

# INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

84:101 | Fall Semester 2021 | 3 credits  
MWF, 9:10-10:10am | Sage Hall 1232

*"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."*

## FALL 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. Then we'll switch our focus and examine countries that aren't democratic or have weaker commitments to democracy: Russia, China, Iran, Brazil, 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  
**Office Hours:** MW, 10:30am-noon (in-person or via MS Teams)  
**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 4631 (T, W, Th)  
**Department Phone:** (920) 424-3456

## 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. **Purchase the text that includes "Inquizitive."**]

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.*

## THIS CLASS AND COVID-19

The University requires us all to wear a mask that covers both the nose and mouth whenever we are indoors. If you will not abide by this requirement, we cannot have a class. This is non-negotiable. Please wear your mask properly—better yet, wear a mask AND get vaccinated. Vaccination is free, safe, effective and our best chance to fully exit this pandemic.

## 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/>).

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:* I get a lot of email every day, and I try to respond within 24 hours. If you decide to email me, please be thoughtful about it, as I will be when emailing you. 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 allows you to focus on news events of your choosing and examine how the news media reports on them. 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.*

September 8 Introduction to the Course and Assignments  
**READ:** this syllabus; bring any questions you have.

September 10 Thinking about Comparative Politics  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Chapter 1

September 13 What is the State?  
**READ:** Cases and Concepts, Chapter 2

September 15 What's the Difference between States and Nations?  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Chapter 3 (read to "Political Attitudes..." on page 68)

- September 17 Political Ideology  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Chapter 3 (finish the chapter)
- September 20 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)
- September 22 The United Kingdom  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, U.K. Case Study
- September 24 The United Kingdom  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, U.K. Case Study
- September 27 The United Kingdom  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, U.K. Case Study
- September 29 Advanced Industrial Democracies  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Chapter 7
- October 1 **NO CLASS** | Dr. Slagter at a conference
- October 4 **NO CLASS** | Dr. Slagter at a conference
- October 6 Germany  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Germany Case Study
- October 8 Germany  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Germany Case Study
- October 11 Germany  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Germany Case Study
- October 13 Political Economy  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Chapter 4
- October 15 Communism  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Chapter 9 (read through "Societal Institutions...")
- October 18 Russia  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Russia Case Study
- October 20 Russia  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Russia Case Study
- October 22 Russia  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Russia Case Study
- October 25 Post-Communism  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Chapter 9 (finish the chapter)
- October 27 **Review:** bring your questions to class!

- October 29 🐾 **Midterm Examination**
- November 1 Non-Democracies  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Chapter 8
- November 3 China  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, China Case Study
- November 5 China  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, China Case Study
- November 8 China  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, China Case Study
- November 10 Political Violence (Terrorism and Revolution)  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Chapter 5
- November 12 Iran  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Iran Case Study
- November 15 Iran  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Iran Case Study
- November 17 Iran  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Iran Case Study
- November 19 Development  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Chapter 10
- November 22 Development  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Chapter 10 (finish)
- November 24 **NO CLASS** | Thanksgiving Break
- November 26 **NO CLASS** | Thanksgiving Break
- November 29 Nigeria  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Nigeria Case Study
- December 1 Nigeria  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Nigeria Case Study
- December 3 Nigeria  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Nigeria Case Study
- December 6 Brazil  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Brazil Case Study
- December 8 Brazil  
**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Brazil Case Study
- December 10 Brazil

**READ:** Cases & Concepts, Brazil Case Study

December 13 Review for Final Exam

December 15 🎉 **Final Examination!**

December 17 **NO CLASS** | Happy Winter Break!