

Syllabus | Spring 2019
INTL 3300: Introduction to Comparative Politics
MWF 12:20-13:10 | MLC 148

Instructor:

Dr Jennifer J White

Office Hours:

MW, 15:30-17:00, or by appointment

Contact:

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TA:

Tara Trask, ABD

Office Hours:

MW, 15:30-17:00, or by appointment

Contact:

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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. This process requires disciplined research 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:

- develop a clearer understanding of how **political culture and history** affect politics in a given society
- explore how the **political institutions** (structure) of a society are established and how and why they may change
- examine how a society’s **political economy** (function) is organized and why, considering elements of culture, history, and institutions
- engage in **methodological comparison** with regard to the ways in which political institutions, culture, and economy of the systems we study interact, looking for **explanations of various outcomes** (such as elections or legislation)
- pursue **critical assessments** of different political systems, contemplating possible **viable answers** to some of the current political problems and controversies that many countries face today (such as immigration policy and migration flows, political violence, and political extremism)
- develop sharper **critical thinking skills** that will enable you to better understand and assess the value of news articles, research papers, and other content on the political and economic affairs of France and other Western European countries
- use theoretical tools from the course to **explain, predict, or prescribe policy reform** and political behavior as a researcher or practitioner in the field of politics
- be able to **comprehend and communicate theoretical concepts and findings** with more effective written and verbal communication skills

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Once we have established a basis for our understanding of political systems, we shall endeavour to examine and compare a number of different 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 States (e.g., South-East Asia; India, Brazil)
- Developing Countries (e.g., Africa, Latin America)

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*) and one supplemental text (indicated in the schedule as "Weston"):

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) OR

ISBN: 978-0-393-63137-1 (e-book)

Weston, Anthony. *A Rulebook for Arguments*. (5th Edition) Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. 2018.

ISBN: 978-1-62466-654-4

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.*

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Ground Rules – 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).

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.

Important: Note that lectures will *not* be mere repetition of the reading material. Lecture and discussions will build upon or expand on the reading material, but ***you are wholly responsible for all assigned materials, whether we cover these explicitly in class or not.*** Hence, all 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 adhere to the following:

1. The use of laptops, cell phones, iPods, or any other electronic device **will not be tolerated during class. Period. No exception.** We shall be doing this old-school, ladies and gentlemen. ***If you cannot be disconnected for 50 minutes twice a week, do not take this class.*** Also note that, as adults, I will not continuously 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 just 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 (that's an entire letter grade). Do not lose participation credit if you don't have to – it may very well make the difference in your final grade (it usually does).
2. ***You may accrue up to three (3) 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.
3. ***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.
4. ***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 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).

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5. **Writing:** Please be aware that there will be a fair amount of writing in this course (group project report outline, journal entries, essay questions – 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** and visits to the **UGA Writing Center** (writingcenter.english.uga.edu/) or our SPIA Librarian, Elizabeth White (elwhite1@uga.edu) **are strongly encouraged**.
 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. If you have not informed me before the deadline, I shall not accept any late submission.
 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!)
 8. 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.*
 9. **When asked to do so, please submit all work via eLC.** I have 180+ 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.
 10. **Be sure to keep track of your own grades and attendance through the semester** (set up an Excel sheet if you'd like – that can help). Owing to time constraints, I cannot give you details on these matters until the end of the semester when I begin to calculate grades. Be pro-active: track for yourself.
 11. **E-Mail Communication:** When e-mailing Ms Trask (tet61@uga.edu) or me (jenx@uga.edu), please **indicate the course in the subject of the e-mail**, include an appropriate salutation in the body of your message, state your purpose for writing clearly, and close properly.
 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.**
 13. Letters of recommendation: I receive many requests for letters of recommendation from students. If you plan to make such a request, please give me at least three (3) weeks' notice before the deadline. I take these very seriously, and would like to write you as strong a letter as I can – this takes time! 😊
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Grading:

Participation/Communication	➔	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%
<hr/>		
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		

Notes on Assignments

Each student will work as part of a group on a project consisting of a class presentation and an individual written report on a pair of countries that the group selects to compare. Each student will also prepare and submit a film essay on one of the films we view in class. Details concerning the group project and film essay assignments will be discussed in class in advance of the respective 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 be announced in class and posted on the course Web site, and will count towards your participation grade.

The final exam will feature multiple choice, short answer questions, and essays. Further information about the format of the final exam will be discussed in class as we near the end of the semester.

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

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*. Set up notifications on eLC to ensure that you receive receipts for assignment submissions. 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. If eLC will not allow you to submit your work, send me or Tara an e-mail to let us know of the problem and attach your assignment, but **keep trying to submit your assignment to eLC until you are successful.**

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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.

Participation/ Communication: 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 significantly towards your final grade. Silently attending lectures and completing all assignments on time earns you a C- or 70%. 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!

Communication, too, is important. I seriously cannot stress this point enough. If something does not make sense to you, if I am going too fast in lecture, if you need help studying for quizzes or in completing assignments, if you like/don't like the textbook – ***all of these issues will be solved to our much greater mutual satisfaction if you simply communicate them to me BEFORE the end of the semester!*** I'm pretty approachable, and this is YOUR class and YOUR learning; so, if something is not working for you (or is working really well), TELL ME! This will allow me to make adjustments to the class that will likely benefit all students. **Communicating, then, is part of your participation in the course, and hence, part of your grade.**

In addition, as mentioned in the ground rules, if you feel overwhelmed or are having any difficulties that affect your performance in the class, tell me about this, too: I may be able to connect you with resources that can help you manage things better. ***Nothing – nothing – is more important than your well-being!***

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 Monday classes on the topics presented in the main textbook readings.
- Wednesday 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.
- Friday's classes will be mainly for discussion, activities, or guest speakers.
- Note that there are a few dates on which we shall not meet for class (listed in the course schedule below). I may, however, need to convene class on those days, should we fall behind due to illness or missed classes for other reasons (e.g., weather).

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Current Events: 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.**

9 January: NO CLASS! Syllabus & Preparation

Readings:

- 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.

Review Syllabus

Syllabus Quiz (On eLC – Due 15 January 2019 by 11:59PM)

11 January: Introduction – Getting to Know You

14 January: Critical Thinking & Thinking about Society

DUE: Reminder – Quiz #1 due 1/15 by 11:59PM (on eLC)

Readings:

- Critical Thinking: Concepts and Tools," Paul & Elder **
- "Good Societies," Draper & Ramsay **
- AW – Introduction – Chapters 1 – 6 (inclusive)

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16 January: What Is This Thing Called “Comparative Politics?”

Due: Journal Reflection #1 (1/17)

Main Readings:

- Chapter 1, *Concepts*

18 January: Thinking Comparatively

Main Readings:

- Dickovick & Eastwood: *Comparative Politics* - Chapter 1 - "The Comparative Approach" (pages 14 - 22) **

**** 21 January: NO CLASS – MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR DAY ****

23 – 25 January: Institutions & States

Main Readings:

- Chapter 2, *Concepts*

Supplemental Reading:

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

28 January – 1 February: Nations & Society

In Class: Quiz #2 (1/30)

Main Readings:

- Chapter 3, *Essentials*, O’Neil

Supplemental Reading:

- “Political Culture and Democracy,” Inglehart and Welzel [in Wiarda] **

4 – 8 February: Political Economy & Institutions, Economy, Culture

Main Readings:

- Chapter 4, *Concepts*

In Class (2/8):

- Film #1: *TBA*

11 - 15 February: Democratic Regimes

Due: Journal Reflection #2 (2/11)

Main Readings:

- Chapter 6, *Concepts*
- Case: “The United Kingdom,” *Concepts*

No Class 2/15

18 - 22 February: Developed Democracies

Due: Sign-Up for Groups and Country – Country Brochure Group Project (2/18)

In Class: Quiz #3 (2/22)

Main Readings:

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

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25 – 1 March: Non-Democratic Regimes

Main Readings:

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

4 - 8 March: Communism & Post-Communism

Due: Journal Reflection #3 (3/4)

Due: Schedule Writing Tutor Meeting for Group Brochure

Main Readings:

- Chapter 9, *Concepts*
- Case: “Russia,” *Concepts*

No Class 3/8

**** 11 – 15 March: SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS! ****

**** Thursday, 21 March: DEADLINE TO WITHDRAWAL ****

18 – 22 March: Communism & Post-Communism

In Class:

- Film #2: “Goodbye, Lenin!”
- Discussion of Film

25 March – 29 March: Developing Countries

Due: Journal Reflection #4 – Film Essay (3/25)

Main Readings:

- Chapter 10, *Concepts*
- Case: “Brazil,” *Concepts*
- AW – Chapters 7 – 9 (inclusive); Appendix I

1 – 5 April: Globalization

In Class: Quiz #4 (4/5)

Main Readings:

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

In Class:

- Resource Activity

8 – 12 April: Political Violence

Due: Individual Research Outline (4/14)

Main Readings:

- Chapter 7, *Concepts*

No Class 4/12

15 – 19 April: Political Violence

In Class:

- Film #3: *TBA*

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22 April: No Class

Due: Meeting with Writing Tutor (Documentation on eLC)

No Class - Meet for Group Brochure Work

24 April: Group Project

Due: Group Project Brochure – Hard Copy in Class

In Class:

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

26 April: Wrap-Up/Debrief Brochures!

In Class:

- Discussion

29 April: Review – Last Day of Classes

Due: Individual Country Comparison Essay

In Class:

- Review for Final

Wednesday, 8 May: 12:00 – 15:00 PM **FINAL EXAM******
(Room to be confirmed later)