

**INTL 3300: Introduction to Comparative Politics**  
**University of Georgia, Department of International Affairs**

**Course Instructor Information:**

Dr. Erin Little

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**Office hours:**

Fridays from 1-3pm, 217 Candler Hall

**Course Meeting Information:**

220 Peabody Hall

MW, 11:35am-12:55pm

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**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Broadly, this course asks: What explains variation in institutional and economic development across countries? Scholars have proposed paths toward democracy and suggested that democracy facilitates economic development within states. The end of the Cold War seemed to affirm for some that Democracy would usher in order and peace, both within and across states. Yet, autocratic and mixed regimes have been surprisingly durable, with few new, stable democracies entering the international system.

We will use cross-national case studies and qualitative methods to evaluate these claims, deepening our understanding of the factors which motivate particular forms of state development. We will explore institutional and economic efforts to maintain order, while also examining challenges to this order and how resulting civil conflict, human rights violations, and repression alter lasting prospects for domestic and international peace.

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**EXAMS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**COUNTRY COMPARISON PROJECT**

One key project of this course is a semester-long study of two countries. Students may select from one of the pairs below or coordinate with their instructor in selecting a pair of their choice. Pairs selected from the list will have the benefit of articles posted to eLC to jump-start students' research on these countries. This is a group project. Suggested Pairs [with materials on eLC]:

1. Chile and Peru
2. Haiti and Dominican Republic
3. India and Sri Lanka
4. France and Italy
5. Rwanda and Burundi
6. Egypt and Tunisia
7. Saudi Arabia and Jordan
8. Pakistan and Bangladesh

Students will select the States they would like to follow through the semester worth 5% just for the country pair selection. From that point, there will be five more assignments related to this project. Submit all assignments through eLC.

1. *A research question:* Students will be expected to propose a research question about the country pairs they have selected. By this point in the semester, students should have a broad understanding of some basic similarities/differences between your country pairs, or interesting historical continuities which help explain their respective developments. You will (a) propose a research question, and (b) explain why you chose that question (i.e., why is it important to you and/or the broader study of comparative politics). This assignment should be no more than **250 words** in length.
2. *Two "short country summaries":* Students will introduce their two countries, providing key details that would allow a reader to identify why these two countries are being compared. Key details related to the research question should be included and cited with at least 2 reputable sources per country. Anywhere from 300-500 words per country is required. This section should have 2-3 cited materials per country.
3. *Theory and Hypothesis:* Students will lay out their proposed answer(s) and reasoning for the chosen research question. The theory should be at least 500 words and include at least one hypothesis. No citations are required for this assignment, but may be useful to set up your arguments.
4. *Methods description:* Students will write a summary of the empirical methods they would use to complete the paper. This assignment will include: (a) The summary itself, roughly 250 words; (b) key dependent and independent variables, excluding controls; (c) Conceptualization and measurement for these variables.
5. *An annotated bibliography:* Students will be expected to compile a list of 10 credible sources, with a brief 50-words-or-less description of key points to pull from the source for their projects, plus any quoted material with a referenced page # (no word limit). Credible sources may include any source with a reference in Google Scholar, with up to 4 sources being those for measurement of dependent and independent variables. Students may use news articles or other sources, but they will not count toward the total 10 required for full credit.

Due dates for these assignments are below:

- Country selection and Research Question - March 5th
- Short Country Summaries - March 26th
- Theory and Hypothesis - April 16th
- Methods Description - May 1st
- Annotated Bibliography - May 1st

## **EXAM AND QUIZZES**

Students will have one midterm exam through eLC, worth 15% of the final grade. A study guide and details will be provided prior to the exam. Additionally, you will have 5 quizzes throughout the semester, worth 2% each, due by the dates marked below in the course schedule.

## **CRISIS SIMULATION**

Students will engage in a brief crisis simulation over two class sessions that will challenge the powers and limitations across core factions of society. Government, Military, and Civilian identities will compete to complete assigned objectives as a crisis unfolds in the background. More details will be made available on eLC.

## **CLASS PARTICIPATION POLICY**

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This class is designed to offer ample opportunities for learning, commensurate to your level of engagement in class discussions and activities. All students are therefore expected to engage in *respectful, mindful dialogue* throughout the semester. Participating in class by asking questions, making thoughtful comments, and adding new information is important for everyone's continuing education. Discussions are intended for the mutual benefit of all students; disrespectfulness will not be tolerated.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

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Attendance will be taken randomly 5 times during the semester (worth 2% each) and on simulation days (if applicable). Rather than a basic roll, this will usually occur in the form of in-class, small-group activities involving a submission with your names attached. Absences will be excused for the following, discussed with me in advance: observance of a religious practice, documented (by a doctor or health clinic/hospital) sickness, death of a relative or close friend, or some other issue evaluated on a case-by-case basis. While attendance is not taken

for each class session, the fast-paced nature of this course and the use of supplemental materials in class (which will also appear on exams) will make it more difficult to do well in this course without being present.

## **GENERATIVE AI POLICY**

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Generative AI tools, such as Chat GPT and Grammarly, are permitted for all assignments in this course to assist in spelling, grammar, and diction. For any final research papers or projects, students may be required to submit a generative AI version of the assignment populated from their research question and a prompt of their choice, noted on the submission. This version will be submitted separately alongside the final document. Only the final document will be graded.

## **GRADING POLICY**

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The breakdown of your grades and the scoring rubric for this course are below (P/F indicates a Pass/Fail grade):

10% - Attendance

10% - Module Quizzes

**15% - Midterm Exam**

15% - Crisis Simulation

50% - Country Comparisons Project

- 5% - Country pair selection (P/F)
- 5% - Research question (P/F)
- 10% - Short country summaries (P/F)
- 15% - Theory and hypothesis
- 10% - Methods description
- 5% - Annotated bibliography

94 to 100 – A

80 to 83 – B-

60 to 69 – D

90 to 93 – A-

77 to 79 – C+

59 and below – F

87 to 89 – B+

74 to 77 – C

84 to 87 – B

70 to 73 – C-

## OUTLINE OF TOPICS

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*Note: All due dates are by 11:59pm on the date listed*

<b>MODULE I: BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE STATE</b>	
<b>1/12-14</b>	<b>Week 1 - Introduction to course and The State</b>
Topics	What is 'the State' and who are its agents? State sovereignty in a globalized world
Readings	Tilly (1985)
	<i>Nothing due this week</i>
<b>1/21</b>	<b>Week 2 - Citizenship, Nation, and Rights</b> <i>1/19 - NO CLASS; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</i>
Topics	Citizenship and civil rights Nationalism and human rights
Readings	McCrone and Kiely (2000)
<i>Due by 1/22</i>	<i>Module I Quiz</i>

<b>MODULE II: DEMOCRACY AND AUTHORITARIANISM</b>	
<b>1/26-28</b>	<b>Week 3 - Democracy</b>
Topics	Conceptualizing democratic governance Measuring democracy in comparative politics
Readings	Polity IV manual (pgs 1-17); Freedom House methodology

	<i>Nothing due this week</i>
<b>2/2-4</b>	<b>Week 4 - Democratic Decline into Authoritarianism</b>
Topics	Patterns and markers of democratic decline Types of autocratic systems and governance under authoritarian regimes
Readings	Watch <i>The Edge of Democracy</i> documentary (link in eLC)
<i>Due by 2/5</i>	<i>Bonus Discussion Thread on documentary (assignment details TBA)</i>
<b>2/9-11</b>	<b>Week 5 - Authoritarianism into Transitional Democracy</b>
Topics	How autocratic regimes break down Installing democratic structures and decentralizing power
Readings	TBA
<i>Due by 2/12</i>	<i>Module II Quiz</i>
<b>2/16-18</b>	<b>Week 6 - Governance Structures and Political Economy</b>
Topics	Foreign aid and State development The role of police in enforcing governance in transitional democracies
Readings	Aluko and Arowolo (2010)
<i>Due by 2/20</i>	<i>Midterm Exam (available on eLC beginning at 8am on 2/19)</i>

**MODULE III: METHODS WORKSHOP 1 AND SIMULATION WEEK**

<b>2/23-25</b>	<b>Week 7 - Asking a research question</b>
Topics	Asking a research question, pt. 1 - Dependent and independent variables Asking a research question, pt. 2 - Causality
Readings	KKV p14-19, Pearl (2009)
<i>Due by 2/25</i>	<i>Module III Quiz</i>
<b>3/2-4</b>	<b>Week 8 - Crisis Simulation Week</b>
Topics	Participate in a competition across intra-state factions to complete objectives amid ongoing political and/or environmental crisis
Readings	Materials for the simulation will be made available on eLC
<i>Due by 3/5</i>	<i>Submit your country selections and research question for the comparison project</i>
<b>3/9-11</b>	<b>Week 9 - NO CLASS; SPRING BREAK!</b>

<b>MODULE IV: POLITICAL VIOLENCE</b>	
<b>3/16-18</b>	<b>Week 10 - Domestic conflict</b>
Topics	Defining coups and civil war Dynamics of civil conflict
Readings	TBD
	<i>Nothing due this week</i>

<b>3/25</b>	<b>Week 11 - Civilian victimization</b>	<i>3/23 - NO CLASS; ISA Conference</i>
Topics	Forms of civilian victimization Civilian victimization during conflict	
Readings	Humphreys and Weinstein (2006)	
<i>Due by 3/26</i>	<i>Submit your short country summaries</i>	
<b>3/30-4/1</b>	<b>Week 12 – Forms of protest</b>	
Topics	Forms of protest, pt. 1 - Riots vs. Revolution Forms of protest, pt. 2 - Self-immolation vs. Suicide terrorism	
Readings	TBD	
<i>Due by 4/2</i>	<i>Module IV Quiz</i>	

<b>MODULE V: METHODS WORKSHOP 2 AND REGIONAL DYNAMICS</b>		
<b>4/6-8</b>	<b>Week 13 - Answering your research question</b>	
Topics	Causal mechanisms vs. Correlative-conjunction Case studies vs. Process-tracing	
Readings	Lim Ch. 2; Mahony on process-tracing	
	<i>Nothing due this week</i>	
<b>4/13-15</b>	<b>Week 14 - Effects of colonization</b>	

Topics	British colonization in Iran French colonization in Vietnam
Readings	No readings this week
<i>Due by 4/16</i>	<i>Submit your Theory and Hypothesis</i>
<b>4/20-22</b>	<b>Week 15 - Diffusion and security</b>
Topics	Policy diffusion Regional security complexes
Readings	Frazier and Stewart-Ingersoll (2010); (Optional) Kampf (2013)
<i>Due by 4/23</i>	<i>Module V Quiz</i>

<b>4/27</b>	<b><i>Optional Workshop Day</i></b>
Topics	Workshop to review or discuss questions concerning the final draft of your country comparison project; <i>Attendance not required</i>

<b>4/28</b>	<b>Reading Day (NO CLASS)</b>
	Dedicated office hours in 217 Candler Hall from 3-5pm for any final questions
<i>Due by 5/1</i>	<i>Methods summary and Annotated bibliography</i>

## **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

UGA Student Honor Code: “I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others.” A Culture of Honesty, the University’s policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found the website of Office of Instruction. We expect that the Student Honor Code will guide your efforts in this course. A lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy does not explain a violation. Please direct any questions to the instructor.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

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The following is taken verbatim from the University Council: “The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.”

The following is taken verbatim from LINK: “In the absence of written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center, students may not make a visual or audio recording of any aspect of this course. Students who have a recording accommodation agree in writing that they:

- Will use the records only for personal academic use during the specific course.
- Understand that faculty members have copyright interest in their class lectures and that they agree not to infringe on this right in any way.
- Understand that the faculty member and students in the class have privacy rights and agree not to violate those rights by using recordings for any reason other than their own personal study.
- Will not release, digitally upload, broadcast, transcribe, or otherwise share all or any part of the recordings. They also agree that they not profit financially and will not allow others to benefit personally or financially from lecture recordings or other course materials.
- Will erase/delete all recordings at the end of the semester.
- Understand that violation of these terms may subject them to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct or subject them to liability under copyright laws.”

## **FERPA STATEMENT**

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The following is taken verbatim from the Syllabus Checklist:

“The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) grants students certain information privacy rights. See the registrar’s explanation. FERPA allows disclosure of directory information (name, address, telephone, email, date of birth, place of birth, major, activities, degrees, awards, prior schools), unless requested in a written letter to the registrar.”

## **DISABILITY SERVICES**

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The following is taken verbatim from the Disability Resource Center:

“If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the Disability Resource Center. They can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting the Disability Resource Center”

The following is taken verbatim from the document of Syllabus Creation:

“Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations in order to participate in course activities or meet course requirements should contact the instructor or designate during regular office hours or by appointment.”

## **MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES**

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The following is taken verbatim from the University Council:

“If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit the website of Student Care and Outreach. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.

UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services or crisis support. If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center. Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.”