

Syllabus | Fall 2018
INTL 3300: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Instructor:

Dr Jennifer J White

Class Time:

TuTh, 12:30-13:45

Office Hours:

Wednesdays, 15:20-17:00 or by appointment

Class Location:

MLC, Room 148

Office:

219 Candler

E-Mail:

jenx@uga.edu

Course Description: Comparative political themes in political science. The transition from feudalism to capitalism, state building, democracy, and interaction between political institutions and cultures in various politics. Examples will be drawn from developed, communist/post-communist and developing political systems.

PREREQUISITE: POLS 1101 or INTL 1100

“Those who only know one country, know no country.” – Seymour Lipset

Raise d’Être of the Course: The crux of comparative political science is this: by examining two or more countries in the light of various political theories – and by comparing two or more themes and/or functions across countries – one learns from the differences and similarities uncovered. Such analysis can also lead to an understanding of one’s own political system, and therefore one can begin to ask and investigate political questions that have a direct bearing on one’s own life and values. Undertaking this process requires disciplined investigation and critical thinking skills, which we shall work to develop throughout the course.

What We’ll Do in This Course: Over the semester, we shall undertake an examination of the different approaches – both theoretical and thematic – to the study of comparative politics. Our study will be grounded in the theoretical foundations of the field (cultural, structural, and functional) as we consider the following:

- how political culture and history affect politics in a given society
- how the political institutions of a society are established and how and why they may change
- how a society’s political economy is organized and how it can affect potential political outcomes (such as elections or legislation)
- how political culture, political institutions, and political economy are interrelated and combine to affect outcomes

Once these foundations are understood, we shall endeavour to examine and compare a number of political systems from around the world, looking at their various cultures/histories, political institutions, and political economies and evaluating how differences in and interactions among these three factors have given rise to different outcomes from one country to the next. Our emphasis will be on the following areas/systems:

- Advanced, Industrialized Democracies (e.g., Western Europe; the US)
- Authoritarian States (e.g., China, Cuba)
- Newly Industrialized Countries (e.g., South-East Asia; India, Brazil)
- Lesser Developed Countries (e.g., Africa, Latin America)

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In our investigation of these other systems and countries, we shall also compare them to the case of the United States, which we shall use as a base reference. As such, we shall engage in *critical assessments* of the differences and similarities we find, asking whether or not changes in our own political system or in other countries' systems may provide viable answers to some of the current political problems and controversies that many countries face today (such as immigration policy, environmental policy, the power of protest, and political violence).

Texts:

We shall use one main textbook for the course, indicated in the class schedule below as *Concepts*:

O'Neil, Patrick, Fields, Carl, and Share, Don. *Cases and Concepts of Comparative Politics*. First Edition (New York: WW Norton & Company, Inc.) 2018.

ISBN: 978-0-393-63130-2 (paperback)

Additional Readings: There will also be selected readings from other texts and news articles, some of which are listed in the course schedule below, and some which will be determined later. All of these readings will be posted on the course's site on the eLC. **Please NOTE:** *The readings that will be posted on the course Web site are for use by students in this course ONLY! Please do not share these copyrighted materials with others, else I shall receive a nasty "cease and desist order" from the publishers. Not fun.*

Top Hat:

As our class size is quite large, I have opted to use some of the tools offered by Top Hat (www.tophat.com) – a course management system. You should have received an invitation to join the course through the Top Hat platform (please contact me if this is not the case). Whilst there is a charge per semester to use Top Hat (about \$25, unless you are also using it in another class this semester, in which case there is a bit of a discount), I have balanced this cost in relation to the cost of our textbook, which offers the benefits of case studies in addition to our main material. We shall use Top Hat for activities such as taking attendance, taking polls, viewing lecture slides, and even taking quizzes. While some of these functions are offered by eLC, not all of them are (nor are they offered on a continuous trouble-free basis by eLC). If you have concerns or questions about the use of Top Hat in our course, please see me. If you have technical questions about the platform, you can see the student quick-start guide at:

<https://support.tophat.com/s/article/Student-Top-Hat-Overview-and-Getting-Started-Guide>

You can also contact the Top Hat help folks directly by way of e-mail (support@tophat.com), the *Contact Support* button within a Top Hat page, or calling them at 1-888-663-5491.

My Expectations of You: As an introduction to an entire subfield of political science, this course will be covering a great deal of ground, and we may not be able to cover adequately a theme or area of the world that is of interest to you. There will be, however, opportunity for you to delve more deeply into particular areas of interest in the group project (described below).

It is *essential* that you come to class prepared: each day's assignments must be completed before class, and each student must be ready to conduct a quality discussion on the day's material. Also, lectures will not be mere repetition of the reading material, and students will be expected to come to class ready to *expand* on the readings and assignments. In effect, we shall be building the lectures together, so each student must be engaged in the discussions.

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A Note on Writing: Finally, please be aware that there will be a fair amount of writing in this course (group project, essays, journals – see below). Writing is an *essential* means of communicating and establishing ideas, and the ability to write clearly and convincingly will serve you well no matter the career path you may take. I will not deduct points from your grades for bad grammar or type-os *unless* these hinder comprehension or flow of your paper's presentation (that is, too much poor grammar or too many type-os will lower your paper's grade). **Proof reading** is strongly recommended, and indeed a your group **will be required to visit** to the **UGA Writing Center** (writingcenter.english.uga.edu/) to consult on your finished country brochure. Also keep our SPIA Librarian, Elizabeth White (elwhite1@uga.edu), in mind - you **are strongly encouraged** to seek her help as well (for this, or indeed any SPIA course!).

Ground Rules:

Each day's assignments and readings must be completed **before** class, and each student must be ready to conduct a quality discussion on the day's material. Also, lectures will not be mere repetition of the reading material, and students will be expected to come to class ready to expand on the readings and assignments. In effect, we shall be building the lectures together, so each student must be engaged in the discussions (and, of course, this counts towards your participation grade!).

Please note the following:

1. First and foremost: **communicate**. If anything occurs that might affect your ability to participate or do the work for the class, please let me know. I have had many students who have felt overwhelmed yet waited too long to speak to me (or did not communicate at all) about the situation: if I know that you are facing challenges, I can work with you or help you find assistance so that you can successfully manage the course.
2. The use of laptops, cell phones, iPods, or any other electronic device **will not be tolerated during class without advance, expressed permission. Period. No exception.** We shall be doing this old-school, ladies and gentlemen. ***If you cannot be disconnected for 75 minutes twice a week, do not take this class.*** Also note that, as adults, I will not reprimand you for using your e-device: I shall simply give you a zero for participation on the day(s) that you choose to ignore this first ground rule. Alternatively, I may single you out to stand up and dance for two minutes to Taylor Swift's "Shake It Off" in front of the class. You might not want to be that person.. **Note:** For anyone who **dares** to use an electronic device when we have a guest speaker, I shall give you a **zero** for your **semester** participation grade. You really don't want to lose participation credit if you don't have to – it may very well make the difference in your final grade.
3. ***You may accrue up to three unexcused absences without penalty.*** If you are absent for more than three class meetings without a valid (per University policy) written excuse, your participation grade will be lowered by one letter grade per unexcused absence. As participation is a part of your grade, you cannot participate if you do not attend class.
4. ***If you are absent on a day when an assignment is due, you must provide an acceptable excuse per University policy in order to make up the assignment.*** In addition, if you know you will be absent (e.g., for religious observance, an extra-curricular event, or illness), I would appreciate an e-mail notification ahead of time, if possible.
5. ***Be sure you know what the heck plagiarism is*** (see www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/plagiarize). ***Work submitted for this course must be your own work; all necessary citations must be properly provided when you cite anyone or anything else:*** All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Students are

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responsible for knowing these standards *before* performing any academic work, and we shall discuss points of academic ethics and plagiarism in class. For more information, see: honesty.uga.edu/ahpd/culture_honesty.htm. **To reiterate:** any incidents of plagiarism or intellectual fraud (see www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fraud) will be treated as the **most serious offense**, and you *really* don't want to go to a University hearing over this – it's scary AF. If you need help in determining what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid committing this most egregious intellectual sin, please consult me or our kickin'-est SPIA Librarian, Elizabeth White (elwhite1@uga.edu, no relation).

6. **Late work:** I shall accept late work on an individual basis: that is, I may accept it, *I may not*. Do not depend on my acceptance of late work. For me to consider *any* submission of late work, you must communicate to me *before* the deadline that the assignment will be late; I shall not accept any late submission otherwise.
 7. **Back up your work!** Purchase an inexpensive USB drive or use an on-line storage site like Dropbox, and use this storage back-up frequently! If your laptop crashes right before an assignment is due, you want to be sure to have something to turn in. (And this back-up routine is an incredibly good habit to get into for your work in all of your classes!) **Note: I do not accept late work due to computer issues, even if notified in advance!**
 8. **When asked to do so, please submit all work via eLC.** I have 150+ students, and it can be extremely difficult to find assignments e-mailed to me. If there is a problem with eLC (as there often is), e-mail me about the problem and send me your assignment, **but continue trying to submit your work via eLC until successful in doing so**. Note also that you should receive a submission receipt for all work submitted via eLC: if you do not receive this, do not assume your work has been submitted. Again, this is your responsibility, so be vigilant.
 9. **Be sure to keep track of your grades and absences through the semester** (set up an Excel sheet if you'd like – that can help). Owing to time constraints, I likely will not be able to give you details on these matters until the end of the semester when I begin to calculate grades. Be proactive: track for yourself.
 10. **Letters of recommendation:** I receive many of these requests each semester. To guarantee that I can complete each request and do so as well as possible, I am limiting the number of new requests for such letters to ten (10) each semester. If I have written a letter for you in the past, your request will not be included in the limit of those ten. In any case, I shall require at least a two-week notice before the letter is due (more time would be appreciated!). ☺
 11. Our discussions may touch upon ideas or topics on which we may not all agree – in fact, this will probably be the case. Each student is expected to be courteous and respectful of the viewpoints and ideas of all others in the class, although disagreements are certainly acceptable. ***In discussions, you should make an effort to provide either a theoretical or empirical basis for your comments (i.e., facts – and there is no such thing as an “alternative fact”). This is a major part of becoming a good critical thinker, which is one of the goals of this course.***
 12. This syllabus is a general plan; **it may be necessary for me to amend any part of the syllabus as we proceed through the course.** (Let's face it: it will likely happen.) Announcements will generally be made in class and on the course Web site, so you should be sure to attend each class, and to **check the course Web site on ELC often**. *If you note any errors (likely) anywhere in the syllabus, please let me know.*
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Grading:

Participation (including in-class activities)	➔	10%
Quizzes (around four)	➔	20%
Journal Reflections (up to four)	➔	10%
Group Project – Components:		
Country “Brochure” (one per group)	➔	10%
Writing Center Consultation on Brochure (one per group)	➔	5%
Peer Evaluation/Critique (individual)	➔	5%
Country Comparison (individual)	➔	10%
Individual Research Outline (individual)	➔	10%
Final Exam	➔	20%
Total:		
		100%

Grading Scale:

Grading for the course will be deemed as follows:

>=94	A	84-86	B	74-76	C	<60	F
90-93	A-	80-83	B-	70-73	C-		
87-89	B+	77-79	C+	60-69	D		

Late Work:

As a reminder of the ground rules: Outside of an accepted University excuse, under **unusual** circumstances, and on a **case-by-case** individual basis, I **may** accept late work *if you have communicated to me before the due date that the work is to be late*. For **all** submitted work, it is **your responsibility** to ensure that I receive your work – not mine. If eLC is not working for you or you’re having connection or computer issues, find another way to get me your assignment on time. If, for any reason, you are unsure if your work has been received by me, it is up to you to follow up. I do reserve the right to refuse late work, per the policy outlined above.

Contested Grades:

If you have a concern about the grade you received for a test or assignment, you must submit a **type-written** explanation of the problem along with the test or assignment in question **within one week** of my returning the assignment to you. I shall re-evaluate your work and assign a “new” grade, taking into account your written explanation (which, in essence then, becomes part of the re-grade). Note, however, that this process may result in the same grade, a higher grade, or indeed a **lower grade for that assignment**. You are allowed this one appeal for each graded assignment; the re-grade will then stand. If the issue is merely a matter of an error in calculation on my part, you need not submit a type-written request for this correction, but you do need to notify me of this error within one week of receiving the graded assignment back from me. *Capisce?* Please see me if you do not understand this policy or if you have questions about it.

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Notes on Assignments:

Group Project: Each student will work as part of a group on a project consisting of a hard-copy “brochure” and an individual written report (in outline form) on a country that the group selects to research. The brochure will draw on the research that each individual performs for the country selected. Furthermore, each member of one group will be responsible for critiquing the brochure of one other group (the average of these assessments for each group will be the grade for the brochure assignment). Finally, each student will perform a comparative analysis of the country that their group researched with the country of their peer-reviewed group. Hence, there are individual components to the group project. Details concerning the group project will be discussed in class in advance of the respective component assignments. **Additional assignments** may also be given during class, either to be completed in class or turned in during the next class session. These assignments will count towards your participation grade.

Classes will consist of lecture, group activities and work sessions, guest speakers, and film viewings (consult the schedule of assignments and classes below).

Participation:

As one of the objectives of the course is to develop better critical thinking skills and to be able to communicate concepts and ideas more effectively, participation counts heavily toward your final grade. Silently attending lectures and completing all assignments on time earns you a C- or 70% (so keep this in mind with regard to how late you get in the night before we have class). A higher grade is contingent on **active participation**. I define participation broadly, for example: raising questions or expressing confusion about the material; interacting with me outside of the classroom; posting interesting articles on the eLC course Web site that relate to our course material. If you are concerned about participation, contact me and we can discuss strategies to raise your grade, but **do not wait until the last day of class to do this**, as it will be too late by then!

If you have a question or comment about the course or an assignment, or if you would like to discuss some issue from class in greater detail, come see me. Also feel free to come to chat about current events, your plans, or anything else related to our mutual efforts. I will of course try to meet students on an appointment basis for those who cannot visit me during my office hours, and I shall hold “happy hour” office hours throughout the semester (usually at Walker’s, downtown), but I cannot guarantee my availability outside of my office hours.

Weekly Class Agenda:

For each class, students are expected to have completed the readings listed for that day in the course schedule *before* class. The general schedule will feature readings from the main textbook for Monday’s classes, followed by supplemental readings later in the week:

- We shall spend Tuesday classes on the topics presented in the main textbook readings.
- Thursday classes will feature more in-depth treatment of some of the important points of the week’s readings, supplemental readings, in-class assignments, and activities.
- Throughout the semester, I shall ask you to prepare questions or write a journal reflection on the week’s readings or a current event related to the material we have covered. You will submit these entries via a dropbox on eLC (due dates/times will be announced well in advance). These questions and journal reflections may be used as discussion points during the class, and will comprise 10% of your grade (see above).

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Students are also expected to be familiar with current world events, and we shall begin each class period with a discussion of these events and how they bear on our studies to that point. As this is a comparative politics course in which you are expected to sharpen your critical thinking skills, you should try to check out at least *two* (2) news sources each day (preferably from different countries) and thoughtfully assess each source's presentation of the information. This may be most easily accomplished on-line by going to the "world news" section in any of the following news outlets or broadcast sources (this is a sample list – you may find others, but please NO BLOGS; you must check a legitimate news source).

Selected Suggested News Sources:

- The New York Times (www.nytimes.com)
- NPR (www.npr.org, also carried on WUGA on-line and at 91.7FM)
- The BBC (news.bbc.co.uk)
- The Washington Post (www.washingtonpost.com)
- The Wall Street Journal (www.wsj.com)
- The Globe and Mail (www.theglobeandmail.com)
- The Guardian (www.guardian.co.uk)
- The Irish Times (www.irishtimes.ie)
- Le Monde (www.lemonde.fr – in French)
- Der Spiegel (www.spiegel.de– in German)
- The Christian Science Monitor (www.csmonitor.com)
- Teen Vogue (www.teenvogue.com/news-politics - the News/Politics section)
- Check out **Google News** (<http://news.google.com/nwshp?hl=en&tab=wn>), and choose "World" to see the world's news in the country of your choice; many are in English (e.g., Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa) as well as other languages.

Schedule of Assignments and Classes:

Readings marked with asterisks (**) can be found on eLC.

14 August: Introduction

In Class:

- Introduction to Course

16 August: Preparation & Critical Thinking

Readings:

- Critical Thinking: Concepts and Tools," Paul & Elder **
- AW: Introduction – Chapter 6 (inclusive)
- Sana, Faria, Tina Weston, and Nicholas J. Cepeda. "Laptop Multitasking Hinders Classroom Learning for Both Users and Nearby Peers." *Computers & Education* 62, (March 1, 2013): 24-31.

21 August: What Is This Thing Called "Comparative Politics?"

Main Readings:

- Chapter 1, *Concepts*
- "Good Societies," Draper & Ramsay **

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23 August: Institutions & States

Readings:

- Chapter 2, *Concepts*
- “The Case for a US Parliament,” Allen **

28 – 30 August: Nations & Society

Readings:

- Chapter 3, *Essentials*, O’Neil
- “Political Culture and Democracy,” Inglehart and Welzel [in Wiarda] **

4 – 6 September: Political Economy & Institutions, Economy, Culture

Readings:

- Chapter 4, *Concepts*

In Class:

- Film #1: “The Other Side of Immigration” (9/6)

11 – 13 September: Democratic Regimes

Readings:

- Chapter 6, *Concepts* (9/11)
- Case: “The United Kingdom,” *Concepts* (9/13)

18 – 20 September: Developed Democracies

Readings:

- Chapter 7, *Concepts*
- Case: “Germany,” *Concepts*

25 – 27 September: Non-Democratic Regimes

Readings:

- Chapter 8, *Concepts*
- Case: “Iran,” *Concepts*

2 – 4 October: Non-Democratic Regimes

In Class:

- Film #2: “Persepolis” & Film Discussion

9 – 11 October: Communism & Post-Communism

Due: Group Project Sign-Up (10/9)

Readings:

- Chapter 9, *Concepts*
- Case: “Russia,” *Concepts*
- AW: Chapters 7 – 9 (inclusive); Appendix I

16 – 18 October: Communism & Post-Communism

In Class:

- Film #3: “Goodbye, Lenin!”
- Discussion of Film

17 October: WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE

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23 – 25 October: Developing Countries

Readings:

- Chapter 10, *Concepts*
- Case: “Brazil,” *Concepts*

30 October – 1 November: Globalization

Readings:

- Chapter 11, *Concepts*
- Case: “China,” *Concepts*

6 – 8 November: Political Violence

Readings:

- Chapter 7, *Concepts*

13 – 15 November: Political Violence

Due: Individual Report Outline (11/13)

In Class:

- Film #3: *TBA*
- Discussion of Film

19 – 23 November: NO CLASS! THANKSGIVING BREAK

27 November: Group Project

Due: Group Project Brochure – Hard Copy in Class

In Class:

- Critique of One Other Group’s Country Brochure (Group Work)

29 November: Wrap-Up and Review

Last Day of Classes

Due: Country Comparisons (Individual)

In Class:

- Review for Final

Thursday, 6 December: 12:00 – 3:00 PM

****FINAL EXAM****