

INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

84:101 | Spring Semester 2023 | 3 credits
MWF, 11:30am-12:30pm | Sage Hall 3232

“Remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There never was a democracy yet that did not commit suicide.”

—John Adams, President of the United States (1897-1801)

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 2023 COURSE DESCRIPTION

Is democracy worth staying with for the long haul? 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 South Africa. In our in-class discussions of these countries, we turn our attention to the United States, France, Brazil, Nigeria 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, 1-3pm, Th 11:30-12:30pm
Office Location: Sage Hall 4626
Email: slagtert@uwosh.edu

Dept. Contact: Ms. Angelee Hammond
Dept. Email: hammond@uwosh.edu
Dept. Office Location: Sage 4631
Department Phone: (920) 424-3456

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.

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 are at the end of this syllabus and sample (blank) maps are available on Canvas.

Inquizitive Online 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 and/or Short Assignments (20%): These are short reaction papers based on episodes of NPR's *Throughline*

podcast or additional readings 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. If you have questions about this requirement, your course schedule, possible internships, or career preparation please reach out to your faculty adviser. Students are encouraged to meet with their faculty advisers at least once per year. If you are unsure who your adviser is, you can check TitanWeb or email Ms. Angelee Hammond at hammond@uwosh.edu.

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

- January 30 Introductions, Expectations, and Outcomes: Why Take This Class?
READ: this syllabus, and bring questions
- February 1 Thinking about Comparative Politics
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 1
- February 3 What's the Benefit of Comparison? What Can We Learn about Politics?
LISTEN: *Throughline:* Student Loans, the Fund-Eating Dragon
<https://www.npr.org/2022/07/20/1112599148/student-loans-the-fund-eating-dragon>
👉 **Throughline Assignment 1 DUE on Canvas by class time**

WEEK TWO

- February 6 What is the State?
READ: Cases and Concepts, Chapter 2
- February 8 What's the Difference between States and Nations?
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 3 (read to "Political Attitudes..." on page 68)
- February 10 What's the Difference between Attitudes & Ideologies?
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 3 (finish the chapter)

WEEK THREE

- February 13 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!)**
- February 15 How do Rules Impact Outcomes?
Throughline: Pirates of the Senate
<https://www.npr.org/2022/02/07/1078984159/pirates-of-the-senate>
👉 **Throughline Assignment 2 DUE on Canvas by class time**
- February 17 Advanced Industrial Democracies: What's Up with the European Union?
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 7

WEEK FOUR

- February 20 The United Kingdom
READ: Cases & Concepts, U.K. Case Study
- February 22 The United Kingdom
READ: Cases & Concepts, U.K. Case Study
- February 24 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 3 DUE on Canvas by class time.**

WEEK FIVE

- February 27 Germany
READ: Cases & Concepts, Germany Case Study
- March 1 Germany
READ: Cases & Concepts, Germany Case Study
- March 3 Political Economy: What's Free-Market Capitalism?
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 4

Throughline: Capitalism: What Makes Us Free?

<https://www.npr.org/2022/04/05/1091050251/capitalism-what-makes-us-free>

👉 **Throughline Assignment 4 DUE on Canvas by class time.**

WEEK SIX

- March 6 Political Economy: Are Marxism and Communism the Same?
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 9 (stop at “The Collapse of Communism”)
- March 8 Russia
READ: Cases & Concepts, Russia Case Study
- March 10 Russia
READ: Cases & Concepts, Russia Case Study

WEEK SEVEN

- March 13 Russia
READ: Cases & Concepts, Russia Case Study
- March 15 Review for Midterm Examination
👉 **Inquizitives for Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7 DUE by 11:59pm today!**
- March 17 👉 **Midterm Examination (in-class; don't miss it!)**

SPRING BREAK WEEK

- March 20 SPRING BREAK
- March 22 SPRING BREAK
- March 24 SPRING BREAK

WEEK EIGHT

- March 27 Non-Democracies
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 8
- March 29 China
READ: Cases & Concepts, China Case Study
- March 31 China
READ: Cases & Concepts, China Case Study

WEEK NINE

- April 3 NO CLASS | Dr. Slagter traveling with Model UN Team
- April 5 NO CLASS | Dr. Slagter traveling with Model UN Team
- April 7 NO CLASS | Dr. Slagter traveling with Model UN Team

WEEK TEN

- April 10 China
READ: Cases & Concepts, China Case Study
- April 12 Political Violence (Terrorism and Revolution)
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 5
- April 14 Iran
READ: Cases & Concepts, Iran Case Study
Throughline: Four Days in August
<https://www.npr.org/2019/07/10/740510559/four-days-in-august>
👉 **Throughline Assignment 5 DUE on Canvas by class time.**

WEEK ELEVEN

- April 17 Iran
READ: Cases & Concepts, Iran Case Study

April 19 Iran
READ: Cases & Concepts, Iran Case Study

April 21 Development
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 10

WEEK TWELVE

April 24 Development
READ: Cases & Concepts, Chapter 10

April 26 Why is Africa Developing so Slowly?
READ: Herbst, Jeffrey. "War and the State in Africa." (Canvas)
👑 Assignment 6 DUE on Canvas by class time.

April 28 South Africa
READ: Cases & Concepts, South Africa Case Study

WEEK THIRTEEN

May 1 South Africa
READ: Cases & Concepts, South Africa Case Study

May 3 South Africa
READ: Cases & Concepts, South Africa Case Study

May 5 South Africa
READ: Cases & Concepts, South Africa Case Study

WEEK FOURTEEN

May 8 Review for Final Examination
👑 Inquizitives for Chapters 8, 5, and 10 DUE by 11:59pm today!

May 10 **👑 Final Examination (in class; don't miss it!)**

May 12 NO CLASS | Enjoy the Summer!

MAP QUIZ COUNTRIES

The list of countries you'll need to know for this **map quiz on February 13** is below. You'll find blank maps (the exact maps I use on the quiz) on our main Canvas page under "Map Quiz, Additional Reading and Study Guides."

1. Afghanistan
2. Belgium
3. Brazil
4. Canada
5. Chad
6. China
7. Colombia
8. Congo (Democratic Republic of)
9. Egypt
10. France
11. Germany
12. Guinea
13. Hungary
14. India
15. Indonesia
16. Iran
17. Iraq
18. Israel
19. Ivory Coast
20. Japan

21. Lebanon
22. Mexico
23. Nigeria
24. North Korea
25. Pakistan
26. Peru
27. Poland
28. Portugal
29. Russia
30. Saudi Arabia
31. Serbia
32. Somalia
33. South Africa
34. South Korea
35. Spain
36. Sudan
37. Sweden
38. Thailand
39. Turkey
40. Ukraine
41. United Arab Emirates (UAE)
42. United Kingdom
43. Venezuela
44. Yemen
45. Zimbabwe