INTL 6300: Comparative Analysis and Method

Fall 2021

Dr. Molly Ariotti

TH: 3:55-6:40pm
Location: Baldwin 114A

Office Hours: By appointment
Office Location: 303 Candler Hall
Email: mariotti@uga.edu

Course Description:
This course is the core seminar for the field of comparative politics. It provides an introduction to many of the questions, theories, and research methodologies employed by scholars of comparative politics. Because comparative politics is concerned principally with political phenomena within countries, there are many potential topics. This course is designed to introduce you to a wide range of topics in comparative politics, but it is by no means exhaustive.

Course Requirements:
Students are expected to (1) attend and participate in all course meetings; (2) complete the required reading before the start of each class; (3) complete all assignments. In the event of an emergency, it is expected the student will contact me with appropriate documentation within 24 hours of a missed class or assignment deadline.

Special Accommodations:
If you have any special accommodations, I expect that you will provide me with all necessary paperwork during the first week of class, and set up a time to meet with me to discuss what I expect from you.

Students who seek religious or cultural accommodations should address potential conflicts with me as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made to accommodate the religious observance. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the coursework required during the period of absence.

It is the obligation of students to provide faculty with reasonable notice of the dates of cultural and religious holidays on which they plan to be absent.
Covid Caveats:

COVID has already killed over 600,000 Americans. Less than half of the adult population of Georgia has been fully vaccinated, and new cases in the state are surging. When classes begin on August 18th, the University of Georgia will not be mandating COVID vaccines for students or employees, nor will there be any mask or physical distancing requirements. However, UGA strongly encourages everyone to be fully vaccinated before returning to campus.

Public health is both a personal and collective responsibility. We must think carefully about the risks posed by the ongoing pandemic, and we must do what we can to minimize risks for ourselves and for each other.

I am happy to share that I am fully vaccinated. I strongly urge you to be fully vaccinated before the start of classes. Information on how to get vaccinated is available here: https://coronavirus.uga.edu/. You can get vaccinated at any of 15 USG campuses, at the University Health Center at UGA, or at other community vaccination sites near you. The vaccines are free, safe, and effective.

As we’ve seen since March 2020, it can be difficult to predict how the semester will play out. Please know that I am willing to work with you to meet any challenges you might be experiencing – but you have to reach out to me. You don’t have to confide your personal situation to me, but I do need you to talk to me about your bandwidth so we can discuss a way forward together.

Assignments:

1. Participation (10%)
   It is not enough for you to attend class – you must improve the quality of the discussion through your participation. While some people might naturally be more or less inclined to participate, part of your job as a graduate student is active engagement with the material. Refusing to participate in class discussions creates an undue burden on your classmates, while also depriving you of the opportunity to participate in the exchange of ideas. You are expected to complete the reading, and demonstrate preparedness through your participation in these discussions, even when you are not the discussion leader. Everyone is expected to post two discussion questions to the discussion board on eLC by 5pm the day before class.

2. Archives memo (5%)
   You will attend a special event at the Special Collections Library (Russell Building) to meet with the team of archivists. They will discuss archival best practices with you, as well as the contents of their collections. You will write me a short memo discussing these best practices as well as the application of archival research from the book you were assigned as reading. Focus on the strategies employed, and any other information about the author’s work in the archives. You will also discuss potential resources available in the Special Collections Library that you may be able to leverage in your own work farther down the line. Be sure to discuss any questions you may have, as well as follow-up points you might want to raise. I will save time at the start of the next class to discuss your memos and your experience at the SCL event.
3. Discussion leader (2x, 20% total)
You will be assigned two weeks on the syllabus for which you are the “discussion leader.” Your responsibilities as discussion leader include a ~20 minute summary and critique of the week’s readings. You should think of this as a chance to set the agenda for the class discussion. Your introduction should address the main questions raised by the articles, and outline any additional questions, concerns, or issues that you would like to discuss with your classmates. It is also your responsibility to gather up the questions your classmates submit on the eLC discussion board to incorporate into your discussion.

You must submit a 3-4 page memo to me on the days that you lead discussion. It should address the main questions raised by the assigned readings, with a mind towards the theories that are presented and how these fit into larger literatures on the topic. Think about the way that the theory is operationalized: how are variables measured, coded, or conceptualized? What is the unit of analysis? How are alternative explanations addressed or accounted for? You should focus your critiques on the theoretical and empirical aspects of each paper, and strive to make constructive comments. Try to avoid criticizing a paper too harshly unless you can present a better way to address their research question.

4. Review (15%)
You will write a review for an anonymous manuscript which I will provide. Writing constructive reviews is an important part of our professional responsibilities as scholars. Everyone will receive a bad review at some point, and it is very frustrating. The sooner you learn to be a helpful reviewer, the better.

5. Final Exam (50%)
The format of the final exam will approximate the morning portion of the doctoral comprehensive exam in comparative politics. This will be discussed in more detail at the end of the semester, but you should bear in mind that the notes you take on the readings and discussions at the end of the semester will save you a great deal of work both on the final, and also later on during your comprehensive exams.
Books you should purchase:


I also highly recommend the book that I use when teaching Introduction to Comparative Politics as a background reference. Although this is generally designed as a textbook for undergraduates, I know many graduate students who have used this book to help them study for the comparative politics comprehensive exams. The book provides a helpful overview of many topics we will cover in class, but above all, it points you in the direction of articles that you can use to develop your understanding of the topics and their evolution over time. While the third version is my favorite, any previous version would be a good start (and should be less expensive):

**Week 1 (August 19) – Introduction to Comparative Politics**

**Required:**

**Recommended:**

**Week 2 (August 26) – Comparative Method, Case selection, Process tracing**

**Required:**

**Recommended:**
Week 3 (September 2) – Regime Types and Measurement

Required:

Recommended:

Week 4 (September 9) – Authoritarian Institutions

Required:

Recommended:

Week 5 (September 16) – Night at the Archives

You will be meeting with the Special Collections Library archivists to discuss archival research, and the resources available to you in the collections here.

Meet: 3:55 pm in the Russell Special Collections Building, room 277

You will write a short memo and submit it no later than Monday at 5pm. See details in “Assignments” section above.

Required:

Recommended:

Week 6 (September 23) – Protest and Social Movements

Required:
Recommended:

**Week 7 (September 30) – Democracy and Development**

Required:

Recommend:
Week 8 (October 7) – Parliamentary, Presidential, and Semi-presidential democracies

Required:
6. **Review Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland 2010 (Week 4) – just the part on classifying democracies!**

Recommended:

Week 9 (October 14) – Governments

Required:
Recommended:

Week 10 (October 21) – Electoral Rules and Party Systems

Required:


Recommended:

Week 11 (October 28) – Political Violence

Required:

Recommended:


**Week 12 (November 4) – Identity and Movement**

**Required:**


**Recommended:**


Week 13 (November 11) – Language and ethnicity

Required:

Recommended:

Week 14 (November 18) – Research Ethics

Required:
6. Skim the University of Georgia IRB Investigator Manual. Focus on sections that are potentially relevant to your own work.
7. Complete the CITI online certification for human subjects research. Email your completion certificate to me, or print it and bring it to class. I recommend that you complete the basic “Social and Behavioral Research” course. If your own research will involve other groups, you may also wish to complete those courses now.
Recommended:

**Week 15 (November 25)**

NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING

**Week 16 (December 2)**

GROUP FINAL STUDY TIME

**Final Exam:** Questions released Thursday, December 9
Due by noon, Monday, December 13