

Syllabus | Fall 2019
INTL 3300: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Instructor:

Dr Jennifer J White

Class Time:

MWF, 12:20-13:10

Office Hours:

Wednesdays, 15:30-17:30 or by appointment

Class Location:

Caldwell, Room 204/302

Appointment Scheduling during Office Hours:

jenx.youcanbook.me

E-Mail:

jenx@uga.edu

Office:

216 Dept of International Affairs ([building #0031](#))

Assignment Submissions:

jenxINTL@gmail.com

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.

Goals of the 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 (structural, cultural, and functional) as we shall work to:

- understand how the **political institutions** of a society are established and how and why they may change
- understand how a society’s **political economy** is organized and how it can affect potential political outcomes (such as elections or legislation)
- understand how **political culture and history** structure political choices in a given society
- seek to understand how **political institutions, political economy, and political culture and history** may interact with one another to affect political outcomes
- **compare** different systems and countries to the case of the United States, which we shall use as a base reference
- engage in **critical comparative assessments** of the differences and similarities we find, asking whether or not a country’s political institutions, economy, or culture may provide viable answers to some of the current political problems and challenges that many countries face today (such as immigration policy and migration flows, political violence, political extremism, environmental concerns, the impact of protest, the meaning of globalization)

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- 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 affairs of different systems of governance and different societies
- 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
- **apply what we have learned to current world political events**, so that we may better understand their meaning and impact on outcomes

Our emphasis will be on the following areas/systems:

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

Texts:

We shall use two main textbooks for the course:

O'Neil, Patrick, *Essentials of Comparative Politics*. **Sixth** Edition (New York: WW Norton & Company, Inc.) 2018.

ISBN: 978-0-393-62458-8 (paperback) OR

ISBN: 978-0-393-63134-0 (e-book)

Weston, Anthony. *A Rulebook for Arguments*. (5th Edition) Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. 2017.

ISBN: 978-1-62466-654-4 (paperback) OR (e-book)

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 (and 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.*

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/countries 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 or ask questions 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 class.

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A Note on Writing:

Please be aware that there will be a fair amount of writing in this course (research outline, 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 the 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 you **will be required to visit** to the **UGA Writing Center** (writingcenter.english.uga.edu/) or another sanctioned writing tutor to consult on one of your writing assignments. 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!).

What You Can Expect from Me:

I shall strive to offer you a fair, manageable workload that will address the essential concepts and knowledge you'll need to serve as the foundation for upper-level Comparative Politics courses. I shall also connect what we discuss with current events to help you gain a greater understanding of our course concepts and certain events happening in the world. ***Please note that our discussions of current events will be related to the topic(s) we are discussing in the course; if you're not making the connections, let's please chat about that!***

You can book a specific time during my office hours to see me at jenx.youcanbook.me. Appointments can be scheduled in 15-minute increments; if you think you might need a longer visit than 15 minutes, please book more than one time slot. If you will be unable to meet with me after having scheduled a time, please delete the appointment at jenx.youcanbook.me, so others may be able to schedule at that time.

You should indeed feel free to ***communicate with me*** on any question or issue you are having in the course. This is ***your*** course: you should be active in what you're learning and with regard to what you wish to learn. If something isn't working or isn't clear, please speak up – don't just wait to give feedback on the course eval at the end of the semester (I can't really adjust anything about the course then!).

Ground Rules:

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 allowed 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 50 minutes thrice 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.

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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 *notify me before the deadline (when at all possible) and 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, so I'll not worry about you.
 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 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!)
 8. **Keep track of your grades and absences through the semester** (set up an Excel sheet – 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 pro-active: track for yourself.
 9. **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!). ☺
 10. 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.**
 11. 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/Communication	➔	10%
Quizzes (generally weekly)	➔	20%
Mid-Term Exam	➔	20%
Journal Reflections (around four)	➔	10%
Writing Center/Librarian Consultation (on one journal reflection)	➔	5%
Group Project – Components:		
Individual Research Annotated Bibliography (individual)	➔	10%
Country “Brochure” (one per group)	➔	10%
Peer Evaluation/Critique (one per group)	➔	5%
Country Comparison Essay (individual)	➔	10%
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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		

Submitted Work:

For **all** submitted work, it is **your responsibility** to ensure that I receive your work – not mine. Having said that, eLC can be a right pain when it comes to dropboxes. **SO, I have set up a gmail account to which you will be expected to e-mail submitted work by its respective deadline** (jenxINTL@gmail.com). I am hopeful that this will alleviate the issues that eLC has routinely presented in the past, but note that it is still your responsibility to ensure that I have received your work on time (a receipt will be sent back to you when you e-mail your assignment).

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.

Notes on Assignments:

Group Project: Each student will work as part of a group on a project consisting of an hard-copy “brochure” and an individual written annotated bibliography that summarized research on a country that the group selects to investigate. The brochure will draw on the research that each individual performs for the country selected. Furthermore, each group will be responsible for critiquing the brochure of one other

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group. 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 certain individual components to the group project. Details concerning the group project will be discussed in class in advance of the respective component assignments.

Quizzes:

Quizzes will generally be given on-line (eLC) each week on Friday, and you will have the weekend to complete them. The quizzes will be open-book/open-note (the point is to get you into the book and allow you to *learn* the material, not merely memorize it temporarily for the quizzes). Each quiz will cover the material since the prior quiz.

Journal Reflections and Writing Tutor Consultation:

You will be assigned up to four “journal reflections” on topics related to our material and class discussions throughout the semester. These are meant to be informal essays that enable you to explore the topics, reflecting on insights, experiences, or questions you have pertaining to the topics. You will also be required to get feedback from a Writing tutor on *one* of your journal reflections (instructions on this will be discussed in class and posted on eLC).

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.

Participation/ Communication: As objectives of the course include developing better critical thinking skills and being 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% (no matter what ratemyprofessor says!). A higher grade is contingent on **active participation**. I define participation broadly, however: raising questions or expressing confusion about the material; interacting with me outside of the classroom; posting interesting articles on the eLC course discussion board that relate to our course material; attending the Walker’s Happy Hour office hours. 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; I am going too fast in lecture; you need help studying for quizzes or in completing assignments; 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 us all. **Communicating, then, is part of your participation in the course, and hence, part of your grade.**

And to reiterate part of 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!**

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Weekly Class Agenda:

For each class, students are expected to have completed the readings listed for that day in the course schedule *before* class.

- We shall generally 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, activities, and/or current events.
- 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 the jenxINTL@gmail.com address mentioned above (due dates/times will be announced well in advance). These questions and journal reflections may be used as discussion points during the class.

Students are also expected to be familiar with current world events, and we shall begin classes on many days 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** (preferably from different countries) a few times each week 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.
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Schedule of Assignments and Classes:

Classes will consist of lecture, group activities and work sessions, guest speakers, and film viewings (consult the schedule of assignments and classes below). This schedule is just a plan (not a contract!); changes may be necessary as we move through the semester.

- Readings marked with asterisks (**) can be found on eLC.
- Additional readings to those featured below may be assigned.
- "O'Neil" indicates a reading from our main textbook.
- "Weston" indicates a reading from the *Rulebook for Arguments* text.

Note: Fridays are generally reserved (that is, we shall not have class on that day – see the schedule below for exceptions), and an on-line quiz of the week's material will be required. You may take this day to complete the quiz, or to participate in climate change protests, or to use in whichever way your judgement dictates.

14 August: Introduction

In Class:

- Introduction to Course

16 August: NO CLASS

Due 18 August: QUIZ #1 (eLC)

19 August: Preparation, Critical Thinking, & What Is This Thing Called "Comparative Politics?"

Readings:

- Critical Thinking: Concepts and Tools," Paul & Elder **
- 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.
- "Good Societies," Draper & Ramsay **
- Begin O'Neil, Chapter 1

21 August: How Do We Do This Thing Called "Comparative Politics?"

Main Readings:

- O'Neil, Chapter 1
- Dickovick & Eastwood: *Comparative Politics* - Chapter 1 - "The Comparative Approach" (pages 14 - 22) **
- TBA **

23 August: NO CLASS

Due 25 August: QUIZ #2 (eLC)

26 - 28 August: Institutions & States

Readings:

- O'Neil: Chapter 2
- Ideologies **

30 August: NO CLASS

Due 1 September: QUIZ #3 (eLC)

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4 – 6 September: Nations & Society

Readings:

- O’Neil: Chapter 3
- Weston: Chapters 1-6 (inclusive)
- “Political Culture and Democracy,” Inglehart and Welzel [in Wiarda] & Identity **

9 – 11 September: Political Economy & Institutions, Economy, Culture

Readings:

- O’Neil: Chapter 4
- Immigration **

13 September:

In Class:

- Film #1: “The Other Side of Immigration”

16 – 18 September: Democratic Regimes

Readings:

- O’Neil: Chapter 6
- Electoral Systems **
- Case: “The United Kingdom” **

20 September: NO CLASS

Due 22 September: QUIZ #4 (eLC)

23 – 25 September: Developed Democracies

Readings:

- O’Neil: Chapter 7
- “The Case for a US Parliament,” Allen **
- Case: “Germany” **

27 September: NO CLASS

Due 29 September: QUIZ #5 (eLC)

30 September – 2 October: Non-Democratic Regimes

Readings:

- O’Neil: Chapter 8
- Case: “Iran” **

4 October: NO CLASS

Due 6 October: QUIZ #6 (eLC)

7 – 11 October: Non-Democratic Regimes

Due: Group Project Sign-Up (10/11)

In Class:

- Film #2: “Persepolis” & Film Discussion
- Review for Mid-Term

14 October: Mid-Term Exam

In Class: MID-TERM

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16 October: Guest Speaker

In Class:

- *Guest Speaker*

Readings:

- Weston: Chapters 7 – 9 (inclusive); Appendix I

18 October: Communism & Post-Communism

Readings:

- O'Neil: Chapter 9

21 October: WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE

21 - 25 October: Communism & Post-Communism

Readings:

- Case: "Russia" **

In Class:

- Film #3: "Goodbye, Lenin!"
- Discussion of Film

28 – 30 October: Developing Countries

Readings:

- O'Neil: Chapter 10
- Case: "Brazil" **

1 November: FALL BREAK – NO CLASS

4 - 6 November: Globalization

Readings:

- O'Neil: Chapter 11
- Case: "China" **

8 November: NO CLASS

Due 10 November: QUIZ #7 (eLC)

11 – 13 November: Political Violence

Readings:

- Political Contention **

15 November: NO CLASS

Due 18 November: QUIZ #8 (eLC)

18 – 22 November: Political Violence

Due: Individual Research – Annotated Bibliography (11/20)

In Class:

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

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25 November: Current Political Challenges – Guest Speaker

In Class:

- *Guest Speaker*

Readings:

- TBA **

27- 29 November: NO CLASS! THANKSGIVING BREAK

2 December: Wrap-Up and Review

4 December: Project Brochure – Hard Copy in Class

Last Day of Classes (Friday schedule)

In Class:

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

9 December:

Due: Country Comparison Essay (Individual)