this assignment you must have the topic approved, bring in the six books/articles, turn in the annotated bibliography, have the draft reviewed, and turn in the final draft on schedule.

**Research Papers**

Grading Criteria:

1) Begin with a one-page summary of your work. Succinctly present your themes, hypotheses, and findings. [3 pts.]

2) Your normative/ideological and theoretical perspective. [3 pts.]


4) The logic of your argument. Is it consistent? [8 pts.]

5) Sources of evidence. Does your evidence supports your conclusions? [8 pts.]

6) Substantive, theoretical & methodological connections between your paper & class readings. [3 pts.]

7) Suggest issues & hypotheses which future research on your topic should address & recommend the most promising methodological and theoretical approaches. [1 pts]

8) Proper grammar, punctuation and spelling are essential and will affect your grade. Please refer to *The Chicago Manual of Style* [3 pts]

**Total Points = 30 [grading guide in parentheses]**

*If you have difficulty with assignment please see me as early as possible!*
**VIRUS ALERT:** Students often report problems producing their papers due to computer viruses at Howard University computer labs. Save all notes & drafts of your paper until after you have handed it in. Make up at least two electronic backups of your paper. Be certain to use only computers that have updated anti-virus programs and have been checked for viruses before you use them. I refuse to accept papers on electronic storage media. I may accept them by fax or via the Internet, but you must make special arrangements during my office hours to use these two options. It is your responsibility to hand in your paper as scheduled. The excuse “I lost my paper in the computer” will not be accepted.

**Annotated Bibliography**

Write a short passage - no more than one paragraph - summarizing the material in the book or article that you will be using in your paper. See sample below:

Collier, David.
Provides methodological guidelines for the research design. Appropriateness of in-depth comparative study with small-N and "comparable" cases.

Cotman, John Walton.
Appendices provide most detailed summary available of aid and cooperation programs between Cuba and Grenada's PRG. Lists potential areas of cooperation between CARICOM states and Cuba.
Overview of CARICOM-Cuba relations, especially since 1983. Details convergence up to June 1992. Initial assessment of impact of Cuba's new economic policy on relations with anglophone Caribbean.
Comprehensive illustration of the economic benefits Grenada received from its relations with Cuba. Limits of the relationship prior to collapse of Grenada Revolution, and major transformations currently underway in Cuba.

Deere, Carmen Diana.
Eyewitness account of impact of collapse of Soviet bloc on Cuban economy, and policy responses from Havana.
Deere, Carmen Diana et al.
Excellent overview of the socioeconomic crisis of the Caribbean in the 1980s. Provides data and measures I can use to operationalize state fiscal crises, and domestic capital accumulation crises.

Eckstein, Susan
State of the art small-N, cross-national comparative case study of political economy that employs aggregate economic data. Incorporate its method into my work.
GUIDELINES FOR LEADING CLASS DISCUSSIONS

It is absolutely essential that students do the required readings prior to class and be prepared to discuss and critique them. To facilitate this, students will be asked to lead discussions. Be prepared to lead a 15-20 minute discussion. Be sure to incorporate questions to stimulate class participation. You must provide the class with legible written outlines of the points you wish to discuss. Maximum length of outlines is three type-written pages. These are to be handed out at the beginning of class.

NOTE: Since all students are expected to have finished the assigned readings, your summary of the contents will not exceed one page of the handout. All class handouts should be formatted as outlines, with references to specific pages and passages. USE THE RUBRIC BELOW:

1. Summarize main themes, hypotheses & conclusions. [No more than 1 page]

2a. Normative Perspective: view of just society, right vs. wrong, good vs. evil

2b. Political Ideology: liberalism, for example

2c. Theoretical Model: modernization, for example

3. Methods used: for example, survey research, participant observation, multivariate statistics. Revisit your research methods text & use it.

4. Readability: ease of reading, familiarity of vocabulary, level of audience, does it keep your attention, have good illustrations, use charts & tables effectively, etc.

5. Cite Major Argument. Is it logical?: Direct us to the passages where key argument is most fully developed.

6. Sources: are sources credible, biased, appropriate for research question being asked?

7. Best Evidence. Does it support the major argument? Find the most compelling evidence.

8. Devil’s Advocate: Use the best evidence cited above to reach a conclusion contrary to the author’s. Hint: look at the evidence from a different normative/ ideological/ theoretical perspective.

9. New Facts/ Interpretations: Give one example of something you learned.

10. Make Connections to class readings:
    a. Who else writes about the same topic?
    b. Who else uses the same theory or criticizes the theory used?
    c. Who else uses the same methods to generate and analyze data, or criticizes the methods used?

11. Significant Contribution to your knowledge?

12. Future Research: If you were to conduct research on the same topic:
    a. What hypotheses & research questions would you investigate and why?
    b. What theoretical models would you use and why?
    c. What methods would you use to obtain data and analyze it and why?
Readings & Assignments Schedule

1) M Jan 10: First Day of Class. Review Syllabus
   - The Art of Political Murder
   - Assign class readings
2) W Jan 12: Introduction
   - Film: "Romero" - Part 1 Media Center/UGL Room 140
   - The Art of Political Murder
   - Assign class readings
   - Receive questions for exam #1
3) F Jan 14: Introduction
   - Film: "Romero" - Part 2. Media Center/UGL Room 140
   - The Art of Political Murder
   - Assign class readings
4) M Jan 17: Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday. No Class
5) W Jan 19: Introduction
   - Film: "Romero" - Part 3. Media Center/UGL Room 140
   - The Art of Political Murder
6) F Jan 21: Introduction
   - Discuss the film: "Romero"
   - Discuss the book The Art of Political Murder
7) M Jan 24: Central America Overview
   - Booth: Chapters 1 ________________ 2 ________________
   - The Art of Political Murder review essay due
8) W Jan 26: Central America: Common History & Costa Rica
   - Booth: Chapters 3 ________________ 4 ________________
   - Research Paper Topic Due
9) F Jan 28: Central America: Nicaragua & El Salvador
   - Booth: Chapters 5 ________________ 6 ________________
10) W Feb 2: Central America: Guatemala & Honduras
    - Booth: Chapters 7 ________________ 8 ________________
    - Booth: Chapters 9 ________________ 10 ________________
12) W Feb 9: Central America: Race, Mestizo Nationalism & Natural Resource Conflicts
    - Hooker ________________
    - Mollett ________________
    - Frundt ________________
14) M Feb 14: Central America: Precursors to Femicide
    - Carey & Torres: ________________
    - Deadline six books/scholarly articles for annotated bibliography
15) W Feb 16: Central America: Gender & Revolution
    - Kampwirth: Introduction ________________
16) F Feb 18: Central America: Gender & Revolution in Nicaragua
    - Kampwirth: Chapter 1 ________________
** M Feb 21: No Class. Presidents’ Day
17) W Feb 23: Central America: Gender & Revolution in El Salvador
   - Kampwirth: Chapter 2

18) F Feb 25: Central America: Gender & Rebellion in Chiapas, Mexico
   - Kampwirth: Chapter 3

19) M Feb 28: Central America: Rethinking Gender, Revolution & Rebellion
   - Kampwirth: Chapter 4
   - Annotated Bibliography Due

   - Kampwirth: Appendix

21) F Mar 4: Central America – Take Home Examination Review Session

   - Examination #1 Central America Due
   - Film: "Sugar Cane Alley"- Part 1 Media Center/UGL Room 140

   - Film: "Sugar Cane Alley"- Part 2 Media Center/UGL Room 140
   - The Log of Christopher Columbus
   - Receive questions for exam #2

   - Film: "Sugar Cane Alley"- Part 3 Media Center/UGL Room 140
   - The Log of Christopher Columbus

   - Discuss the book The Log of Christopher Columbus
   - First draft of research paper due

   - Hillman & D’Agostino: Chapters 3____________________ 4____________________
   - Log of Christopher Columbus review essay due

27) M Mar 28: The Caribbean: Economics & International Relations
   - Hillman & D’Agostino: Chapters 5____________________ 6____________________

   - Hillman & D’Agostino: Chapter 9____________________
   - Dupuy: Foreword & Preface, Chapter 1____________________

29) F Apr 1: The Caribbean: Haiti Part Two
   - Dupuy: Chapter 2____________________
   - Dupuy: Chapter 3____________________

30) M Apr 4: The Caribbean: Haiti Part Three
   - Dupuy: Chapter 4____________________
   - Dupuy: Chapter 5____________________

31) W Apr 6: The Caribbean: Haiti Part Four
   - Dupuy: Chapter 6____________________

32) F Apr 8: The Caribbean: Race & Politics in Dominican Republic - A
   - Sagás: Chapters Preface & Intro____________________ 1____________________
   - Last day to withdraw from course

33) M Apr 11: The Caribbean: Race & Politics in Dominican Republic - B
   - Sagás: Chapters 2____________________ 3____________________ 4____________________

34) W Apr 13: The Caribbean: Race & Politics in Dominican Republic - C
   - Sagás: Chapters 5____________________ Conclusion & Appendices____________________
35) F Apr 15: The Caribbean: Health & Politics in Cuba - A
- Whiteford & Branch: Chapters 1 _____________ 2 ______________
- Last day for 2nd meeting with instructor

36) M Apr 18: The Caribbean: Health & Politics in Cuba - B
- Whiteford & Branch: Chapters 3 _____________ 4 ______________
- Research Papers Due

37) W Apr 20: The Caribbean: Health & Politics in Cuba - C
- Whiteford & Branch: Chapters 5 _____________ 6 ______________
- Final Assignments Due from Prospective Graduates

38) F Apr 22: The Caribbean: Health & Politics in Cuba – D
- Whiteford & Branch: Chapters 7 _____________ 8 ______________

39) M Apr 25: Open

40) W Apr 27: Last Day of Class
- Examination #2 Due