

## PSCI 2012: INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

### Simulation Instructions: The Parliament of Europa

The goal of the simulation will be to introduce you to the rules of a parliamentary system and to give you a feel for what it is like to be a politician. This is relevant to the on-going themes and discussions of this class regarding democracy and transitions from authoritarian regimes.

The scenario will be as follows. A parliament will be meeting for the first time following a national election in the country of Europa. The Socialist Party has won about 35% of the seats, the Conservative Party has won about 35% of the seats, the Nationalist Party has won about 10% of the seats, the Green Party has won about 10% of the seats, and the Islamic Fundamentalist Party has won about 10% of the seats. The parties in Europa are stereotypes of actual parties throughout Europe. Three issues hang before Europa, and the parliament must attempt to negotiate and create a governing coalition based on these issues:

- A. The 35-hour work week: Labor unions are clamoring to have the workweek lowered from 40 to 35 hours. This would require overtime pay for anyone working more than 35 hours per week. The options for this are the following:
  - (1) require business to pay twice a worker's wages above 35 hours per week
  - (2) require business to pay 1.5 times a worker's wages above 35 hours per week
  - (3) keep overtime pay at 1.5 times a worker's wage above 40 hours per week (this is *status quo*)
  - (4) require business to pay 1.5 times a worker's wage above 44 hours per week
  - (5) eliminate overtime pay altogether.
  
- B. Relations with the United States: The US recently invaded Iran because of concerns that Iran possesses and might use weapons of mass destruction. Should Europa also commit troops to help out its NATO ally or not? Should it censure the US through the UN and other international channels or should it keep its mouth shut? The options for this are the following:
  - (1) try to get the UN to formally censure and implement sanctions against the US
  - (2) try to get the UN simply to formally censure the US
  - (3) neither censure nor assist the US (this is the *status quo*)
  - (4) allow the US to use military bases in Europa but do not commit troops
  - (5) allow the US to use European military bases and commit European troops to the effort.

- C. Immigration: Immigrants, largely from poorer and often Muslim countries, now comprise 17% of the population of Europa. These immigrants tend to take lower paying jobs and, it is believed, may provide willing participants for domestic terrorist networks. Should immigration from Muslim countries be made more restrictive, less restrictive, or remain the same? Should illegal immigrants be deported? The options for this are the following:
- (1) offer asylum to more foreigners and more social benefits to poor immigrants.
  - (2) offer asylum to more foreigners but do not increase social benefits
  - (3) allow the flow of immigration to continue as its is (*status quo*)
  - (4) tighten asylum rules and lower social benefits to poor immigrants
  - (5) refuse asylum to anyone and deport as many illegal immigrants as possible

You are a Member of Parliament and a representative of that party throughout the simulation; you cannot switch parties at any time. Your initial task is to decide among your party members (1) the basic beliefs/ideology of your party and (2) the stance on each of these three issues that you think a party like this would take. From there, the parliamentary session will begin with each party declaring its position (corresponding to the numbers above) on each issue. These positions must be similar to those of the real-world party stereotypes. Then negotiations over political positions and voting positions will occur. At the end of class, voting will take place. At no time, once the parliamentary session has begun, can a party change its issue position beyond acceptable levels of compromise (the Nationalist party is not going to suddenly become pro-immigrant, for example), and students must vote along party lines. After a coalition has been formed, the parties in the coalition will decide who gets to be Prime Minister and who gets to fill other significant cabinet posts: Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary and Labor Secretary. These positions and well as the issue platforms are all the materials with which each party can negotiate. The party "performance" is based on the status at the end of the simulation of two factors: (1) how close the enacted laws or final state of affairs is to your party's stated issue position and (2) how well your party does in landing important political positions.

. Parties will be awarded points according to the following scheme:

- 3 points for a law passed that matches your party's stance
- 2 points for a law passed that is one notches away from your party's stance
- 1 points for a law passed that is two notches away from your party's stance
- 4 points if the prime minister at the end of the simulation is from your party
- 2 points for each ministry (3 total: Labor, Foreign, and Home) your party has at the end