

INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

84:101 | Fall Semester 2022 | 3 credits
MWF, 9:10-1010am | Sage Hall 1232

"The crisis of Western values has many aspects, many faces. There is a decline in faith in liberal democracy, a loss of confidence in universal human rights, a collapse in support for all kinds of transnational projects."

Anne Applebaum, journalist and author of *The Twilight of Democracy: the Seductive Lure of Authoritarianism*

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 2022 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 isn't democratic at all) seem to be doing pretty well. In this course, we look at established democracies in the United Kingdom and Germany to see how they function and whether they're up to the challenges our current political climate presents. Then we switch our focus and examine countries that aren't democratic or have weaker commitments to democracy: Russia, China, Iran, and Nigeria. In our in-class discussions of these countries, we turn our attention to the United States, France, Brazil, and other countries as well to provide a broadly comparative experience. You'll find that you learn a lot about the world in just fourteen short weeks.

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.

BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor: Prof Tracy H. Slagter, Ph.D., University of Iowa
Office Hours: M, 2-3pm, Th 10am-12pm
Office Location: Sage Hall 4626
Email: slagtert@uwosh.edu

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REQUIRED MATERIALS

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.



We will also listen to a few podcasts in this class. In your favorite podcast app, subscribe to "**Throughline**." It's a podcast by NPR. New to podcasts? That's fine—we'll help you out. You can also listen on your computer and read transcripts if you'd like.



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 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/>).

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.

Late Work: While you will be able to work at your own pace for several assignments, there are some small assignments that have specific due dates. Please abide by these due dates to avoid late penalties (1/2 letter grade per day).

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:

- *Define and apply* key concepts in comparative politics.
- *Compare and contrast* the political systems of the countries explored in the course, paying particular attention to historical, political, economic, geographical, and moral aspects of governance in each country.
- *Investigate* how differences in worldviews, beliefs, practices, and values affect political choices in diverse contexts.

- *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 – you can't participate if you're not around! You can 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.

Map Quiz (10%): Around the third week of class we'll have a short map quiz. The countries on the quiz will be posted on Canvas along with sample (blank) maps.

Quizzes (20% total): There will be a multiple-choice online quiz after we complete some of the sections 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.

Throughline Reactions (20%): These are short reaction papers based on episodes of NPR's *Throughline* podcast that are related to our course materials. Links to the podcast

episodes and the writing prompts are under “Assignments” in Canvas.

Exams (40% total): There will be two exams in this course, a midterm exam (20%) and a final exam (20%). 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. 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

- September 7 Introductions, Expectations, and Outcomes: Why Take This Class?
READ: this syllabus, and bring questions
- September 9 Thinking about Comparative Politics: Why Compare?
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 1

WEEK TWO

- September 12 What is the State?
READ: Cases and Concepts, Chapter 2
- September 14 What's the Difference between States and Nations?
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 3 (read to "Political Attitudes..." on page 68)
- September 16 Political Ideology
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 3 (finish the chapter)

WEEK THREE

- September 19 Democracy: What is it? Is it Worth It?
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)
👉 **Map Quiz (in class only—don't miss it!)**
- September 21 *Throughline:* Pirates of the Senate
<https://www.npr.org/2022/02/07/1078984159/pirates-of-the-senate>
👉 **Throughline Assignment 1 DUE on Canvas by class time**
- September 23 Advanced Industrial Democracies: What's Up with the European Union?
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 7

WEEK FOUR

- September 26 **NO CLASS:** Dr. Slagter out of town
Finish Inquizitives if you have not done so: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7.
- September 28 **NO CLASS:** Dr. Slagter out of town
👉 **Inquizitives for Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7 are DUE by 11:59pm today.**
- September 30 The United Kingdom
READ: Cases & Concepts, U.K. Case Study

WEEK FIVE

- October 3 The United Kingdom
READ: Cases & Concepts, U.K. Case Study
- October 5 The United Kingdom
READ: Cases & Concepts, U.K. Case Study
Throughline: The Invisible Border
<https://www.npr.org/2020/02/26/809768491/the-invisible-border>
👉 **Throughline Assignment 2 DUE on Canvas by class time.**
- October 7 Germany
READ: Cases & Concepts, Germany Case Study

WEEK SIX

- October 10 Germany
READ: Cases & Concepts, Germany Case Study
- October 12 Germany
READ: Cases & Concepts, Germany Case Study
- October 14 Political Economy
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 4

WEEK SEVEN

- October 17 *Throughline:* Capitalism: What Makes Us Free? **(Students with last names A-M)**
<https://www.npr.org/2022/04/05/1091050251/capitalism-what-makes-us-free>
Throughline: American Socialist **(Students with last names N-Z)**
<https://www.npr.org/2021/12/22/1066806317/american-socialist-2021>
👉 **Throughline Assignment 3 DUE on Canvas by class time.**

- October 19 From Marxism to Communism
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 9 (stop at “The Collapse of Communism”)
- October 21 From Russia to Soviet Union and Back Again
READ: Cases & Concepts, Russia Case Study

WEEK EIGHT

- October 24 From Russia to Soviet Union and Back Again
READ: Cases & Concepts, Russia Case Study
- October 26 From Russia to Soviet Union and Back Again
READ: Cases & Concepts, Russia Case Study
- October 28 Review for Midterm Examination
Submit questions via form on Canvas

WEEK NINE

- October 31 👉 **MIDTERM EXAMINATION (in class, don't miss it!)**
- November 2 Non-Democracies
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 8
- November 4 China
READ: Cases & Concepts, China Case Study
Throughline: A Dream of Modern China
<https://www.npr.org/2019/05/21/725358387/a-dream-of-modern-china>
👉 **Throughline Assignment 4 DUE on Canvas by class time.**

WEEK TEN

- November 7 China
READ: Cases & Concepts, China Case Study
- November 9 China
READ: Cases & Concepts, China Case Study
- November 11 Political Violence (Terrorism and Revolution)
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 5

WEEK ELEVEN

- November 14 Iran
READ: Cases & Concepts, Iran Case Study
Throughline: Outside/In | War of the Worlds
<https://www.npr.org/2019/04/17/714297520/war-of-the-worlds>
👉 **Throughline Assignment 5 DUE on Canvas by class time.**

November 16 Iran
READ: Cases & Concepts, Iran Case Study

November 18 Iran
READ: Cases & Concepts, Iran Case Study

THANKSGIVING WEEK

November 21 **NO CLASS** | Spend time with your families and friends!

November 23 **NO CLASS** | Thanksgiving Break

November 25 **NO CLASS** | Thanksgiving Break

WEEK TWELVE

November 28 Development
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 10

November 30 Development
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 10

December 2 Why is Africa Developing so Slowly?
READ: Herbst, Jeffrey. "War and the State in Africa." (Canvas)
👉 Assignment 6 DUE on Canvas by class time.

WEEK THIRTEEN

December 5 Nigeria
READ: Cases & Concepts, Nigeria Case Study

December 7 Nigeria
READ: Cases & Concepts, Nigeria Case Study

December 9 Nigeria
READ: Cases & Concepts, Nigeria Case Study

WEEK FOURTEEN

December 12 Review for Final Examination
Submit your questions via form on Canvas
👉 Inquizitives for Chapters 8, 5, and 10 are DUE by 11:59pm today.

December 14 **👉 FINAL EXAMINATION (in class, don't miss it!)**

December 16 **NO CLASS** | Enjoy your break!