

# Comparative Politics

Political Science 130

Fall 2021

**Dr. John Watson**

**Discussion Leader: David Morales**

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**Office:** BSB 1123/1129

**Office Hours:** TR 2:50 – 3:50 PM

**Class Hours:** TR 2:00 – 2:50 PM

**Discussion Groups:** F 2:00 – 2:50 PM; 3:00 – 3:50 PM

**Classroom:** Synchronous Online; Friday Campus Discussion Group: ARC 136

**CRN:** 13284; **Discussion Group:** 13282; 13281

## **POLS 130. Introduction to Comparative Politics. 3 hours.**

Comparative study of political institutions, political culture, and political processes in selected major countries of the world. Course Information: Same as [INST 130](#). Class Schedule Information: To be properly registered, students must enroll in one Discussion/Recitation and one Lecture-Discussion. *Individual and Society course.*

### **I. INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT**

This is an interesting time to take this course, which focuses on the similarities and differences in the political units between countries—the institutions, processes, founding philosophies, political conflicts, economic development and citizenry. The Black Lives Matter movement, the immigration crisis, controversial Trump foreign and domestic policies, climate change and even how countries remember and memorialize their pasts have all contributed to a national political introspection unlike any since the Sixties. We will use a broad range of thematic topics, current events and real-world case studies to explore the political differences among countries around the globe. This is an introductory course with no prerequisites. We are fortunate at UIC to have an internationally diverse student body, and I encourage all students to share their unique backgrounds in class discussion.

## II. COURSE FORMAT

This is an online-only course by department design. Every course presents unique challenges and this one will be no different. Each virtual class will take place on Blackboard Collaborate (BBC) and consist of a mix of lecture, class discussion, and the occasional video. We will open each class with news from the world of comparative politics in an attempt to firmly ground the class in real-time events. Friday Discussion Groups will be on campus in-person and led by graduate student David Morales in ARC 136. There are two groups from 2:00 – 2:50 pm and 3:00 – 3:50 pm. David is the instructor for this facet of the course, and he has full autonomy. Current events, lecture material, question-answer and David’s preference material will guide the discussion sections. Students are not only encouraged but are expected to participate. These group sessions should be wide open and fun.

## III. READINGS AND MATERIALS

*Cases in Comparative Politics* by Patrick O’Neil, Karl Fields and Don Share, W.W. Norton (2021), Seventh Edition

## IV. COMPUTATION OF COURSE GRADE

Mid-term Exam	25%
Final	25%
Analytical Paper	25%
Attendance/Participation	25%

Percentage cutoffs for A-B-C-D grades are the classical 90-80-70-60 framework

**DISCUSSION BOARDS (DB):** There are TEN (10) DBs throughout the semester that are part of your participation grade. These DBs are due at the end of the scheduled day. See the weekly course schedule for the scheduled DBs.

**EXTRA CREDIT, CE-NEWS:** We will start each class with current events news on the comparative or international politics. Each student can earn an extra participation credit by offering an *informal* summary of real time CE-news from *anywhere* in the world.

## V. COMPARATIVE ANALYTICAL PAPER

This assignment is worth 25 percent of your grade. The paper should be 4-5 pages (double-spaced with 12-point font) and focus on an aspect of comparative political interest regarding one of the dozen countries explored in the *Cases in Comparative Politics* text *or* another country that is **cleared in advance** by the professor. For example, one might want to write a paper on how Brexit is changing Great Britain's relationship with the European Union or how and why the United States is moving away from democracy. I will permit students to write a paper that focuses on a country outside of the exemplars discussed in the main text. An example might be nuclear-ization on the Korean Peninsula. But please clear the topic in advance. The paper is due Tuesday November, 30; see weekly course schedule.

## VI. WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE

### Abbreviations for interpreting Weekly Course Schedule:

**DB**: Required Blackboard Discussion Board due at end of lecture day

**FILM**: Please watch prior to attending class

**READ**: Read indicated chapter in *Cases in Comparative Politics* (CCP) prior to attending lecture

### **WEEK ONE:**

**08/24 (T)**                      **Introduction to the course**

**08/26 (R)**                      **What Is Comparative Politics?**

**READ**: Chapter One (C1) *Cases in Comparative Politics* (CCP)

### **WEEK TWO:**

**08/31 (T)**                      **Comparing States, Regimes, Political Conflict and Competition**

**READ**: C1 in CCP

**09/02 (R)**                      **Comparing Societies, Political Economies and National Identities**

**READ**: C1 in CCP

**FILM**: *Guns, Germs and Steel* (National Geographic, 2005):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i885hopsw6E>

**DISCUSSION BOARD #1 (DB): Reaction to *Guns, Germs and Steel* film**

**WEEK THREE:**

**09/07 (T) United Kingdom: Emergence & Empire, Industrial Revolution and Gradual Democratization**

**READ:** C2 in CCP

**09/09 (R) United Kingdom: Political Regime and Current Issues: Scottish Independence, Brexit, Trouble in the Monarchy**

**READ:** C2 in CCP

**DB #2:** Prince Harry, Meghan Markle and the Modern Monarchy

**WEEK FOUR:**

**09/14 (T) United States: Historical Development of the State: Colonialism to Black Lives Matter**

**READ:** C3 in CCP

**09/16 (R) United States: Political Regime and National Identity; Trump George Floyd, Kneeling and Income Inequality**

**READ:** C3 in CCP

**DB #3:** The Good, the Bad and the Ugly of the United States Founding

**WEEK FIVE:**

**09/21 (T) France: Modern French State, Revolution, Many Republics**

**READ:** C4 in CCP

**09/23 (R) France: Political Regime, Rise of the Right and the Welfare State**

**READ:** C4 in CCP

**WEEK SIX:**

**09/28 (T) Germany: Holy Roman Empire to Reunification**

**READ:** C5 in CCP

**09/30 (R)                    Germany: Political Regime, National Identity and Immigration Dilemma**

**READ:** C5 in CCP

**DB #4:** Germany's Immigration Dilemma

**WEEK SEVEN:**

**10/05 (T)                    Japan: Feudalism, Militarism, Occupation and Reinvention**

**READ:** C6 in CCP

**10/07 (R)                    Japan: Political Regime and Asian Foreign Relations**

**READ:** C6 in CCP

**DB #5:** U.S. Occupation and Reinvention of Japan

**REVIEW FOR MIDTERM EXAM, FRIDAY 10/09**

**WEEK EIGHT:**

**10/12 (T)                    Russia: Emergence, Revolution, Lenin/Stalin, Soviet Collapse  
Failure of Reform under Putin**

**READ:** C7 in CCP

**10/14 (R)                    Russia: Political Regime, Central Asia and Russian Demographics**

**READ:** C7 in CCP

**DB #6:** Trump vs. Biden on Putin

**MIDTERM EXAM: CHAPTERS 1-7, FRIDAY 10/16**

**WEEK NINE:**

**10/19 (T)                    China: Dynastic Rule, Communism, Mao**

**READ:** C8 in CCP

**10/21 (R)                    China: Political Regime & Economy, Hong Kong and Taiwan  
Tension**

**READ:** C8 in CCP

**DB #7:** What to do about Taiwan?

**WEEK TEN:**

**10/26 (T) India: Colonialism, Independence, Rise of Hindu Nationalism and Pakistan Conflict**

**READ:** C9 in CCP

**10/28 (R) India: Political Regime and National Identity**

**READ:** C9 in CCP

**WEEK ELEVEN:**

**11/02 (T) Iran: Persian Legacy and Islamic Empire to Revolution and Islamic Republic**

**READ:** C10 in CCP

**11/04 (R) Iran: Political Regime and Acquiring the Bomb**

**READ:** C10 in CCP

**WEEK TWELVE:**

**11/09 (T) Mexico: Empire & Conquistadors, Revolution, Stability and Instability**

**READ:** C11 in CCP

**11/11 (R) Mexico: Political Regime, Drug War and Migration**

**READ:** C11 in CCP

**DB #8:** Immigration at U.S. – Mexico Border

**WEEK THIRTEEN:**

**11/16 (T) Brazil: Colonialism, Gold, Second Republic, Democracy Falts with Militarization**

**READ:** C12 in CCP

**11/18 (R) Brazil: Political Regime, Corruption, the Amazon**

**READ:** C12 in CCP

**FILM:** Jared Diamond: Why Societies Collapse:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IESYMFtLIis>

**DB #9:** Bolsonaro and the Global Environment: Biodiversity,  
Climate Change and the “Lungs of the Planet”

**WEEK FOURTEEN:**

**11/23 (T) South Africa: Colonialism. Boer Wars, Afrikaner Power, Apartheid,  
Democracy**

**READ:** C13 in CCP

**11/25 (R) NO CLASS THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**WEEK FIFTEEN:**

**11/30 (T) South Africa: Political Regime and Impact of HIV; Nigeria: Euro  
Imperialism and Independence**

**READ:** C13 & C14 in CCP

**DB #10:** The Collapse of Apartheid

**COMPARATIVE ANALYTICAL PAPER DUE**

**12/02 (R) Nigeria: Political Regime and the Curse of the Petro State**

**READ:** C14 in CCP

**REVIEW FOR FINAL EXAM, 12/04**

**12/06 - 10 FINAL EXAM: Chapters 8-14**

