



University of Wisconsin Oshkosh at Fox Cities

Introduction to Comparative Politics (POL 101)

About your Professor:

Dr. Amber Lusvardi
Assistant Professor of Political
Science
Pronouns: She/her/hers

Find me:

Office: Fox M1502
Number: 920-832-2856
E-mail: lusvardia@uwosh.edu
Department website:
<https://uwosh.edu/politicalscience/>

About this class:

*Introduction to Comparative
Politics*
POL 101-00
3 credit hours
When: MWF 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Where: Fox M1845 and PTP at FDL
C-102
How long: Feb. 5-May 17

“Can I ask you a question?” ↓

About Student Hours:

My student hours are time set aside specifically for you. We can discuss course content, any barriers you are facing, or broader questions about political science. I highly encourage students use this available time to discuss their class progress or college journey. If you are not available during my office hours, please let me know and I can accommodate you.

Student Hours 🕒

10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Mondays and Wednesdays
(Fox) and 11 a.m.-12 p.m. Thursday
(Oshkosh) in person (preferred) or via
Teams.



Important Information

 UW
Oshkosh

Dr. Amber Lusvardi

Class help: See me!

Find me at Fox: M1502

Find me at Oshkosh: Sage 4619

I can be reached via e-mail or Canvas.



Let's talk about mental health



Mental health and personal safety resources

1. **UW Oshkosh Counseling Center:** uwosh.edu/counseling or call/text: 888- 531-2142
2. **Reach Counseling** (sexual violence) 24-hour helpline: 920-722-8150
3. **Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Services** 24-hour helpline: 800-261-5998
4. **Mental Health Crisis Helpline:** Call or text 24-hours: 988



Best tips for success

| Outside of class | Inside of class |
|------------------------|---|
| Check Canvas Regularly | Be present |
| Come to student hours | The best predictor of student success is class attendance |

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead, Anthropologist

What to Know

Getting Started in this Course

“Are you ready for it?”

Political science is a social science - sciences that study human and social behavior. In political science we are particularly interested in power. As Harold Laswell said, "Who Gets What, When, and How?"

In this course, we will explore the impact of political institutions, electoral systems, and cultural elements on modern states. Importantly, we will consider what makes for a "successful" democracy? What (good & bad) lessons can we learn from the rest of the world?

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.

Learning Outcomes

- 1) Define and apply key concepts in comparative politics.
- 2) 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.

- 3) Investigate how differences in worldviews, beliefs, practices, and values affect political choices in diverse contexts.

Required Textbook

O'Neil, Fields, and Share. *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*. 3rd Edition. WW Norton. This textbook is instant access. You were charged a course fee and the textbook was loaded to your Canvas account. You can opt out of this service.

All other reading materials will be supplied via Canvas.

Grades

Your final grade will be based on a: first-week writing assignment, map quiz, Inquisitive quizzes, two exams, case presentation and preparation, article annotations, exit tickets, in class activity participation, and a final assessment.

Many of the points in this class are based on an expectation of class attendance. If you have a circumstance that will require an extended absence from class, please speak to me. Quizzes and annotations are expected to be turned in on time (there is a 24-hour grace period).

Assignments

First-week writing assignment (20) - I will provide a prompt on our first day of class to help you reflect on how to best be a successful student during this semester. You

have a week to complete your two-page typed response.

Map quiz (20) – You will need to correctly identify 20 countries on the World Map. I will provide a list on Canvas of 40 potential countries that will appear on the list.

In-Class Activities (5 X 10) - Throughout the course of the semester, I will give you collaborative in-class activities. Participation in each of these is worth 10 points.

This semester's in-class activities will be:

Create an authoritarian state
Wicked problems – political stability
Consumption and globalization
Ranked choice voting
Reflect and review

Inquizitive quizzes (11 x 10) – You have 11 quizzes you will take via Canvas. They are worth 10 points each.

Exams (2 x 30): We will have two essay exams completed via Canvas to assess what information and themes you have taken from the course.

Article annotations (5 x 10): You will be assigned five articles (outside of your normal textbook reading) throughout the course of the semester. You will read and annotate these articles in Canvas. (Instructions and instruction video in Canvas).

Case presentations (100 points):

The class will be broken up into groups and each group (of approximately 5) will be assigned a country “case.” In consultation with your professor, you will have most of a class period to present your case to the class (45-50 minutes). Each member of the group will be graded separately. You may split up the work or collaborate on all elements.

What needs to be included in your case presentation: Answer these questions -- What is the current political environment in your country (5-10 minutes), what is something unique or interesting about the history or politics of this country (5-10 minutes), what is something you found confusing about the political system in this country (5 minutes). Create an activity for the class (10-15 minutes) that would help them understand this country better. Create an “exit ticket” prompt that students must complete before class comes to an end (5 minutes).

Each one of your cases ties to a major “theme” within our class (democratic regimes, communism, etc.) and your professor will work with you to tie the appropriate theme into your case.

More information on this assignment is on Canvas.

Case preparation (40 points) – One week prior to presenting your case, you must submit: 1) A two or three paragraph overview of your understanding of the case. 2) At least six references from academic, news, government, or primary sources about the case. Citations may be in APA or APSA format. 3) A plan for the case presentation.

Exit tickets (5 x 10) – When your colleagues present their cases, you will fill out an exit ticket at the end of class. Each of these is worth 10 points.

Final Self-assessment (40) – This final assignment will ask you to evaluate your own learning over the course of the semester. To consider: What are the most important concepts you learned this semester? How do they help you understand the social world? What is something you did that you are proud of?

** Detailed descriptions and rubrics of all assignments are on Canvas.

If substantive changes are made in course syllabus, such as changes in schedule or assignments, notification will be provided in a timely manner and a revised syllabus made available.

Grading Scale

Your final grades are calculated by points earned/total points. A total of 580 points are available.

100-97 - A+
97-94 - A
93-90 - A
89-87 - B+
84-86 - B
80-83 - B
79-77 - C+
76-74 - C
73-70 - C
69-67 - D+
66-64 - D
63-60 - D
59 and below - failing

Weekly Schedule

Feb. 5/7/9 – Syllabus, Introduction, and Chapter 1

Feb. 12/14/16 – Chapter 1, Continued

Read: Chapter 1

Feb. 19/21/23 – Chapter 2, States

Read: Chapter 2

Map quiz Feb. 19

Feb. 26/28/March 1 – Chapter 3, Nations and Society; Case: The United States

Read: Chapter 3 and *How Democracies Die*

March 4/6/8 – Chapter 4, Political Economy; Case: United Kingdom

Read: Chapter 4

March 11/13/15 – Chapter 5, Political violence

Read: Chapter 5

March 18/20/21 – Chapter 6, Democratic regimes; Case: Mexico

Read: Chapter 6 and Wright, “Necropolitics, Narcopolitics, and Femicide: Gendered Violence on the Mexico-US Border” *Signs*

Midterm exam via Canvas March 21 – we will not meet

March 25/27/29 – Spring break

April 1/3– Chapter 7, Developed democracies; Case: Germany

No Class April 5

Read: Chapter 7

April 8/10/12 – Chapter 8, Nondemocratic regimes; Case: Iran

Read: Chapter 8 and Satrapi, *Persepolis* Introduction and Chapter 1

April 15/17/19 – Chapter 9, Communism and Post-communism; Case: China

Read: Chapter 9 and Pomerantsev, “The Disinformation Age: A Revolution in Propaganda”

April 22/24/26 – Chapter 10, Developing countries

Read: Chapter 10 and Yarwood “The Struggle over Term Limits in Africa: The Power of Protest” *Journal of Democracy*

April 29/May 1/3– Chapter 11, Globalization and the Future of Comparative Politics

May 6/8/10 – Students choose: One case to revisit

Via ranked-choice voting, the class the vote on one case they would like to go into more detail on

Reflect and Review – We will put together the major main themes of our semester and work together to write the final exam

All About YOU

The author bell hooks writes in *Teaching to Transgress*, “The professor must genuinely value everyone’s presence. There must be an ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom dynamic, that everyone contributes. These contributions are resources” (8). In this spirit, I affirm that without exception every person is a valued member of this class. Your experience and contribution as a member of this class is important to me. If you are experiencing barriers that are preventing you from being a fully present member of this group, please come speak to me.

All About Others

The scholar Brené Brown says (paraphrased) that we cannot understand other people’s point of view by pretending to walk in their shoes. This is insufficient because we are only imagining what they have experienced. It is better to actually listen to other people. Listen to them and believe them about their experiences. This is where understanding begins.

On Language

Each person in this course is a valued member of the group and you should feel free to share your experiences as they are relevant to this class. No student in this class is ever expected or believed to speak for all members of a group. Do be thoughtful and inclusive in your language when adding to class discussion.

What About My Technology?

You will never be required to bring a laptop or tablet to class. I discourage students from the use of laptops or tablets in my courses due to the extensive research that shows it

to be a hindrance to learning and a distraction to classmates (see Dontre 2020). It is your choice whether to use your laptop/tablet while we are taking notes, but it should be stowed away at other times. As engagement and discussion are important, please refrain from wearing headphones during class.

In other words: *Hi! Don’t be the problem.*

Note to Poli Sci 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.

Student Right to Know

Students are advised to see the following URL for disclosures about essential consumer protection items required by the Students Right to Know Act of 1990: <https://uwosh.edu/financialaid/consumer-information/>

Disability Statement:

This course is for all UWO students, including those with mental, physical, or cognitive disabilities, illness, injuries, impairments, or any other condition that could negatively impact one’s equal access to education. If, at any point in the term, you find yourself not able to fully access the space or content of this course, please contact me by email, phone, or during office hours to discuss your specific needs. I am happy to discuss how to best accommodate you. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessibility Center in Dempsey Hall 215 or

at accessibilitycenter@uwosh.edu for further assistance.

Caregiver statement:

I recognize that some of you may be caregivers to others (siblings, children, partners, parents, etc.) and that places an added consideration to your availability. If you are a caregiver, please reach out to me if there are additional ways that I can support you.

Grievance Statement:

The Department of Political Science is committed to offering you a high-quality classroom 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. Tracy Slagter. She can be reached at slagtert.edu. Should she be unable to resolve your concerns, she will guide you to appropriate resources within the College of Letters and Science.

Academic Honesty

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 teacher directs you to work in teams, the work is to be done by the team.

Artificial Intelligence statement:

Increasingly the use of AI programs such as ChatGPT are used to assist in generating ideas and responding to writing and editing prompts. However, the goal of our course is to be intellectually curious and grow our writing and critical thinking skills. As such, I expect anything written for class to be generated by you from the idea stage to the writing stage.

Course Prerequisites:

None – this course is open to students at any level and in all majors and is the first in a series of introductory courses in Political Science.

Fond du Lac dates:

Feb. 14, Feb. 28, March 6, March 20, April 3, April 17, May 1, May 8

Early Alert:

A few weeks into the semester your instructors will send you an early alert message if they think that you are struggling with class. This message will let you know whether your instructors have noticed any academic problems, attendance problems, or both. When you get such a message it is a chance to address a problem and improve on your work. We suggest meeting with your instructor.