

# INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

84:101 | Fall Semester 2017 | 3 credits  
MWF, 10:20-11:20 am in Sage 2232

*“Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education.”* – Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 32<sup>nd</sup>  
President of the United States

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is about democracy: what is it, what does it take to sustain it, and is it worth it? We will begin our examination of democracy in the United Kingdom and Germany, making reference to democracy in the United States. From there, we'll explore political systems in transition to democracy as well as some systems that are not democratic at all, including Russia, Iran, China, Nigeria, and South Africa. Throughout the course of the semester we will explore how these different political systems respond to social, cultural, economic, religious, and other major national cleavages. The major emphases of this course will be institutions of government, electoral systems, parties, and political participation and how these aspects of government contribute to or detract from the quality of democracy in each country.

## GENERAL EDUCATION AT UW OSHKOSH

This course fulfills a USP **Social Science (SS)** requirement and has been constructed to conform with UW Oshkosh's Essential Learning Outcomes (<https://www.uwosh.edu/usp/about-the-usp/essential-learning-outcomes>) as well as our Departmental Learning Goals (<http://politicalscience.uwosh.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Learning-Goals-2016.pdf>). By exploring other political systems, you'll find that you actually learn a lot about your own. **NOTE: This is NOT a Quest II course.**

This course also fulfills a **Global Citizenship (GC)** requirement. Global Citizenship is the knowledge of nations, cultures, or societies beyond the U.S.; the recognition of how interaction, interdependence, and inequity among diverse geographical, social, political, or economic systems have shaped historical and contemporary global challenges and opportunities; and the skills to engage with the responsibilities of informed citizenship in a complex, interdependent, and changing world.

If you have questions about how this course fits into your overall plan of study at UW Oshkosh, please ask me. I assure you, this class will impact everything you do, no matter what your major is or what you plan to do with it.

## BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

**Instructor:** Professor Tracy H. Slagter, Ph.D., University of Iowa (2006)

**Office Hours:** TTh, 11:30-1:00pm and by appointment (email me)

**Office Location:** Sage Hall 4626

**Email:** [slagtert@uwosh.edu](mailto:slagtert@uwosh.edu)

**Dept. Contact:** Ms. Angelee Hammond

**Dept. Email:** [hammond@uwosh.edu](mailto:hammond@uwosh.edu)

**Dept. Office Location:** Sage Hall 4631

**Department Phone:** (920) 424-3456

**Facebook:** “UWO Political Science”

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS/PHONE APP

O’Neil, Patrick H. 2015. *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, 5th Edition. New York, NY: W.W. Norton. [Noted as “Essentials” in the syllabus.]

O’Neil, Patrick H, Karl Fields, and Don Share. 2015. *Cases in Comparative Politics*, 5th Edition. New York, NY: W.W. Norton. [Noted as “Cases” in the syllabus.]

Other readings will be available to you on D2L or via Polk Library’s online databases. Please bring your textbook(s) and readings to class on the days we discuss them. *I strongly recommend that you print your readings that are not in the textbook.*

If you have a smartphone, please install the free **BBC News** app on your phone and learn to use it!



## COURSE FORMAT

This is an introductory course in political science and is one of our “gateway” courses in the major. Some of the time I will lecture and use PowerPoint slides as an outline; other times I will require participation from you in small groups. I expect that students will attend class each week prepared to listen, discuss, and question.

## THE CORNELL METHOD

It is imperative that you take good, detailed notes in this class—I do not lecture from the textbook. To that end, I have structured my slides around the Cornell note-taking method

and encourage you to use it. I will teach it to you on the first day of class.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

*Make-up Exams:* If you must miss an exam, quiz, or in-class activity for a University-related event or pre-scheduled medical procedure, you must tell me in advance and prepare to take your exam before it appears on the syllabus. If you are ill on the day of the exam, I expect you to let me know *BEFORE* the exam that you will not be here to take it. In order to take a make-up exam or quiz, you must provide documentation of your illness from a healthcare provider. *Note that you are not allowed to make up missed quizzes or in-class assignments, no matter the reason.*

*Email and Email Etiquette:* Since you're all preparing for gainful employment after your time at the University, it's important to start presenting yourself as a professional now. One easy way to do this is by writing professional, respectful emails. In your emails to me, other faculty and staff, and even your classmates, heed the following advice: 1.) include a meaningful subject line; 2.) begin your email with "Dear..."; 3.) use proper titles, if necessary (for faculty, that's usually "Prof." or "Dr."); 4.) be specific about the action you'd like the recipient to take; and 5.) sign your full name to the email or use an automatic signature.

*Cell Phones, Laptops, Etc.:* Please be courteous and set your phone to vibrate or silent mode during class, and please keep your phone in your bag unless I tell you it's OK to use it (sometimes it is!). It is disruptive to all of us if it rings during lecture or discussion. Despite the lure of laptops, the documented best way to learn is for you to take notes on paper in class. If you are on a laptop or tablet and checking non-course-related sites, I'll ask you to stop bringing your devices to class, as it's a distraction to those around you.

*Other Distractions:* Please refrain from reading the newspaper, wearing headphones/earbuds, checking your phone, or frantically completing your reading or assignments for other classes while you're in mine. It's disrespectful to me and to your classmates. *If you cannot give this class your full attention, you probably shouldn't come anyway.*

## **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

After successfully completing this course, students will be able to do the following:

- *Understand* how diversity in value systems and cultures and/or inequities among geographical, social, political, or economic systems have shaped past and/or contemporary global challenges and opportunities;
- *Explain* patterns of diverse beliefs, ideas, traditions, and/or geographical, social, political, or economic systems;

- *Compare* other systems of government to the systems in place in the United States; and
- *Recognize* the patterns and pathologies of democracy in contexts other than our own, particularly as they experience global events.

## **GRADING SCALE**

I use a **93/90/87** grading scale in this course (which means that 93 is the cutpoint for an A, 90 for an A-, 87 for a B+, etc.). Your grade will be determined by several assignments and exams, detailed as follows:

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

*Participation (10%):* I expect you to be in class at each meeting – you can't participate if you're not here! You can earn participation points in several different ways: contributing to in-class discussions, answering questions I pose to the class, or stopping by my office hours. Students who attend every class but never say a word can expect a C for this portion of their grade. Participation *cannot* be made up, no matter the reason for your absence from class.

*Map Quiz (5%):* There will be a map quiz given in the third week of the course. Countries included on the quiz can be found on the next page of this syllabus.

*Quizzes/Interteach (20% total):* There will be a short (~10 question) multiple-choice/fill-in-the-blank online quiz after we complete some of the countries in this course. These quizzes will assess your basic understanding of each political system, and questions will be drawn from both lecture and the readings. I also will use Interteach (a method of guided discussion) for some of the readings. *Note that these assignments cannot be made up for any reason.*

*Exams (65% total):* There will be two exams in this course, a midterm exam (35%) and a final exam (30%). Exams will consist of multiple choice/fill-in-the-blank questions and several identification and/or short-answer essays. I will provide a study guide for each exam. Exams must be taken *at the time and on the date they are scheduled unless you have a documented medical excuse* (e.g., note from your doctor from the date you were sick) or

must be absent for a University-sponsored activity (in which case I will need a letter from your coach or other University official).

### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

I will not tolerate plagiarism or cheating of any kind. All students should familiarize themselves with the University's policies on academic dishonesty and know the consequences of plagiarism or cheating. In this course, plagiarism or cheating on any assignment or examination will result in a grade of F for the course.

### **A NOTE TO POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJORS**

Political Science majors should take Political Methodology (245) in either their sophomore year or the first semester of their junior year. Political Science 245 is a prerequisite for the senior capstone, Political Analysis (401), and cannot be taken concurrently. If you are currently a political science major or if you think you will be one of our majors in the future, it is important that you save your graded coursework from this class. If you have questions, please see me or any faculty member after class.

### **CHANGES**

I reserve the right to make amendments to this syllabus in order to accommodate the needs and pace of this particular group. I will notify you in advance of any changes I decide to make.

### **MAP QUIZ COUNTRIES**

The following list of countries will appear on your map quiz. You will be given a map with numbers in place of country names, and a numbered list. You'll then have to write the country name next to its correct number on the map.

1. Afghanistan
2. Australia
3. Belgium
4. Brazil
5. Canada
6. China
7. Democratic Republic of Congo
8. Egypt
9. France
10. Germany
11. Greece
12. India
13. Indonesia
14. Iran
15. Iraq
16. Israel
17. Japan
18. Kenya

19. Mexico
20. Nigeria
21. North Korea
22. Philippines
23. Qatar
24. Russia
25. Saudi Arabia
26. South Africa
27. South Korea
28. Sudan
29. Sweden
30. Syria
31. Ukraine
32. United Kingdom
33. Venezuela
34. Yemen
35. Zimbabwe

### **POLITICAL SCIENCE AFTER COLLEGE**

After completing this course, you might wonder: what would I do with a major in Political Science? There are a lot of opportunities. Here's a small sample of some of the positions our recent graduates hold:

- Wisconsin State Assembly Representative, 57<sup>th</sup> Assembly District
- Executive Director, Wisconsin Asphalt Pavement Association
- Political Director, Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters
- Strategy and Innovation Consultant, United Airlines
- Associate Attorney (several)
- Assistant Manager of Championship Communications, United States Golf Association
- Clinical Research Associate, ProHealth
- Elections Specialist, Ramsey County (MN)
- Foreign Military Sales Subject Matter Expert (SME), Defense Security Cooperation Agency
- Public Policy Coordinator, Planned Parenthood Federation of America
- IT Business Consultant, SAP (Germany)

We profile a new alum and hear about their job experiences most Thursday mornings on our departmental Facebook page ("UWO Political Science") and on our website.

## SCHEDULE OF TOPICS OF ASSIGNMENTS

**NOTE:** You should complete the assigned reading *by the date it is listed on this syllabus*. It is also beneficial for you to take notes on what you read, or highlight your text as you read it. It is NOT helpful, in most cases, to only read the text online; it's always better for your learning if you *engage* with the material, not just read it silently.

September 6	Introduction to Comparative Politics: How to Do Well in This Class READ: this syllabus all the way through; print it and bring it with you to class every day
September 8	Thinking about Comparative Politics READ: Essentials, Chapter 1
September 11	What is the State? READ: Essentials, Chapter 2
September 13	What is Democracy? READ: Essentials, Chapter 5
September 15	Understanding Democracy INTERTEACH: Schmitter and Karl, "What Democracy Is... And Is Not" and de Tocqueville, excerpt from <i>Democracy in America</i> (D2L)
September 18	Introduction to the United Kingdom READ: Cases, Chapter 2
September 20	The United Kingdom READ: Cases, Chapter 2
September 22	The United Kingdom READ: Cases, Chapter 2
September 25	State and Nations READ: Essentials, Chapter 3 👑 <b>Map Quiz today!</b>
September 27	Introduction to Germany READ: Cases, Chapter 5
September 29	Germany READ: Cases, Chapter 5 READ: Duverger, "The Number of Parties" (D2L)
October 2	Germany READ: Cases, Chapter 5 READ: Essentials, Chapter 8
October 4	Political Economy READ: Essentials, Chapter 4
October 6	Political Economy INTERTEACH: Alesina, et al., "Why Doesn't the U.S. Have a European-Style Welfare State?" and Smith, "An Inquiry into the Nature and Cause of the Wealth of Nations" (D2L)

October 9	Political Economy READ: Marx and Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party"
October 11	Introduction to Russia READ: Cases, Chapter 7
October 13	Russia READ: Cases, Chapter 7
October 16	Russia READ: Cases, Chapter 7
October 18	Post-Communism READ: Essentials, Chapter 9
October 20	Review for Midterm; bring questions to class!
October 23	🌟 <b>Midterm Examination!</b>
October 25	Non-Democracy READ: Essentials, Chapter 6 <b>NO CLASS, ONLINE QUIZ:</b> see D2L
October 27	Introduction to China READ: Cases, Chapter 8
October 30	China READ: Cases, Chapter 8
November 1	China READ: Cases, Chapter 8
November 3	Political Violence READ: Essentials, Chapter 7
November 6	Iran READ: Cases, Chapter 10
November 8	Iran READ: Cases, Chapter 10
November 10	Iran READ: Cases, Chapter 10
November 13	Less Developed Countries READ: Essentials, Chapter 10
November 15	Introduction to Nigeria READ: Cases, Chapter 14
November 17	Nigeria READ: Cases, Chapter 14

November 20	Nigeria READ: Cases, Chapter 14
November 22	THANKSGIVING BREAK
November 24	THANKSGIVING BREAK
November 27	Development in Africa INTERTEACH: Herbst, "War and the State in Africa" and Diamond, "The Rule of Law vs. The Big Man" (D2L)
November 29	Introduction to South Africa READ: Cases, Chapter 13
December 1	Introduction to South Africa READ: Cases, Chapter 13
December 4	South Africa READ: Cases, Chapter 13
December 6	South Africa READ: Cases, Chapter 13
December 8	Conclusions: What Do We Know? How Does It Help Us?
December 11	Review for Final Examination; bring questions to class!
December 13	👑 <b>Final Examination</b>
December 15	NO CLASS