


Overview



Political Science 120: Politics Around the World

Read this page and click the  in the top-right or bottom-right corner of the page to continue with the orientation.

Course Description

This course is an introduction to Comparative Politics, one of the four sub-fields in Political Science, which involves the comparative analysis of political institutions, processes, and outcomes at the national level.

During this term, you will learn how to usefully compare politics in a variety of countries. We will make comparisons explicit and systematic in order to determine how governments work, how power is organized and contested at the national level, and how regular people can participate and pursue their interests in different political settings.

One of the primary goals of the class will be to introduce you to the study of Comparative Politics, including its key concepts, theories, methods, issues, and language. Some of these may seem quite removed from the “real world” at first, which is why we will look at six countries in some detail in order to make the application of Comparative Politics more concrete and accessible.

The course is divided into four parts:

Part 1: *Core Concepts*

- State & Democracy: September 3-10
- The Scientific Method & The Logic of Comparison: September 11-26
- *Exam #1*: September 29

Part 2: *Democracies*

- United Kingdom: September 30-October 8
- Germany: October 9-20
- *Exam #2*: October 22

Part 3: *Non-Democracies*

- Russia: October 23-November 3
- China: November 4-November 14
- *Exam #3*: November 17

Part 4: *From Autocracy to Democracy*

- South Africa: November 18-December 1
- Mexico: December 2-12
- *Exam #4*: December 15

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this class.

Learning Objectives

In this course, you will:

- Learn about some basic theoretical and methodological problems in the study of politics (concepts, theories, issues).
- Learn about the "real world" and how to explain it.
- Learn to identify interesting questions about politics in different countries.
- Learn to identify differences and similarities, and what both tell us about what we are studying.
- Learn to understand and compare different forms of democratic and non-democratic rule.
- Become familiar with the language of political science.

By the end of the semester, you should be able to apply the concepts of political science to analyze (and evaluate) political events in a variety of settings.

 Click the  button in the lower right corner to continue.

© 2016 Board of Regents of the [University of Wisconsin System](http://www.wisconsin.edu)
(<http://www.wisconsin.edu>)

Grades

Grade Breakdown

Part	Case Activity	Discussion Section	Discussion Activity	Study Group	Essay Exam
1.1	1	3	-	1.5	-
1.2	-	3	3	-	13.5
2.1	1	3	-	1.5	-
2.2	1	3	3	-	13.5
3.1	1	3	-	1.5	-
3.2	1	3	3	-	13.5
4.1	1	-	3	1.5	-
4.2	1	-	3	-	13.5
TOTAL	7	18	15	6	54

Detailed information about these different items is available under [Assignments](https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/216876/pages/assignments) (<https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/216876/pages/assignments>).

You will notice that each individual graded item is worth what seems like a rather small number of points. Missing or skipping a graded assignment will, however, have a substantial impact on your final grade in this class. For example, missing just one discussion section, study group, and discussion activity each adds up to one full letter grade (e.g., the difference between an AB and BC). Missing just one discussion section, or a single discussion activity, will quite likely mean that your final grade ends up being a half letter grade lower (e.g., BC instead of B). So, don't let the seemingly small numbers of points fool you and be sure to complete all assignments.

Also, please note that we are deducting the equivalent of one letter grade for every 24 hour period a graded assignment is late (unless otherwise stated in the instructions for a given assignment). So, when an assignment is due on Tuesday at 11:59pm (CT), assignments submitted between 12:00am and 11:59pm (CT) on Wednesday will be downgraded one letter grade, assignments submitted between 12:00am and 11:59pm (CT) on Thursday two letter grades, etc. For some assignments, these deductions will be automatic if you don't complete them on time. For others, we will retrospectively deduct points.

Time Management

The credit standard for this course is met by an expectation of a total of 180 hours of student engagement with the course learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit), which include reading, writing, watching lectures, participating in your discussion sections, watching response videos provided by the instructor in response to student questions, discussion activities, study group activities, and other student work as described in this Orientation Module.

It is imperative that you set aside sufficient time in your weekly schedule to stay on top of and complete your work for this class.

There are a substantial number of fixed due dates for various assignments. Please be sure to add these dates to your calendars right away, including reminders for yourself when they are coming up.

- **Part 1**

- September 21, 10am: Task 1 of Part 1.2 Discussion Activity due
- September 23, 10am: Task 2 of Part 1.2 Discussion Activity due
- September 24, 11:59pm: Part 1 Study Group posts due
- September 25: Watch Study Group response video
- September 30, 11:59am: Exam #1

- **Part 2**

- October 17, 10am: Task 1 of Part 2.2 Discussion Activity due
- October 19, 10am: Task 2 of Part 2.2 Discussion Activity due
- October 19, 11:59pm: Part 2 Study Group posts due
- October 20: Watch Study Group response video
- October 23, 11:59am: Exam #2

- **Part 3**

- November 12, 11:59pm: Part 3 Study Group posts due
- November 13: Watch Study Group response video
- November 18, 11:59am: Exam #3
- November 21, 10am: Task 1 of Part 3.2 Discussion Activity due
- November 23, 10am: Task 2 of Part 3.2 Discussion Activity due

- **Part 4**

- December 2, 10am: Task 1 of Part 4.1 Discussion Activity due
- December 4, 10am: Task 2 of Part 4.1 Discussion Activity due
- December 9, 10am: Task 1 of Part 4.2 Discussion Activity due
- December 10, 11:59pm: Part 4 Study Group posts due
- December 11: 10am: Task 2 of Part 4.2 Discussion Activity due

- December 11: Watch Study Group response video
- December 15, 10:05am: Exam #4

Since most of this class is asynchronous (meaning that, with the exception of your discussion sections, we don't "meet" online on particular days at particular times), it is your responsibility to make sure you work through the various materials in a timely fashion. To make this a bit easier, I recommend that you add to your calendars the following "milestone" dates, by which I strongly suggest you have worked through the relevant course materials. Basically, if you have not completed the materials by those dates, a) you will not be able to successfully complete your assignments (e.g., a discussion activity may build on a particular readings), and b) you will know that you are behind and must quickly catch up.

Note that I am not suggesting that you wait until these dates to work through these materials; you should be working on them all along and be sure to be finished by these dates.

- By September 10:
 - Complete Part 1.1 Case Activity
 - Complete all Part 1.1 readings
 - Watch and take notes on all Part 1.1 Lectures
- By September 17:
 - Complete Sodaro 2004 reading
 - Watch and take notes on Part 1.2 Lectures 1-6
- By September 24:
 - Complete Lijphart 2012 reading
 - Watch and take notes on Part 1.2 Lectures 7-8
- By October 8:
 - Complete Part 2.1 Case Activity
 - Complete all Part 2.1. readings
 - Watch and take notes on all Part 2.1 lectures
- By October 15:
 - Complete Part 2.2 Case Activity
 - Watch and take notes on Part 2.2 Lectures Germany I-IV
 - Complete all Part 2.2 readings
- By October 20:
 - Watch and take notes on Part 2.2 Lectures Germany V-VI
- By November 3:
 - Complete Part 3.1 Case Activity
 - Complete all Part 3.1 readings
 - Watch and take notes on all Part 3.1 lectures
- By November 12:

- Complete Part 3.2 Case Activity
- Complete all Part 3.2 readings
- Watch and take notes on all Part 3.2 lectures
- By December 1:
 - Complete Part 4.1 Case Activity
 - Complete all Part 4.1 readings
 - Watch and take notes on all Part 4.1 lectures
- By December 10:
 - Complete Part 4.2 Case Activity
 - Complete all Part 4.2 readings
 - Watch and take notes on all Part 4.2 lectures

Grade Scale:

Percentage	Grade
93 – 100%	A
88 – 92%	AB
83 – 87%	B
78 - 82%	BC
70 - 77%	C
60 – 69%	D
0 – 59%	F

© 2016 Board of Regents of the [University of Wisconsin System](http://www.wisconsin.edu)
<http://www.wisconsin.edu>

Textbook & Readings

Textbooks:

The textbook chapters for this class are drawn from the following book:

Patrick O'Neil H. *et al.*: **“Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics”** (2018, W.W. Norton & Co.)

Three Purchase Options

You may access or get a hold of the assigned chapters in one of three ways.

Option 1:

Pay for access to the chapters that are integrated into our Learn@UW course website. Option 1 is easiest and cheapest, but it has two disadvantages:

- You lose access to the materials after 180 days.
- You must be online to read the materials; there is no way for you to read offline.

To purchase access and use the book as described above, follow the link below. It will take you to the W.W. Norton website and offer you purchase options.

- **Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics** - <https://ncia.wwnorton.com/ebook-casesconcepts> (<https://ncia.wwnorton.com/ebook-casesconcepts>)

Option 2:

Purchase access to the downloadable Ebook on www.vitalsource.com (<http://www.vitalsource.com>). The book will be more expensive, but you can read offline and you won't lose access after 180 days. Search for the book using the ISBN number 9780393631371.

Option 3:

Purchase a hard copy of the book, either new or used. Note that you must purchase the correct book (there are other Norton books with similar titles). For the hardcover version,

the ISBN number is 978-0-393-63130-2. For the (cheaper) looseleaf option it is 978-0-393-63131-9.

Other Readings

Other required readings are available in PDF form throughout the Learn@UW course site.

Internationally-aware News Source

We also urge you to read an internationally-aware news source, such as the [New York Times](http://www.nytimes.com/) [\(http://www.nytimes.com/\)](http://www.nytimes.com/). Other sources of good international news are the [Washington Post](http://www.washingtonpost.com/) [\(http://www.washingtonpost.com/\)](http://www.washingtonpost.com/), the [Wall Street Journal](http://online.wsj.com/home-page) [_\(http://online.wsj.com/home-page\)_](http://online.wsj.com/home-page), the [Financial Times](http://www.ft.com/home/us) [_\(http://www.ft.com/home/us\)_](http://www.ft.com/home/us), the [Economist](http://www.economist.com/) [\(http://www.economist.com/\)](http://www.economist.com/), and the [BBC](http://www.bbc.com/news/) [_\(http://www.bbc.com/news/\)](http://www.bbc.com/news/).

You can get a subscription to the mobile and online version of the New York Times for fairly little money (only \$1 a week or so) [here](http://nytimes.com/college31) [_\(http://nytimes.com/college31\)_](http://nytimes.com/college31).

© 2016 Board of Regents of the [University of Wisconsin System](http://www.wisconsin.edu) [_\(http://www.wisconsin.edu\)](http://www.wisconsin.edu)

Assignments

Readings

Your readings are available either in your textbook (see “Textbook Information”) or as PDFs on our course website. Note that some weeks are more reading intensive than others, so please be prepared for that and plan accordingly.

Case activities

At the start of each sub-section of the class (with the exception of Part 1.2), you will complete a case activity that provides foundational information on the materials we are covering. For the country cases, much of this is focused on history and the development of political institutions. The materials for these exercises include short texts, primary documents, and videos, and the like. You will be asked to engage with those materials (by reading, watching, or listening) and to then answer a series of knowledge check questions.

When the activity consists of more than one item or segment, you will only be able to move on after having correctly answered every question on the preceding knowledge check. You are awarded the points that count toward your final grade only after you have completed the last knowledge check, so you want to make sure you actually finish each case activity. In other words, there is no partial credit; you must correctly answer all knowledge check questions.

Finishing each case activity with a perfect score on the last knowledge check is particularly important because you will not be able to access any of the other course materials for that sub-section (lectures, discussion activity, etc.) if you did not fully finish the case activity. [Please note that this setup is not our preference, but there isn't a better way to do it in the Canvas system.] In other words, you must finish the case activity first before you move on to any other materials (except for Part 1.2, when there is no case activity).

For the sake of full disclosure, you should know that we have access to a wide range of information about your participation in various online activities. We can, for example, tell if your "strategy" for these case activities is to quickly open up the content and to then complete the quizzes by trial and error, as opposed to carefully engaging with the materials and completing the quizzes based on your newly acquired substantive knowledge. Also remember that the contents of the online activities may be relevant for the exams, so it really is in your interest to carefully work your way through the materials.

Lectures

Each sub-section includes a series of video lectures, of varying lengths, which you are required to watch in their entirety and take notes on – as if you were in a regular classroom. The lectures were recorded a couple of years ago; they remain up to date, although there were a few instances when I provide relevant updates. Instead of "PS120," some of the lectures (and other materials) may reference "PS106," which is the old course number for this class, so please just disregard this. Along similar lines, there may be a few leftover references on this course website to a particular "week" (instead of a "part") of the class; please also disregard those. I tried to find and correct such remainders of previous terms, but I may have missed one or two.

Discussion Sections

Your TAs will be holding discussion sections, all online, during the following weeks (i.e., discussion sections do not meet every week):

- Week of September 7-11
- Week of September 21-25
- Week of October 5-9
- Week of October 19-23
- Week of November 2-6
- Week of November 9-13

The TAs will be in touch about relevant details.

Attendance and participation in discussion section is mandatory and graded. If you miss a discussion section for a valid reason (meaning a genuine family emergency, illness or injury, or certain university-related obligations), I may grant you the opportunity to complete a written substitute assignment.

In addition to your sections, we will offer one single online session during the week of October 12-16 (i.e., the week before Exam #2) to discuss general strategies for improving your exam performance. The time slot is yet to be determined and we will make a recording available afterwards.

Discussion Activities

The online discussion activities involve two tasks: an original post and a response to your peers. Since task 1 requires more original thought, it is worth 2 points; Task 2 is worth 1 point.

The idea behind these discussion exercises is that you reflect on the ideas of your classmates and meaningfully engage with them. Again, note that we can tell if you do that, or if you only look at and respond to a single one of your peers' posts, for example.

There is also extra credit to be gained. Extra credit is awarded either because somebody's post was selected as the best by most of the other students (who "vote" by responding to it) or because the TA selects it as the best, or both. Each instance of extra credit is generally worth .5 points, unless otherwise stated (see the instructions for each discussion activity for additional details).

Study Groups

Each of the four parts of the course includes a virtual "study group," which will allow you to engage with your peers about the course materials. The basic purpose of the study group is for you to receive help from your peers and for you to help them as you are preparing for your graded assignments. If something in the readings, lectures, or in the other course materials is unclear to you, this is the place to ask questions and for you to help answer the questions your classmates post.

Each study group consists of about half the people in your discussion sections, so they are another way for you to build connections and community.

To the extent possible, you want to be answering each others questions, so that at the end of each study group period you are only left with those questions you are unable to answer yourselves or which you would like me to weigh in on. I will then address those questions in the response video I post the day after the deadline (but note that I may not be able to address every single question in my response, although I will try to be as exhaustive as I can be in a relatively short period of time). As applicable, I may also use those videos to address other questions that may have come up or to provide information on current events that may be relevant to your essay exams, so be sure to always watch the videos carefully and take notes.

Note that I will be monitoring the study group discussions and that I will note who participates. Please don't let this inhibit you - I just want to make sure I know, for example, if somebody never participates or only ever asks questions and never tries to respond to questions posed by others. The member of each study group will receive the same grade, which reflects the quality of their discussion. I will, however, downgrade students when it is obvious that they were merely free-riding on everybody else's efforts.

Please note I will only award full credit for contributions posted by the deadline. I may give partial credit for posts posted between the deadline and when I start working on my video response. I will, of course, only downgrade those individuals who submitted their contributions

late, not their whole group.

Essay Exams

Each of the four exams consists of exactly two essay questions that you will have a total of 90 minutes to answer during a given 24-hour period. Once you access the exam, the clock starts and you are unable to interrupt and re-start.

- Exam #1: available Tuesday, September 29, at 12:00pm; due Wednesday, September 30, at 11:59am
- Exam #2: available Thursday, October 22, at 12:00pm; due Friday, October 23, at 11:59am
- Exam #3: available Tuesday, November 17, at 12:00pm; due Wednesday, November 18, at 11:59am
- Exam #4: available Monday, December 14, at 10:05am; due Tuesday, December 15, at 10:05am (note: this exam time reflects the final exam slot scheduled by the university, but the exam format is the same as for the previous three)

In preparation, I will post a list of possible essay questions during each sub-section of the class, two of which will then be on the exam. In other words, the only surprise will be which of the essay questions I select. The selection will be random, so it will be a poor strategy for you to try to guess which essay will end up on the exam; in order to succeed, you have to prepare for each essay. The exams are open book, so you can use your class material and notes. But it is very important for you to understand that our expectations are sufficiently high that you will do poorly on the exams if you do not prepare in advance. 45 minutes are not enough to review all relevant course materials and write a quality response.

Here are some general guidelines for your answers:

- We expect you to draw explicitly on and reference the relevant class materials.
- You are to use your own words unless you are offering a direct quotation (which you should only do sparingly). Even if you cite properly, it is not acceptable to string together other people's words. It is your voice and ideas we are looking to hear.
- The exams are not strictly cumulative, but note that we do expect you to rely on relevant knowledge of materials from prior weeks. Not every part of the class is a clean slate, in that sense, even if each exam will of course focus most heavily on the materials covered since the most recent exam.
- Note that using examples from countries you know will almost certainly strengthen your argument.
- In preparation for the essay exam, you don't have to write each essay fully ahead of time (although you can of course do that, if you want). But we would strongly urge you to come up with your thesis statement and to identify and carefully read those class materials that

are relevant to the essay question and your thesis statement. Then prepare a detailed outline for each essay. That way you can use the 45 minutes you will have for each essay during the exam time to write what you already know you will say.

- There are no word limits for your answers.
- You are expected to cite your sources properly, including all class materials. If you do not know how to cite, check out [this resource](http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html) (<http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>).
- Finally, I will not tolerate any plagiarism on your exams (or on any other assignment). Even if it concerns “just” a sentence or short section, I will treat it as an act of academic dishonesty. You will fail the class and I will report you to the dean’s office. Before each exam, I urge you to carefully review our notes on [plagiarism](https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/216876/pages/plagiarism-statement) (<https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/216876/pages/plagiarism-statement>). Note that ignorance does not protect you from punishment.

© 2016 Board of Regents of the [University of Wisconsin System](http://www.wisconsin.edu)
(<http://www.wisconsin.edu>)

Plagiarism Statement

Plagiarism is the act of improperly using and presenting someone else's words or ideas as if they were your own. As such, plagiarism is the theft of intellectual property, and this is no less serious than the theft of material property. There are no "degrees" of plagiarism; one little offense, no matter how small it may appear, constitutes academic dishonesty. Whatever form it takes (downloading and reformatting an article, "buying" an essay, taking a "free" paper off the internet, turning in another student's work, "sharing" assignments with others, failing to cite a source, neglecting necessary quotation marks, etc.) there is no excuse for plagiarism, and it will get you in a lot of trouble.

The "I did not know" excuse does not count, in any way. Ignorance of what constitutes academic dishonesty does not entitle you to any leniency. It is much like the real world: not knowing a rule or law does not mean you are not subject to it or protect you from sanction. It is your responsibility to know what academic dishonesty is or to educate yourself. We are providing some explanation in what follows, but we urge you to ask any follow-up questions you might have.

Note that the most common form of plagiarism is failure to cite properly. You must provide a citation, for example (Brown 1999, 57), after writing a sentence or a series of sentences that contain words or ideas taken from another person or publication. If you are quoting directly, you must use quotation marks. If you are unsure about how to cite properly, check out [this handbook](http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html) (<http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>) from [The Writing Center](https://writing.wisc.edu/) (<https://writing.wisc.edu/>). If anything remains unclear, please ask me.

Also note that changing a couple of words here or there does not mean you are not plagiarizing. Here is an example: a few years ago, the journalist Fareed Zakaria was suspended from his jobs at Time Magazine and CNN for plagiarism. Below is what he wrote and then the source from which he plagiarized. Notice that he did not take from the other source word for word; he did change some words, but it still counts as plagiarism. This is not just because he did not cite the other author; it is because he passed off phrases and ideas as his own that were not.

What Zakaria wrote: "Adam Winkler, a professor of constitutional law at UCLA, documents the actual history in *Gunfight: The Battle over the Right to Bear Arms in America*. Guns were regulated in the U.S. from the earliest years of the Republic. Laws that banned the carrying of concealed weapons were passed in Kentucky and Louisiana in 1813. Other states soon

followed: Indiana in 1820, Tennessee and Virginia in 1838, Alabama in 1839 and Ohio in 1859. Similar laws were passed in Texas, Florida and Oklahoma. As the governor of Texas (Texas!) explained in 1893, the "mission of the concealed deadly weapon is murder. To check it is the duty of every self-respecting, law-abiding man."

What the author of the original piece wrote (Jill Lepore in the New Yorker): "As Adam Winkler, a constitutional-law scholar at U.C.L.A., demonstrates in a remarkably nuanced new book, "Gunfight: The Battle Over the Right to Bear Arms in America," firearms have been regulated in the United States from the start. Laws banning the carrying of concealed weapons were passed in Kentucky and Louisiana in 1813, and other states soon followed: Indiana (1820), Tennessee and Virginia (1838), Alabama (1839), and Ohio (1859). Similar laws were passed in Texas, Florida, and Oklahoma. As the governor of Texas explained in 1893, the "mission of the concealed deadly weapon is murder. To check it is the duty of every self-respecting, law-abiding man."

So if you paraphrase, make sure you are truly writing in your own words. And make sure to properly cite all your sources, including all class materials.

In a course without in-class assignments, the temptation to take shortcuts and cheat may be greater than in a regular class. You absolutely must resist this temptation, or the consequences will be dire. If you are caught cheating, you will receive a failing grade for the class, we will report you to the Dean's office, and the reason for the grade will be noted in your transcript. This will make it extremely difficult for you to gain entrance to graduate or professional schools and will jeopardize your opportunities with a large number of employers in the future. If you are repeat offender, you will most likely be expelled from the university. Do not put yourself (and me) into what will be a very uncomfortable situation with very serious consequences.