POlitical science 211
Comparative Politics and Government
Section XX
Course date & time, Course Location
Fall 20XX Syllabus

Dr. PROFESSOR Y
Office: Mack Social Science (MSS) #XX
Office Hours: M & W 10:00am-11:00am and by appointment.
Email: ProfY@unr.edu
Webcampus: https://wcl.unr.edu
Department Website: www.unr.edu/cla/polisci

Course Description:

This course, Comparative Government and Politics, aims to acquaint students with the key concepts, methodological tools, and topics of interest in the field of comparative politics. Upon completion, the student should be able to identify the salient debates within comparative politics, utilize relevant concepts and approaches to systematize their analysis of domestic, as well as international political trends, and, thusly, examine a wide range of political outcomes. We will cover four countries to allow students to apply their knowledge: the United Kingdom, Brazil, Pakistan, and Russia, respectively. Students are encouraged to be critical of readings and to freely express their ideas in classroom discussions.

There is not a prerequisite, corequisites or other recommended preparation required to enroll in this course.

Required Texts and Course Materials:


• Case-Study 1 Reading: (Additional required readings noted in the syllabus will be available via WebCT (https://wcl.unr.edu)


*All books are available at the UNR Bookstore. Additional readings or course materials will be available digitally on WebCampus.*

**Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:**

Upon completion of this course…

- Students will be able to understand the basic tenants of the key concepts and methodological tools and topics in comparative politics.
- Students will be able to acquire the conceptual framework to understand how to interpret world events.
- Students will observe the role of institutions and the roles of key actors (leadership) in evaluating potential political outcomes; they will understand the complex nature of comparative politics when evaluating the connections among local, national, and international institutions and actors.
- Students will critically interpret political outcomes as a result of problems in historical or contemporary global contexts through critical reading, interpretation and conclusion formulation.
- Students will be able to identify the salient debates in comparative politics, utilize relevant concepts and approaches to systematize their analysis of domestic, as well as international political trends, and, thusly, examine a wide range of political outcomes including an inquiry to human problems.

This course satisfies the social science core requirement by satisfying the Silver Core C006 (Cultures, Societies and Individuals) and developing a competency in in CO01 (Effective Composition and Communication) and CO03 (Critical Analysis and Use of Information). Students will acquire the conceptual framework to understand (observe) how to interpret world events as they pertain to human social conditions. Particularly, students will theorize approaches and articulate the levels of analysis in comparative politics based on the case study analysis. Students will have to demonstrate their ability for academic inquiry (critical reading, interpretation, and analysis) through the research of problems in human social relations and the challenges of human problems ultimately coming up with their own conclusions.

This semester-long exercise requires students to first understand how international political trends are perceived but also evaluates the role of leaders and the institutions in interpreting (potential) political outcomes. This is done through a critical reading, analysis and interpretation of case studies presented in the course. Additionally, students will formulate a conclusion on political outcomes through written composition
(short answer and essay exam questions) and oral discussion during the class. This analysis involves an understanding of human and societal conditions, including the individual and groups. The requirement heavily falls on the student’s ability to interpret the subject matter as means of inquiring into human problems. Together, these satisfy the social science core requirement.

In addition, this course also satisfies Silver Core Student Learning Objective CO11 (Global Contexts). The fundamental aim of this course is to equip students with the conceptual tools necessary to understand the fundamental forces, processes, and actors at work in comparative politics. Upon completion, the student should be able to identify the salient debates within comparative politics, utilize relevant concepts and approaches to systematize their analysis of domestic, as well as international political trends, and, thusly, examine a wide range of political outcomes. Students will understand the connection between local, national and international actors and institutions, which shape outcomes. This is done using case study analysis of four countries, to better understand historical and contemporary global influence affecting comparative politics. Students will have to demonstrate their ability for academic inquiry through research of problems in historical and contemporary global issues.

**Class Policies and Procedures:**

I ask students to follow just a few particular rules so that we can maintain a positive learning environment:

- **Attendance and Talking during lectures:** You are expected to attend lectures. Please do not email me five minutes before class saying you will not be there. If you are late coming to the class please be as quiet and as unobtrusive as possible. **If you are more than 10 minutes late to class, please do not bother showing up.** If you need to leave lecture early, I would appreciate you telling me so in advance and possibly changing your assigned seat in the lecture hall so that your departure creates as little disruption as possible.

  No matter how softly you think you are talking, somebody next to you or behind you or in front of you (hint, hint) is going to be annoyed by your talking. Everybody in this class has had to work hard, pay money, or both to be in this classroom. Your talking during lectures is a distraction to your colleagues and me, and no one should have to be put into a confrontational situation to get you to be quiet.

- **The Use of Electronic Equipment:** Part of having modern “toys” is having the responsibility that comes with them. At any given time, the great majority of students—having paid money for the course and having dire concern over their grades—will also be concerned about the lectures and discussions. Modern communication devices such as cell phones, text messages, PDAs, beepers, cell
phones, wireless email receivers, cell phones, portable music players, cell phones, and cell phones are a significant distraction to your colleagues, and equally important, to your professor. Please turn off your personal communication devices before entering my lecture and never answer your communication device in my lecture hall. Again, you would not expect me to hold a second conversation while you were visiting me during my office hours; I do not expect you to do so during my lecture. As these communication devices beep, burp and scream during lecture, you create disturbances for others. If you must or expect to receive a phone call during the lecture, keep your device on buzz and leave the classroom to take the call (YES: This includes text messaging).

• On a similar note, laptops are not permitted in the lecture hall. Recent credible research has indicated that students who have a laptop in lecture halls do worse in retention of information, participation, and following significant points. Moreover, laptops, again, create problems of disturbances in lecture halls as students wander from Website to Website looking to be entertained instead of paying attention to lectures and discussions. Colleges, universities and law school professors are starting to ban them in lecture hall and this professor will be no different. Students are also advised that they must obtain in advance the permission of the Professor or any outside speakers before using any recording devices within the lecture hall or discussions.

• Additional notes
  • Note One: I realize that everybody has special circumstances at home, at work, etc. You should make the decision at the beginning of this class whether you can commit the time and energy needed for this class. I am not in the position and should not be placed in the position of making “special exceptions” for people. It is unfair to the rest of the class and it puts you and me in an awkward situation.

  • Note Two: If you are struggling in the class and need help, you need to see me as soon as possible so that I can assist you. If you do not tell me what is going on, I cannot assist you. Please see me if you need help in getting through my class.

  • Note Three: Please do not make travel arrangements to leave the university at the end of the semester until you understand and know your final examination situation, not just in my class, but all classes. I will not allow early finals or make ups because you could not keep your dates organized. You should anticipate being at the university through final examination week until you are able to confirm your final examinations for all your courses.

  • Note Four: Likewise, if you are experiencing a personal emergency, especially around exam and paper due dates, you need to bring this
situation to the attention of the university’s Student Advocacy Services or the university’s Counseling Services, both services can provide needed support in times of crisis and trouble and act as liaisons between you and your professors so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Student Advocacy Services Website: (http://www.unr.edu/stsv/studentlife/index.html). University Counseling Services Website: (http://www.unr.edu/stsv/cs/)

• **Note Five:** Completion of the assigned readings before each class meeting is critical to your success in the course. Although you may be tempted to put off the reading until shortly before the exams, this will make it very difficult to do well on the quizzes and exams and short-change you in your understanding of international relations. If you have questions about the material as the course progresses, do not hesitate to contact me. I am also easily accessible via e-mail for simple questions. Please feel free to use this resource.

**Description of Assignments:**

This course does not have any graded assignments. Your assignment instead is to read all the required material before you get to class, ask questions, and take notes. Your grade is dependent on your performance on three exams and a final cumulative exam. In addition you'll be graded on your participation. Please see the next section on the breakdown of your grade.

**Grading Criteria:**

The objective in setting the evaluation components is to make sure they are fair to everyone in the class. With that in mind, there are several evaluation components to the class. All grading will be on a 0-100 scale. There will be no grade curve in my lecture hall. The following correspond to the approximate letter grades in my class:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-100 = A</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-93.99 = A-</td>
<td>90-99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89.99 = B+</td>
<td>80-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84-86.99 = B</td>
<td>70-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74-76.99 = C</td>
<td>60-69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>64-66.99 = D</td>
<td>&lt;60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>60-63.99 = D-</td>
<td>&lt;60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57-59.99 = D-</td>
<td>&lt;60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-52.99 = F</td>
<td>&lt;60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Participation (10%)** Your participation grade will be determined by your responses to questions posed in the classroom during lecture, your contribution to class discussion, and your performance in *ad hoc* group activities assigned by the instructor. Class participation and attendance will also be assessed by your performance on a series of *unannounced* quizzes given in class. Your quiz scores will be averaged into your final participation score (they will constitute 70% of your
participation grade overall). The 3-exams will test you on the most recent readings covered in class.

**Exams (3) (60%)**: The three exams that will test the progress of your knowledge in this course will be composed of multiple-choice questions and short answers. I will send out key words in advance to help you study for them. These exams will help you keep up with the readings and will be oriented toward testing your knowledge of the country-cases and key concepts from the *reference text*. The first three exams are not cumulative rather they cover the material in between tests.

**Final Exams (30%)**: The final exam is cumulative and will be composed of multiple-choice questions and a short essay response.

Calculating your final grade:

\[
\text{Final Grade} = \left( \text{Participation score \times 0.10} \right) + \left( \text{average of your quizzes \times 0.60} \right) + \left( \text{final exam \times 0.30} \right)
\]

*There are no make-up exams (missed exams are counted as “0s”). There are only two conditions under which a make-up will be administered: family emergency or serious illness (both require documentation).*

**Course Calendar / Topics and Readings:**

### Week 1: XX-XX
**Why and how to compare political systems?**
- Introduction and organization
- *Chapter 1 (Introduction) in O’Neill*
- Lifehacker article

### Week 2: XX-XX
**The State and the Nation**
- *Chapter 2 in O’Neill: States*
- *Chapter 3 in O’Neill: Nations and Society*

### Week 3: XX-XX
**Democratic Regimes**
- *Chapter 5 in O’Neill: Democratic Regimes*
- CASE STUDY: UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND (UNITARY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY)
Week 4: XX-XX
Advanced Democracies: Introduction to Great Britain
Tuesday: Exam 1: The Basics (Introductory Concepts)
Thursday: Chapter 7 in O’Neill Advanced Democracies
Thursday: Wright 1

Week 5: XX-XX
Great Britain
- Wright 2-5

Week 6: XX-XX
Great Britain
- Wright 5-7
- CASE STUDY: THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL (FEDERAL PRESIDENTIAL CONSTITUTIONAL REPUBLIC)

Week 7: 1 XX-XX
Developing Democracies: Introduction to Brazil
- Chapter 9 in O’Neill: Less-Developed and Newly Industrializing Countries
- Cardoso, chapters 1-6

Week 8: XX-XX
Brazil
- Chapter 4 in O’Neill: Political Economy
- Cardoso, chapters 7-9

Week 9: XX-XX
Brazil
- Cardoso, chapters 10-11
- CASE STUDY: THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION (FEDERAL SEMI-PRESIDENTIAL CONSTITUTIONAL REPUBLIC)

Week 10: XX-XX
Authoritarian Regimes: Introduction to Russia
- Tuesday: Exam 2: The Democracies (UK +Brazil)
- Thursday: Chapter 6 in O’Neill: Nondemocratic Regimes
- Thursday: Levine 1
**Week 11: XX-XX**
Russia
- Chapter 8 in O’Neill: Communism and Post-Communism
- Levine 2-5

**Week 12: XX-XX**
Russia
- Levine 6-10
- CASE STUDY: THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN (FEDERAL PARLIAMENTARY REPUBLIC)

**Week 13: XX-XX – Thanksgiving**
Authoritarian Regimes: Introduction to Pakistan
- Chapter 10 in O’Neill: Political Violence
- Weaver (read over break) 1-3

**Week 14: XX-XX**
Pakistan
- Weaver 4-6

**Week 15: XX-XX**
Pakistan
- Tuesday: Exam 3: The Autocracies (Russia + ½ Pakistan)
- Thursday: Weaver 7

**Week 16: XX-XX**
Pakistan and Conclusion to Course
- Weaver: Epilogue
- Chapter 11 in O’Neill: Globalization and the Future of Comparative Politics

**Final Exam: DATE X**
- Exam 1: XX
- Exam 2: XX
- Exam 3: XX
- Final Exam: XX
Academic Dishonesty:

Cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses" constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and penalties can include canceling a student's enrollment without a grade, giving an F for the course or for the assignment. For more details, see the University of Nevada, Reno General Catalog and the Office of Student Conduct (http://www.unr.edu/student-conduct/policies/university-policies-and-guidelines/academic-standards/policy)

Disability Services:

Any student with a disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me and the Disability Resource Center as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations. You can refer to the Disability Resource Center website at http://www.unr.edu/drc.

Academic Success Services:

Your student fees cover usage of the Tutoring Center (784-6801 or www.unr.edu/tutoring-center) and University Writing Center (784-6030 or http://www.unr.edu/writing-center). These centers support your classroom learning; it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.

Audio and Video Recording:

Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.