

INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

84:101 | Spring Semester 2021 | 3 credits | QUEST II
MWF, 10:20-11:20am | 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 and Germany 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: 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

Dept. Contact: Ms. Angelee Hammond
Dept. Email: hammond@uwosh.edu
Dept. Office Location: remote this semester
Department Phone: (920) 424-3456

JOINING OPEN (OFFICE) HOURS

The Department of Political Science 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 for your instructor (green = available; red = with another student).

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 a direct link to my online open hours, see our course Canvas site.

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 encourage you to have your phone out at the beginning of every class, but then put it away when the lecture or discussion starts.

LIBERAL EDUCATION AT UW OSHKOSH

At UW Oshkosh, we pride ourselves in providing a quality liberal arts education to all students—we call it the **University Studies Program (USP)**. What does being liberally educated mean? It means we want to ensure that you're prepared for whatever challenges you will face in the future, which in turn means that you must be *broadly* educated. We offer you a wide variety of courses in your first year of college in order to expose you to new perspectives, new ways of thinking, and new ways of solving problems. The world's challenges rarely fit into the narrow confines of a college major; a liberal arts education gives you an education *beyond* your major.

We focus our approach to a liberal arts education around the **Quest** series of courses. This is a **Quest II** course, a type of course offered only to first-year students in their second semester at UW Oshkosh. You've just finished **Quest I**, which helped you learn about university life and college expectations. In **Quest II**, we introduce you to resources to help you make the most efficient use of your time here and encourage you to think about your role as responsible, ethical citizen. Next year, you'll enroll in a **Quest III** course, which extends the lessons you learned in your first year into the greater Oshkosh community.

This course fulfills a USP **Society** requirement and has been constructed to conform with UW Oshkosh's Essential Learning Outcomes (<https://uwosh.edu/usp/about-usp/essential-learning-outcomes/>). 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. In fulfilling the GC requirement, you're also gaining exposure to the **Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Signature Question**, which asks, "How do people understand and bridge cultural differences?" We will encounter and attempt to answer this question many times over the course of this semester.

Quest II courses are unique in that they also ask students to think about **values and ethics**: what does it mean to be a good citizen? What does a good policy look like? How do I balance what is good for *me* versus what is good for *society*? In this course, we'll explore ethics in the context of citizenship, public policy, justice, and human rights.

Finally, this Quest II course will allow you to continue your exploration of the University resources that can assist you in **planning for your future in college, work, and life**. You'll hear from an alum, discuss the process of scholarship, and

attend a number of events designed to further help you build your own community right here.

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 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 an 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 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;
- *Recognize* the patterns and pathologies of democracy in contexts other than our own, particularly as they experience global events.
- *Understand* the ways the University can help set them up for success later in their academic careers and life; and
- *Examine* political and daily decisions and their ethical implications.

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 online meeting – but this is more than an attendance grade; 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.

First-Year Experience Reflections (20%): Check the course schedule below for dates of important events for first-year students (**highlighted in RED**). You will have short written assignments based on these. I will talk a lot more about this in class.

Quizzes (20% total): There are short, multiple-choice online quizzes after we complete some of the sections of this course. These quizzes will assess your basic understanding of each

political system or concept, and they're a great way to ensure that you're keeping up with the course reading. We'll be using Inquizitive from W.W. Norton—it's a great resource that will keep you on track with the reading (and it's kind of fun, in a really nerdy way).

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.

EARLY ALERT

Around the fifth week of classes, you may receive an "Early Alert" notice from me or another of your instructors. This is just a nudge—a friendly reminder that you should attend to your grade or missing assignments. It does not go on your permanent record. If you receive an Early Alert notice, please contact your instructor to sort it out ASAP. For more information on Early Alert, see:

<https://uwosh.edu/advising/for-students/early-alert/>

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Please see our course Canvas page for links to offices on campus that can meet a wide variety of student needs. Remember: everyone on this campus exists to help you. *You are never a burden to us.* Always reach out if you need assistance, no matter what kind.

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. 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 page 68)
- February 10 Political Ideology
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 3 (finish the chapter)
- February 12 Career Services Visit (Mr. Rich Marshall)**
Get ready for a lot of great information on networking and resume-writing! **Heads-up:** you'll have to turn in a complete resume before spring break.

- WEEK THREE Academic Open House Week** (online); see Canvas for details on how to attend and assignment
- February 15 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)
- February 16 **Taste of UW Oshkosh** in Reeve Ballroom (221); explore the student organizations we have on this campus. There's truly something for everyone! 11:00am-1:00pm and again 4:00pm-6:00pm. Make a point to attend, and wear a mask. A short assignment on this will follow.
- February 17 The United Kingdom
READ: Cases & Concepts, U.K. Case Study
 Today is also **Career Fair on the Fox** (see link on Canvas), noon-4:00pm
- February 19 The United Kingdom
READ: Cases & Concepts, U.K. Case Study

WEEK FOUR

- February 22 The United Kingdom
READ: Cases & Concepts, U.K. Case Study
- February 24 **Alumni Visit:** Christian Jensen (Executive Director, myTEAM TRIUMPH)
WATCH (BEFORE CLASS): Dan Pallotta, "The Way We Think About Charity is Dead Wrong"
https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_pallotta_the_way_we_think_about_charity_is_dead_wrong?language=en
- February 26 Advanced Industrial Democracies (with one case under our belts...!)
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 7

WEEK FIVE

- EARLY ALERT WEEK!** (If you get one, don't panic.)
- March 1 Germany
READ: Cases & Concepts, Germany Case Study
- March 3 Germany
READ: Cases & Concepts, Germany Case Study
- March 5 Germany
READ: Cases & Concepts, Germany Case Study

WEEK SIX

- March 8 Political Economy
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 4
- March 9 **Oshkosh Student Association (OSA) Spring Election: vote!**
- March 10 Political Economy
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 4
- March 12 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. **Final resumes due on Canvas by 11:59pm tonight.**

WEEK SEVEN

- March 15 **Review:** bring your questions to class!
- March 17 🏰 **Midterm Examination**
- March 19 Non-Democracies
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 8

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

WEEK EIGHT

- March 29 Communism
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 9 (read through “Societal Institutions...”)
- March 31 Russia
READ: Cases & Concepts, Russia Case Study
- April 2 Russia
READ: Cases & Concepts, Russia Case Study

WEEK NINE

- April 5 Russia
READ: Cases & Concepts, Russia Case Study
- April 7 Post-Communism
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 9 (finish the chapter)
Today is the **Healthcare Career Fair** (see link on Canvas), 10:00am-1:00pm
Today is also the **Creating Connections** event (see link on Canvas), 4:30-5:30pm
- April 9 China
READ: Cases & Concepts, China Case Study

WEEK TEN

- April 12 China
READ: Cases & Concepts, China Case Study
- April 14 China
READ: Cases & Concepts, China Case Study
- April 15 Today is the **Education Career Fair** (see link in Canvas), 11:30am-1:00pm
- April 16 Reflecting on Democracy: is it worth it?
READ: Musgrave, Paul. “Political Scientists Turned a Blind Eye to America’s Democratic Failures.” *Foreign Policy*; January 18, 2021. (See PDF on Canvas; you can also find it online.)

WEEK ELEVEN

- April 19 Political Violence (Terrorism and Revolution)
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 5
- April 21 Iran
READ: Cases & Concepts, Iran Case Study
- 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 (start)
- April 29 **Celebration of Research & Creative Activity** (online; link will be posted on Canvas); short assignment will follow.
- 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! Here's hoping that next fall we'll all be safely in-person!