

**INTL 3300: Introduction to Comparative Politics**  
**Autumn 2019**

Class meeting times: Tuesday/Thursday, 11:00am-12:15pm  
Class location: Gilbert Hall 116

Dr. Nora Webb Williams  
Office: Candler 312  
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**Course description:** What is Comparative Politics (CP)? A very general answer is that CP looks *inside* the workings of states around the world and examines the use of power to explain economic, political, and social outcomes.<sup>1</sup> In CP, we ask a lot of “why” questions. Why are some countries democratic, while others are autocratic? Why are some countries poor while others are rich? Why do civil wars start and why do they end? We answer these questions with theories and hypotheses that we test using many different types of evidence. We also ask a lot of “how” questions. How do different political systems work? How do voting rules shape who wins an election? How does corruption affect economic development? Answering these questions requires us to dig into details from around the world. In this course, we will study a range of political systems and phenomena from a social science perspective.

**Course goals:** After taking this course, students will be able to:

- Identify major questions and debates in Comparative Politics research
- Evaluate the quality of Comparative Politics theories and evidence
- Describe differences and similarities in political systems and outcomes from a variety of states, regions, and historical periods
- Confidently enroll in higher level courses in Comparative Politics

**Course assignments:**

- 5 short response papers (one film, one current event, three for readings of your choice) (5% each, 25% total)
- Participation (15%)
- Midterm (35%)
- Final (35%)
- Note that this adds up to 110%! This means that you have some wiggle room if you flub a question on the midterm or if you forget one of the assignments. No additional extra credit will be offered.

**Grade Scale:**

>=93%: A  
90-92.99%: A-  
87-89.99%: B+  
83-86.99%: B  
80-82.99%: B-  
77-79.99%: C+  
73-76.99%: C  
70-72.99%: C-  
60-69.99%: D  
<60%: F

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<sup>1</sup> This definition borrows from Dr. Susan Whiting’s 2014 Introduction to Comparative Politics syllabus at the University of Washington.

**Final exam:** *Thursday, December 12, 12:00 - 3:00pm.* A mixture of multiple choice, short-answer, and essay questions. The class before the exam will have time for review.

**Midterm exam:** *Thursday, October 10.* A mixture of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The class before the exam will have time for review.

**Participation:** This is *not* the same thing as attendance, but you will not earn participation points if you are not in class. Participation means contributing to the class, which might take many forms. You could make a comment or answer a question about the reading during discussion. You could be an active participant in an in-class activity. You could bring up a current event that is relevant to our course materials. Speaking up in public is a skill that does not come easily to everyone. You can also earn participation by coming to office hours and discussing course materials or relevant current events. You can also let me know if speaking up is hard for you and we can work together on some strategies to make it easier.

**Response papers:** There are five response papers, each worth 5% of your grade. There are three different types of response papers. These should be **submitted in hard copy at the start of class**. Papers submitted after the start of class will be docked one point. Papers submitted after the end of class will not be accepted.

- 1) **Film response:** *Due September 3.* A single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman, 1-inch margins, single page maximum response to film shown the last week of August. More details to come in class.
- 2) **Current event write-up:** *Due any time before or on December 3.* A single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman, 1-inch margins, single page maximum discussion of a current event, preferably *not from the USA*. Half of the response should describe the facts: What happened and when? Where? Who was involved? The second half of your response must relate the event to concepts and readings from the course. How does the event demonstrate a theory we have discussed? Does it remind you of other cases or phenomena?
- 3) **Three reading responses:** *See below for due dates.* A single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman, 1-inch margins, two-page maximum discussion of a course reading. Your response should address the following points:
  - What is the “puzzle” or question that the article is trying to explain/solve?
  - What is the author’s primary argument?
  - What evidence does the author(s) use? How does this evidence support the argument?
  - Describe two things you find intriguing about the article. Explain why.
  - Discuss and explain at least one weakness that you identify in the article.

You will choose the three readings for your responses. However, you must submit your response *before* we discuss it in class (e.g. bring your response to the class where the reading is assigned). In addition, there is a hard deadline for each of your three responses.

- First response is due on or before *Tuesday, October 1*
- Second response is due on or before *Tuesday, November 5*
- Third response is due on or before *Tuesday, November 26*

**Course materials:** There is no assigned textbook for the course. Instead, we will read academic articles and excerpts from books. All the readings are available for download at the course eLC website. I will provide guidance on how to read an academic article, but should you need more assistance in tackling these challenging pieces, please ask.

**Attendance policy:** I will not take attendance and attendance is not, strictly speaking, a graded portion of the course. However, if you do not attend class, that means you are *not* gaining participation points, you are *not* turning in

assignments, you are *not* interacting with the course materials, and as a consequence you will *not* do well in the course. For participation, you are allowed **two days of missed points**, no questions asked.

**Make-up of assignments/exams:** No make-ups allowed for assignments. Exam make-ups will only be offered in extreme circumstances at the professor's discretion. Mark your calendars now and set plenty of alarms on exam day!

**Contacting the instructor:** Office hours generally are first-come, first-served opportunities to meet with the professor. If you need to set up a specific time to meet, please email me. I am available to answer questions via email, but do not expect a response for at least 24 hours. Unsure about how to word an email to your professor? Read this blog post (be aware that it has some profanity): <https://medium.com/@lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-af-cf64ae0e4087>

**Accommodations:** If you require a disability accommodation, it is your responsibility to contact the Disability Resource Center (<https://drc.uga.edu/>) as soon as possible. Accommodations will only be made through the DRC.

**Honor code:** As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty" found at: [www.uga.edu/honesty](http://www.uga.edu/honesty). Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

**Technology policy:** Screens are very distracting to your fellow students. At the same time, I recognize that they are important tools, especially for notetaking and referring to readings. Keep cellphone use to an absolute minimum and be conscious of how your screens affect those around you. I reserve the right to ask what's on your screen at any point or to ask you to move to a different part of the room based on technology usage.

**Diversity policy:** It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that diversity within the classroom be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. I will strive to present materials and activities in ways that respect and affirm such differences. I expect the same of you: while discomfort is an important part of the learning process, nobody should be made to feel unsafe in this classroom. I will not create or allow space for offensive language or behavior related to differences in gender, race, age, national origin, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, immigration status, intellectual and physical ability, sexual orientation, income, faith, socio-economic class, family status, primary language, military experience, and political identification.

**Reporting policy:** Although class materials are generally considered confidential pursuant to student record policies and laws, University employees cannot maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues that jeopardize the health and safety of our community. As the professor, I must report certain information to other University offices if you share it with me. This includes allegations of sexual assault, sexual discrimination, or sexual harassment when they involve UGA students, faculty, or staff, or third parties visiting campus. UGA also has a vast array of resources available to students facing a variety of challenges:

- Office of Student Care & Outreach (coordinate assistance for students experiencing hardship/unforeseen circumstances) – 706-542-7774 or by email [sco@uga.edu](mailto:sco@uga.edu).
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS) - 706-542-2273 (during regular business hours) After Hour Mental Health Crisis: 706-542-2200 (UGA Police—ask to speak to the CAPS on-call clinician).
- Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention – 706-542-SAFE (Please note, faculty and staff are obligated to report any knowledge of sexual assault/relationship violence to UGA's Equal Opportunity Office. The advocates at RSVP can provide student confidentially).

Students and faculty can report non-emergency behavior that causes them to be concerned using these confidential reporting resources: <https://coo.uga.edu/Confidential-Reporting>.

**Course schedule:** You should do the reading (and write reading responses) *before* the day it is listed. The following is the schedule of when we will discuss a given reading. The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

#### **WEEK 1:**

8/15: Introduction, Course Overview

#### **WEEK 2:**

8/20: The State

Read: Charles Tilly (1985). War Making and State Making as Organized Crime. In Peter Evans, et al. eds., *Bringing the State Back In*, pp. 169-186. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

8/22: The State

Read: Jeffrey Herbst (1990). War and the State in Africa. *International Security* 14(4): 117-139

#### **WEEK 3:**

8/27: NO CLASS MEETING

Watch: The Death of Yugoslavia, part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDADy9b2IBM>

Timelines for reference:

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/etc/cron.html>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-18331273>

8/29: NO CLASS MEETING

Watch: The Death of Yugoslavia, part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YcZvQxoTzdQ>

#### **WEEK 5:**

9/3: Nations and Nationalism

*Film response due*

Read: Benedict Anderson (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.  
(TWO selections)

9/5: Nations and Nationalism

Read: Daniel N. Posner (2004). The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi. *American Political Science Review* 98(4): 529-545

#### **WEEK 6:**

9/10: Civil War

Read: James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin (2003), Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War. *American Political Science Review* 97(1): 529-545

9/12: Civil War

Read: Emily Kalah Gade, Mohammed M. Hafez and Michael Gabbay (2019), Fratricide in Rebel Movements: A Network Analysis of Syrian Militant Infighting. *Journal of Peace Research*. Forthcoming.

#### **WEEK 7:**

9/17: Territorial Distribution of Power

Read: Dawn Brancati (2006). Decentralization: Fueling the Fire or Dampening the Flames of Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism? *International Organization*, 60(3): pp. 651-663 and conclusions.

9/19: Democracy and Authoritarianism

Read: Robert A. Dahl (1972). *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press. (Selection)

#### **WEEK 8:**

9/24: Democracy and Authoritarianism

Read: Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl (1991). What Democracy Is . . . and Is Not. *Journal of Democracy* 2(3): 75-88.

9/26: Democratic Systems

Read: Juan Linz (1990). The Perils of Presidentialism. *Journal of Democracy* 1(1): 51-69.

#### **WEEK 9:**

10/1: Democratic Systems

*Last chance for first reading response*

Read: John Gerring, Strom C. Thacker, and Carola Moreno (2009). Are Parliamentary Systems Better? *Comparative Political Studies* 42(3): 327-359 (skim pp.337-353)

10/3: Electoral Systems

Read: Donald L. Horowitz (2003). Electoral Systems: A Primer for Decision-Makers. *Journal of Democracy* 14(4): 115-127

Watch: John Cleese Explains STV: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0qWDPauV\\_p4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0qWDPauV_p4)

#### **WEEK 10:**

10/8: REVIEW DAY

10/10: MIDTERM

#### **WEEK 11:**

10/15: Authoritarian Systems

Read: Steven Levitsky & Lucan Way (2002). The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism. *Journal of Democracy* 13(2): 51-65

10/17: Authoritarian Systems

Read: Beatrice Magaloni (2008). "Credible Power-sharing and the Longevity of Authoritarian Rule" *Comparative Political Studies* 41(4-5), 715-741

#### **WEEK 12:**

10/22: Corruption

Read: Keith Darden (2008). The Integrity of Corrupt States: Graft as an Informal State Institution. *Politics & Society* 36(1): 35-60

10/24: Democratic Transitions

Read: Seymour Martin Lipset (1959). Some Social Requisites of Democracy. *American Political Science Review* 53(1), pp. 75-84 only

### **WEEK 13:**

10/29: Democratic Transitions

Read: Eva Bellin (2000). Contingent Democrats: Industrialists, Labor, and Democratization,” *World Politics* 52(2): 175-205.

10/31: Democratic Transitions

Read: Barbara Geddes (1999). What Do We Know about Democratization after Twenty Years? *Annual Review of Political Science* Vol. 2: 115-144

### **WEEK 14:**

11/5: States and Markets

*Last chance for second reading response*

Read: Peter Murrell (1993). What is Shock Therapy? What did it do in Poland and Russia? *Post-Soviet Affairs* 9(2): 111-140.

11/7: Economic Development

Read: Gary Gereffi (1990). Paths of Industrialization. In Gary Gereffi and Donald L. Wyman, eds., *Manufacturing Miracles*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 3-23.

### **WEEK 15:**

11/12: Economic Development

Read: Daron Acemoglu (2003). Root Causes. *Finance and Development* June: 27-30.

Read (optional): Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson and James A. Robinson (2002). Reversal of Fortune: Geography and Institutions in the Making of the Modern World Income Distribution. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 117(4): 1231-1294

11/14: Globalization

Read: Pun Ngai (2005). “Global Production, Company Codes of Conduct, and Labor Conditions in China: A Case Study of Two Factories.” *The China Journal* 54(July): 101-113

### **WEEK 16:**

11/19: Collective Action

Read: Mancur Olson (1965). *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Selection)

11/21: Collective Action

Read: Timur Kuran (1991). Now out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989. *World Politics* 44(1): 7-48.

**WEEK 17:**

11/26: Revolutions

*Last chance for third reading response*

Read: Zeynep Tufekci and Christopher Wilson (2012). Social Media and the Decision to Participate in Political Protest: Observations from Tahrir Square. *Journal of Communication* 62(2): 363-379

11/28: NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING

**WEEK 18:**

12/3: REVIEW

*Last chance for current event response. See above for final exam schedule*