

# INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

84:101 | Spring Semester 2021 | 3 credits

MWF, 9:10-10:10am | Online via Collaborate Ultra

*"The long century during which Western liberal democracies dominated the globe has ended for good...The only remaining question now is whether democracy will transcend its once firm anchoring in the West, a shift that would create the conditions for a truly global democratic century—or whether democracy will become, at best, the lingering form of government in an economically and demographically declining corner of the world."*

Yascha Mounk & Roberto Stefan Foa in *Foreign Affairs* (2018)

## BULLETIN COURSE DESCRIPTION

*"This course provides an introduction to key concepts and issues in comparative politics in the context of case studies from Europe, Asia, the Americas, Africa and the Middle East. It explores political participation and institutions, political ideology and culture, the role of government, political parties, democratization, economic development and inequality, nationalism, and ethnic and religious conflict in variety of national and regional contexts around the globe."*

## SPRING 2021 COURSE DESCRIPTION

Is democracy worth it? We're living in a time when ideas about democracy are shifting, and when global—and even *American*—democracy is declining. More than that, countries like China (which aren't democratic at all) seem to be doing pretty well. In this course, we'll take a long, hard look at established democracies in the United Kingdom, Germany, and France to see how they function and whether or not they're up to the challenge our current political climate presents. At midterm, we'll switch our focus and examine countries that aren't democratic or are relatively new to democracy: Russia, China, Iran, and Nigeria. Throughout the semester we will explore how 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.

You'll find that, as you study the way other countries function, you'll gain a better understanding of your own country. If you pay attention, do the work I assign, and come to class every session, you'll walk away from this class a much more informed global citizen than when you entered—and that will serve you well no matter what career you are pursuing.

## BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

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

**Open Hours:** TTh 11:00-12:30 on MS Teams or in-person in Sage 4626

**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:** remote this semester

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

## JOINING OPEN (OFFICE) HOURS

The Political Science Department uses Microsoft Teams (MS Teams) for holding office hours. This system is available to all UW Oshkosh students. Faculty will be available during the hours noted on your syllabus. When logging into MS Teams, look closely at the status indicators (green dots = available, red dots = with another student) for your instructor.

We hope that using MS Teams for office hours for all of our courses will help students become more accustomed to virtual office hours during the pandemic. The main point to remember is that we are available to you. Please use our office hours freely and often. We are here to help. We are also happy to set up meetings outside of my office hours if students have conflicts with the posted times.

For more information and the invitation link to open hours, see our course Canvas page.

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOK/PHONE APP

O'Neil, Patrick H., Karl Fields, and Don Share, eds. 2021. *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics, 2e*. New York: W.W. Norton. [NOTE: This is an E-Book.]

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



*I am fully supportive of you having your phones out and available during the first ten minutes of class. When the lecture or discussion starts, however, please kindly put them away.*

## 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://uwosh.edu/usp/about-usp/essential-learning-outcomes/>). **NOTE: This is NOT a Quest II course. If you are in the wrong course, please see me ASAP.**

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.

## COURSE PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for this course. It is open to students at any level and in all majors, and is the first in a series of introductory courses in Political Science. In Introduction to Comparative Politics (84:101) we introduce students to the democratic and non-democratic political systems of several different states (e.g., Germany, China, Iran), taking a look inside each one to determine how they function. In Introduction to American Politics (84:105), we give students an in-depth look at the working of the American system of government. And in Introduction to International Relations (IR; 84:115), we show you how states work with and against each other in the global system. Political Science majors are required to take all three, but they stand independently so that non-majors can benefit from them as well.

## COURSE POLICIES

*Make-up Exams:* If you must miss an exam, quiz, or 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 able 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 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. *More About Email:* If decide to email me, please be thoughtful about it. This syllabus can answer most questions. If you need to meet with me, be clear about why; if you require a response to an email, be sure your question is concise and answerable. For complicated matters, visiting me during office hours is the best idea.

## 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 cut-point 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 online meeting – you can't participate if you're not around! You participate in several different ways: talking about the news, contributing to in-class discussions, answering questions I pose to the class, or popping into 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.

*Quizzes (20% total):* There will be a short, multiple-choice online quiz after we complete some of the section of this course. We will be using W.W. Norton's Inquizitive, which is built into Canvas. As you'll see, the quizzes are not meant to be punitive, but are designed to facilitate your reading. (In a nerdy way, they're also kind of fun.)

*Event Analysis (20%):* Keeping up with the news is really important! This short assignment will allow you to focus on an area of the world of your choosing and employ concepts and measurements we discuss in lecture and discussions. More details will follow in class.

*Exams (50% total):* There will be two exams in this course, a midterm exam (25%) and a final exam (25%). Exams will consist of multiple choice/fill-in-the-blank questions and several identification and/or short-answer essays. 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). Please check the course schedule right away to ensure that you are NOT going to miss an exam.

### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

A college education is intended to develop your skills, knowledge, and confidence. Graded assignments are designed to work on these items. Thus, to gain the skills, knowledge, and confidence of a college-educated person all graded work is to be your own. When you are directed to work alone, an assignment or test must be done by you, its primary ideas are to be your own, and any outside materials should be dealt with properly (quoted when using someone's words, and cited when quoting or referencing them in any other way). When your instructor directs you to work in teams, the work is to be done by the team. More information can be found here:

<https://uwosh.edu/politicalscience/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2020/08/Academic-Honesty.pdf>

### **GRIEVANCES**

The Department of Political Science is committed to offering you a high-quality classroom or online experience, and we take your feedback very seriously. If you have concerns about anything related to this course, assignments, or teaching method, you are encouraged to first speak with your instructor directly. If you are not comfortable speaking with the instructor, you are

invited to speak with the Chair of the Department of Political Science, Dr. James Krueger. He can be reached at [kruegerj@uwosh.edu](mailto:kruegerj@uwosh.edu). Should he be unable to resolve your concerns, he will guide you to appropriate resources within the College of Letters and Science.

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

If you have or think you may have a learning difference or a disability—a mental health, medical, or physical impairment—that would limit your access to learning or demonstrating your knowledge in this course, please contact the Dean of Students Office. If you already have an accommodation, please let me know in the first week of class. Note that this class *may* be recorded for accommodation purposes.

### **STUDENT RIGHT TO KNOW ACT (1990)**

Students are advised to see the following URL for disclosures about essential consumer protection items required by the Student Right to Know Act of 1990:

<https://uwosh.edu/financialaid/consumer-information/>

### **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.

## SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

This schedule is subject to change. Some topics and readings will require a bit more time than I have allotted, and some less. I will let you know what to expect the next session after each lecture so that you can be prepared. In general, *you should have the readings completed for the day they are assigned.*

### WEEK ONE

- February 1 Introduction to the Course and Assignments  
**READ:** this syllabus; bring any questions you have. Complete the Flipgrid introduction this week! (See our course Canvas page under “Welcome (Read This First)” for a link.)
- February 3 Thinking about Comparative Politics  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Chapter 1
- February 5 What is the State?  
**READ:** Cases and Concepts, Chapter 2

### WEEK TWO

- February 8 What’s the Difference between States and Nations?  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Chapter 3 (read to “Political Attitudes...” on page 68)
- February 10 Political Ideology  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Chapter 3 (finish the chapter)
- February 12 Democracy  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Chapter 6 (read through this; we’ll continue to discuss it throughout the semester, as democracy is the motivating concept for the entire course)

### WEEK THREE

- February 15 The United Kingdom  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, U.K. Case Study
- February 17 The United Kingdom  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, U.K. Case Study
- February 19 The United Kingdom  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, U.K. Case Study

### WEEK FOUR

- February 22 Advanced Industrial Democracies (with one case under our belts...!)  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Chapter 7
- February 24 Germany  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Germany Case Study
- February 26 Germany  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Germany Case Study

### WEEK FIVE

- March 1 Germany  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Germany Case Study
- March 3 France  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, France Case Study
- March 5 France  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, France Case Study

### WEEK SIX

- March 8 France  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, France Case Study
- March 10 Political Economy

March 12      **READ:** Cases & Concepts, Chapter 4  
Political Economy  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Chapter 4

### **WEEK SEVEN**

March 15      Catch-Up Day  
**READ:** No new reading; be sure you have completed all readings to this point. **NOTE:** this is the **last day** you can submit quizzes for this half of the semester. Complete them by 11:59pm tonight for credit.

March 17      **Review:** bring your questions to class!

March 19      🍷 **Midterm Examination**

### **SPRING BREAK | No Class | Be Careful! (March 21-28, 2021)**

### **WEEK EIGHT**

March 29      Non-Democracies  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Chapter 8

March 31      Communism  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Chapter 9 (read through “Societal Institutions...”)

April 2        Russia  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Russia Case Study

### **WEEK NINE**

April 5        Russia  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Russia Case Study

April 7        Russia  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Russia Case Study

April 9        Post-Communism  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Chapter 9 (finish the chapter)

### **WEEK TEN**

April 12      China  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, China Case Study

April 14      China  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, China Case Study

April 16      China  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, China Case Study

### **WEEK ELEVEN**

April 19      China  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, China Case Study

April 21      Political Violence (Terrorism and Revolution)  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Chapter 5

April 23      Iran  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Iran Case Study

### **WEEK TWELVE**

April 26      Iran  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Iran Case Study

April 28      Development  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Chapter 10

April 30      Development  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Chapter 10 (finish)

### WEEK THIRTEEN

- May 3            Nigeria  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Nigeria Case Study
- May 5            Nigeria  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Nigeria Case Study
- May 7            Nigeria  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Nigeria Case Study

### WEEK FOURTEEN

- May 10          **Review:** bring your questions to class!
- May 12          🎉 **Final Examination!**
- May 14          **No class;** happy summer! Let's all hope that we can return *in-person* in the fall!