

# Introduction to Comparative Politics

PSC 1001 | Fall 2022

Tuesday/Thursday | 2:20 p.m. – 3:35 p.m.

**Instructor:** Joseph Cerrone

**Office:** Monroe 409

**Office Hours:** Tuesday/Thursday, 1 p.m. – 2 p.m. or by appointment

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## Overview

This course offers an introduction to the core theories, concepts, and ideas that animate scholarly study of comparative politics. We will explore how politics varies across and within countries and compare how institutions, attitudes, behaviors, and identities shape political processes and outcomes. Our focus will be on applying scholarly ideas to investigate real-world politics around the globe.

This course is divided into four parts. In Part I–Political Regimes, we will investigate the various ways political life is organized in states around the world. In Part II–Political Economy, we will explore how states and societies structure their economies and how economics influences political processes. In Part III–Political Identities, we will study how various identities—such as nationalism, ethnicity, gender, and religion—shape politics. In Part IV–Case Studies, we will apply the concepts and theories from the first three parts of the course to a series of case studies spanning the globe.

## Learning Objectives

As a result of completing this course, students will be able to:

- ❖ Understand the core concepts and theoretical approaches that guide scholarly study of comparative politics;
- ❖ Analyze current events in light of these aforementioned concepts and theories; and
- ❖ Apply these concepts and theories to understand politics in selected country cases.

## Course Materials

There is one required textbook for this course:

- ❖ O’Neil, Patrick H., Karl Fields, and Don Share. 2018. *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics: An Integrated Approach*, 1st ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

All additional readings and course materials are available via Blackboard.

## Assignments

There are four assignments for this course:

- ❖ Participation (20%)
- ❖ Current Event Presentation and Memo (20%)
- ❖ Midterm Exam (30%)
- ❖ Final Exam (30%)

### ***Participation (20%)***

It is important to come to class prepared to actively participate in class discussions. Participation can take many forms, including asking questions, answering questions, and engaging in group discussions.

### ***Current Event Memo (20%)***

Each student will take a turn beginning class with a short, five-minute presentation on a current event relevant to comparative politics. The presentation should explain the topic or issue at stake and provide at least one discussion question for the class to reflect on. Students must also submit a one-page memo (Times New Roman font, 12-point, double-spaced, one-inch margins) summarizing the current event and providing a short reflection linking it to topics and themes of comparative politics covered in class and the readings. Students will sign up for the date of their presentation during the first week of the semester.

### ***Midterm Exam (30%)***

The take-home midterm exam will be distributed on Blackboard following class on October 13 and will be due on Blackboard by 12 p.m. on October 18. The exam will include material covered in the first half of the course (September 1/The State and Institutions – October 13/Globalization). The exam will consist of identification, short-answer, and essay questions.

### ***Final Exam (30%)***

The take-home final exam will be distributed on Blackboard following class on December 8 and will be due on Blackboard by 12 p.m. on December 13. The exam will include material covered in the second half of the course (October 18/Nationalism – December 8/The Future of Comparative Politics). The exam will consist of identification, short-answer, and essay questions.

## **Course Policies**

### ***Covid-19 Precautions***

Students are required to follow all health and safety guidelines set forth by the university and the District of Columbia. The university's policies can be found in the [Onward GW Plan](#) and updates can be found on the university's [coronavirus website](#). Specifically, students are required to wear a mask **at all times** during in-person class sessions and to **stay home** if you are experiencing Covid symptoms or have tested positive. In accordance with the university's [classroom policy](#), students are not permitted to bring or consume food or drink in the classroom. Failure to comply with these policies will be sanctioned, including removal from class and reporting to the relevant university authority.

### *Absences*

Students should plan to attend and participate in all class sessions. Students will be given two free absences, after which their grade will be adversely affected. In the case of an absence, students should ensure they keep up with the class readings and consult another student for class notes. In accordance with the university's policy on religious holidays: (1) students should notify faculty at least three weeks in advance of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance; (2) the faculty should extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up examinations; (3) faculty who intend to observe a religious holiday should arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or make other provisions for course-related activities. Additional details on this policy are available [here](#).

### *Academic Integrity*

Students are expected to be familiar with the [Code of Academic Integrity](#) and the [Code of Student Conduct](#). Academic dishonesty or other violations of the codes will be reported to the university and will be penalized. Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.

### *Blackboard*

All course materials—including the syllabus, assignment instructions, and additional resources—are posted on Blackboard. Students should regularly check Blackboard and their GW email address for class updates. All assignments must be submitted on Blackboard.

### *Classroom Conduct*

All students are responsible for contributing to a professional, scholarly, and welcoming classroom environment. Rudeness, intolerance, or discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated.

### *Extensions and Late Assignments*

Please consult the instructor about an extension before the deadline if you need extra time to complete an assignment. Requests for an extension following the deadline will not be granted. Late assignments will be penalized one-third of a letter grade each day they are late.

### *Grading*

Letter grades convert to points on a 0–100 scale as follows:

- ❖ A: 94–100
- ❖ A–: 90–93
- ❖ B+: 87–89
- ❖ B: 84–86

- ❖ B-: 80–83
- ❖ C+: 77–79
- ❖ C: 74–76
- ❖ C-: 70–73
- ❖ D+: 67–69
- ❖ D: 64–66
- ❖ D-: 60–63
- ❖ F: 0–59

### *Safety and Security*

In an emergency, call GWPD at 202-994-6111 or 911. For situation-specific actions, review the [Emergency Response Handbook](#). To stay informed on campus safety and security, see [here](#).

### *Technology in the Classroom*

In order to facilitate active engagement, students are asked to not use technology in the classroom. This includes laptops, tablets, phones, or other electronic devices. Students with DSS accommodation will be exempted from this policy.

### *Use of Electronic Class Material*

Students are encouraged to use electronic course materials, including recorded class sessions, for private personal use in connection with their academic program of study. Electronic course materials and recorded class sessions should not be shared or used for non-course related purposes unless express permission has been granted by the instructor. Students who impermissibly share any electronic course materials are subject to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct. Please contact the instructor if you have questions regarding what constitutes permissible or impermissible use of electronic course materials and/or recorded class sessions.

### *Workload*

In accordance with university policy, students are expected to spend a minimum of 100 minutes on independent coursework for every 50 minutes of direct instruction per week. This course meets for 4 hours and 40 minutes of direct instruction per week, meaning students are expected to spend 9 hours of independent learning per week. This totals a minimum of 13.5 hours of learning per week.

## **Resources**

### *Counseling and Psychological Services*

GW's Colonial Health Center offers counseling and psychological services, supporting mental health and personal development by collaborating directly with students to overcome challenges and difficulties that may interfere with academic, emotional, and personal success. For additional information, call 202-994-5300 or see [here](#).

*Disability Support Services (DSS)*

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact Disability Support Services in Rome Hall, 801 22nd Street NW, Suite 102 to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information, call 202-994-8250 or see [here](#).

*Gelman Library*

The [Gelman Library](#) offers a vast array of digital and print resources to support student learning. These include a [Political Science Guide](#) and [Citation Styles Guide](#).

*Writing Center*

The [Writing Center](#) offers free writing support to students through one-on-one consultations. Appointments can be made [here](#).

## Course Schedule

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### Part I: Political Regimes

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#### August 30 – Foundations of Comparative Politics

Overview: What is comparative politics? How do scholars study comparative politics? What do we stand to gain from academic study of comparative politics?

Readings:

- ❖ Syllabus
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#### September 1 – The State and Institutions

Overview: What is the state? What is an institution? How do the state and institutions fit into scholarly study of comparative politics?

Readings:

- ❖ “A Guiding Concept: Political Institutions.” In O’Neil et al., *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, pp. 16–18.
  - ❖ “Chapter 2: States.” In O’Neil et al., *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, pp. 25–51.
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#### September 6 – Civil Society and Social Movements

Overview: What is civil society? What are social movements? How do civil society and social movements influence political processes and outcomes?

Readings:

- ❖ Putnam, Robert D. 1995. “Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital.” *Journal of Democracy* 6 (1): 65–78.
- ❖ Foley, Michael W., and Bob Edwards. 1996. “The Paradox of Civil Society.” *Journal of Democracy* 7 (3): 38–52.

- ❖ Tucker, Joshua A., Yannis Theocharis, Margaret E. Roberts, and Pablo Barberá. 2017. “From Liberation to Turmoil: Social Media and Democracy.” *Journal of Democracy* 28 (4): 46–59.
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### **September 8 – Democracy and Democratization**

Overview: What is democracy? What factors influence the rise and stability of democratic regimes? What theories explain democratization?

Readings:

- ❖ “Chapter 6: Democratic Regimes.” In O’Neil et al., *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, pp. 142–152. \*\*Read up to “Institutions of the Democratic State”\*\*
  - ❖ Collier, David, and Steven Levitsky. 1997. “Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research.” *World Politics* 49 (3): 430–451.
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### **September 13 – Democratic Institutions**

Overview: What core institutions are found across democratic regimes? How do they vary? What are the advantages and disadvantages of different democratic institutions?

Readings:

- ❖ “Chapter 6: Democratic Regimes.” In O’Neil et al., *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, pp. 152–173. \*\*Read from “Institutions of the Democratic State”\*\*
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### **September 15 – Political Ideologies**

Overview: What is a political ideology? What are the most prominent political ideologies in contemporary politics? How do political ideologies shape politics?

Readings:

- ❖ Heywood, Andrew. 2021. “Understanding Political Ideologies.” In *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*, 7th ed., 1–18. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
- ❖ Heywood, Andrew. 2021. “Why Political Ideologies Matter.” In *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*, 7th ed., 266–271. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

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## September 20 – Democratic Backsliding

Overview: Is democracy on the decline worldwide? If so, what is causing democratic backsliding?

Readings:

- ❖ LISTEN: Abou-Chadi, Tarik, and Daniel Ziblatt. 2021. “How Democracies Die.” *Transformation of European Politics*. Podcast.
- ❖ Bermeo, Nancy. 2016. “On Democratic Backsliding.” *Journal of Democracy* 27 (1): 5–19.

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## September 22 – Authoritarian Regimes

Overview: What are the defining features of authoritarian regimes? What types of authoritarian regimes exist? How does authoritarianism influence political, economic, and societal life?

Readings:

- ❖ “Chapter 8: Nondemocratic Regimes.” In O’Neil et al., *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, pp. 354–381.
- ❖ “Chapter 9: Communism and Postcommunism.” In O’Neil et al., *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, pp. 382–395. \*\*Read up to “The Collapse of Communism”\*\*

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## September 27 – Hybrid Regimes

Overview: What is a hybrid regime? How does this concept improve our understanding of regime type in the twenty-first century?

Readings:

- ❖ Hale, Henry E. 2011. “Hybrid Regimes: When Democracy and Autocracy Mix.” In *The Dynamics of Democratization: Dictatorship, Development, and Diffusion*, Nathan J. Brown, ed. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- ❖ Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan Ahmad Way. 2020. “The New Competitive Authoritarianism.” *Journal of Democracy* 31 (1): 51–65.

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## Part II: Political Economy

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### September 29 – Political Economies

Overview: What is political economy? What are the main ways economic systems have historically been structured? How do economic processes influence politics and vice versa?

Readings:

- ❖ “Chapter 4: Political Economy.” In O’Neil et al., *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, pp. 82–115.

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### October 4 – Imperialism and Colonialism

Overview: What are imperialism and colonialism? What impact did these systems have on colonized parts of the world? How are the effects of imperialism and colonialism still felt in the present day?

Readings:

- ❖ “Chapter 10: Developing Countries.” In O’Neil et al., *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, pp. 480–509.

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### October 6 – Resource Curse

Overview: What is the “resource curse”? How do resources supposedly weaken democratic governance? Is there evidence for a “resource blessing” in some states?

Readings:

- ❖ Ross, Michael L. 2001. “Does Oil Hinder Democracy?” *World Politics* 53 (3): 325–361.
- ❖ Haber, Stephen, and Victor Menaldo. 2011. “Do Natural Resources Fuel Authoritarianism? A Reappraisal of the Resource Curse.” *American Political Science Review* 105 (1): 1–27. **\*\*Skip “Literature Review” and “Research Design” sections\*\***

### **October 11 – Development**

Overview: What is development? How do scholars determine if a state is “developed” or not? To what extent is “development” an important goal for policymakers and political practitioners?

Readings:

- ❖ Easterly, William. 2009. “The Ideology of Development.” *Foreign Policy*. October 13.
  
  - ❖ NA. 2009. “In Defense of Development.” *Foreign Policy*. October 13.
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### **October 13 – Globalization**

Overview: What is globalization? How does globalization influence political, economic, and societal processes and outcomes?

Readings:

- ❖ “Globalization and the Future of Comparative Politics.” In O’Neil et al., *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, pp. 692–717.
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**Midterm Exam – Due October 18 at 12 p.m.**

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## **Part III: Political Identities**

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### **October 18 – Nationalism**

Overview: What is a nation? What is nationalism? How has nationalism influenced politics within and between states in recent years?

Readings:

- ❖ Anderson, Benedict. 1983. “Introduction.” In *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: Verso. **\*\*Read only “Concepts and Definitions” on pp. 5–7\*\***

- ❖ Renan, Ernest. 1995 [1882]. “What Is a Nation?” In *The Nationalism Reader*, eds. Omar Dahbour and Micheline R. Ishay. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press.
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### **October 20 – Populism**

Overview: What is populism? How does populism relate to democracy and nationalism? Is populism promising, problematic, or both?

Readings:

- ❖ Urbinati, Nadia. 2019. “Political Theory of Populism.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 22: 111–127.
  - ❖ Selection from: Mudde, Cas, and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. 2017. *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.
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### **October 25 – Fall Break (No Class)**

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### **October 27 – Ethnicity**

Overview: What is ethnicity? How does ethnicity impact politics? Why do some ethnic groups seek political independence or autonomy while others do not?

Readings:

- ❖ Selection from: Chandra, Kanchan. 2012. *Constructivist Theories of Ethnic Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
  - ❖ Hale, Henry E. 2000. “The Parade of Sovereignities: Testing Theories of Secession in the Soviet Setting.” *British Journal of Political Science* 30 (1): 31–56.
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### **November 1 – Gender**

Overview: What is gender? How does gender impact politics? To what extent do women and men have equal access to political, economic, and social rights and responsibilities around the world?

Readings:

- ❖ Htun, Mala. 2004. “Is Gender Like Ethnicity? The Political Representation of Identity Groups.” *Perspectives on Politics* 2 (3): 439–458.
  
  - ❖ Fumega, Silvana. 2020. “Tracking Latin America’s Other Pandemic: Violence Against Women.” *Americas Quarterly*. April 13.
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**November 3 – LGBTQ+**

Overview: What is the status of LGBTQ+ rights around the world? How does LGBTQ+ identity influence politics?

Readings:

- ❖ Encarnación, Omar G. 2014. “Gay Rights: Why Democracy Matters.” *Journal of Democracy* 25 (3): 90–104.
  
  - ❖ Poushter, Jacob, and Nicholas Kent. 2020. “The Global Divide on Homosexuality Persists.” *Pew Research Center*.
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**November 8 – Religion**

Overview: How does religion influence politics? How do different states view the public role of religion in politics and society?

Readings:

- ❖ Stepan, Alfred C., and Graeme B. Robertson. 2004. “Arab, Not Muslim, Exceptionalism.” *Journal of Democracy* 15 (4): 140–146.
  
  - ❖ NA. 2021. “The Rise of Christian Nationalism.” *Council on Foreign Relations*.
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**Part IV: Case Studies**

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**November 10 – United Kingdom**

Overview: What are the most salient features of politics in the United Kingdom?

Readings:

- ❖ “United Kingdom.” In O’Neil et al., *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, pp. 202–231.
  
  - ❖ Current event reading
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### **November 15 – Russia**

Overview: What are the most salient features of politics in Russia?

Readings:

- ❖ “Russia.” In O’Neil et al., *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, pp. 416–443.
  
  - ❖ Current event reading
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### **November 17 – China**

Overview: What are the most salient features of politics in China?

Readings:

- ❖ “China.” In O’Neil et al., *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, pp. 444–479.
  
  - ❖ Current event reading
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### **November 22 – India**

Overview: What are the most salient features of politics in India?

Readings:

- ❖ “India.” In O’Neil et al., *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, pp. 510–539.
  
  - ❖ Current event reading
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## November 24 – Thanksgiving (No Class)

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### November 29 – Mexico

Overview: What are the most salient features of politics in Mexico?

Readings:

- ❖ “Mexico.” In O’Neil et al., *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, pp. 568–599.
  
  - ❖ Current event reading
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### December 1 – Iran

Overview: What are the most salient features of politics in Iran?

Readings:

- ❖ “Iran.” In O’Neil et al., *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, pp. 540–567.
  
  - ❖ Current event reading
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### December 6 – Nigeria

Overview: What are the most salient features of politics in Nigeria?

Readings:

- ❖ “Nigeria.” In O’Neil et al., *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, pp. 662–691.
  
  - ❖ Current event reading
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### December 8 – The Future of Comparative Politics

Overview: How does studying comparative politics better enable us to understand the world and our place in it?

Readings:

❖ No Readings

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**Final Exam – Due December 13 at 12 p.m.**

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