

POLS 260-1 INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Fall 2017
Department of Political Science
Northern Illinois University

Lectures: M/W 3.30-4.45
Room: DU459

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Course Overview:

Where and how has a modern liberal democracy developed? Why and how can some regimes maintain authoritarian rule? How do other democracies differ from the American democracy? Will a democratic government help reduce poverty and make people live longer and happier lives than an undemocratic government? This course will help students to assess and learn how politics work around the world and outside the U.S. in order to answer these general questions which are pertinent to the interests of citizens. The course is designed as an introduction to the basic concepts, themes, and issues in Comparative Politics such as democracy, authoritarianism, the political roots of development and poverty, national and ethnic identities, civil society and social movements, and political parties and elections. If you are interested in political science as a major, this class helps to prepare you for upper-level political science courses. If you just want to better understand current affairs across the world, this class will provide you with useful analytical perspectives, as well as a factual background, on a number of important countries and regions.

The course will focus on the three essential themes of comparative political analysis: (1) The State, Political Regimes and Institutions; (2) Political Participation and State-Society Relations; and (3) Political Economy and Welfare. The underlying purpose of the course is to identify and explain differences and similarities in political systems and political life across a set of diverse countries and regions of the world. To this end, we will be primarily (but not exclusively)

focusing on seven countries—Britain, France, Japan, Russia, China, and Iran, as well as the US.

This is a lecture course. However, students are encouraged to actively participate in class discussion, learn from one another, and respect various viewpoints.

Course Schedule:

Week 1 (Aug 28/30)	Introduction/ Concepts and Issues in Comparative Politics ** 08/30 NO CLASS (APSA) **
Week 2 (Sept 4/6)	State and State formation
Week 3 (Sept 11/13)	Nationalism and Nation-building
Week 4 (Sept 18/20)	Democracy
Week 5 (Sept 25/27)	Authoritarianism/Political Economy
Week 6 (Oct 2/4)	Liberal Democracy: UK
Week 7 (Oct 9/11)	Mid-Term Review/Exam **Term Paper Draft Due (10/9)**
Week 8 (Oct 16/18)	Liberal Democracy: France
Week 9 (Oct 23/25)	Liberal Democracy: Japan
Week 10 (Oct 30/1)	Illiberal Democracy: Russia
Week 11 (Nov 6/8)	Authoritarianism: China
Week 12 (Nov 13/15)	Democracy and Culture
Week 13 (Nov 20/22)	Thanksgiving Holidays
Week 14 (Nov 27/29)	Theocracy: Iran
Week 15 (Dec 4/6)	Review/Catch-up **Term Paper Due (12/4)**
December 11	Final Exam

Course Requirements:

1. Class Attendance and participation (10% of total grade)

- a. Students are *required* to attend all the classes. More than three consecutive unexcused absences will jeopardize your entire Class Attendance grade. The instructor reserves full discretion to decide students' final grade. Please notify and provide credible supporting document to your TA in advance if you must miss class.
- b. Class attendance is evaluated as follows, with 10% being full marks:
10% (0-2 unexcused absences); 9% (3-4 unexcused absences); 8% (5-6 unexcused

absences); 7% (7-8 unexcused absences); 0% (9 or more unexcused absences).

- c. You are expected to participate actively in class discussions. If you make a significant point to contribute to class discussion, you will be given a point equivalent of a class attendance added to your Class Attendance grade.
- d. If you are deemed to be causing a disturbance to class, you will lose a point equivalent of a class attendance from your Class Attendance grade.

2. Readings:

- a. Students are expected to **come to class having read all the required readings**.
- b. Recommended readings are provided in some sections to help students write their essay assignments (see 4 in *Course Requirements* below).
- c. Both required and recommended readings are available (in alphabetical order) in the E-reserves section on the Blackboard. Please make sure to refer to the required reading list in *Course Outline* below before reading them.
- d. Students are expected to come to class having done the required reading beforehand and to actively participate in discussion. It is helpful to approach the readings with the following questions in mind: (a) what is the central question/debate? (b) what is the main point/argument? (c) what is the evidence for the argument? (d) what are the problems with the argument? (e) can you think of counterarguments? Students should also address these questions in writing assignments.

3. **Two in-class Exams (20% + 40% of total grade, respectively)**

- a. **The Mid-term Exam**: consists of a short-answer section and essay questions. The exam will cover the first half of the course. Students will be expected to write clear and coherent essays.
- b. **The Final Exam**: consists of a short-answer section and essay questions. The exam will primarily cover materials from the second half of the course, but will test your overall understanding of the materials covered in the course.
- c. Students will be provided with a study guide including potential questions one week before each exam.

4. **One Term Paper (Draft paper 10%+ Final paper 20%=30% of total grade)**

- a. Students will be required to write a short term paper (approximately 5-6 pages). The paper topic and guideline is provided in class and attached below in Appendix B. It is

- also posted under the Assignment tab on Blackboard.
- b. Students are required to submit **a draft paper no later than Week 7-1 (October 9)** to gain feedback from the instructor and subsequently revise the paper before submitting a final draft.
 - c. **The final paper due is Week 15-1 (December 4).** A hard copy must be submitted to the instructor in class **after posted in the Safe Assign section on Blackboard.**
 - d. The paper must be typewritten (12 font), double-spaced, and properly footnoted.
 - e. Your paper will be evaluated according to the assessment rubric attached below in Appendix C.

Grade Distribution:

1. Class attendance (10%)
2. Mid-term exam (20%)
3. Final exam (40%)
4. Term paper (Draft paper 10% + Final paper 20%)

Final course grades will be translated into the letter grades as follows:

A: 93-100% A-: 90-92.9% B+: 87-89.9% B: 83-86.9% B-: 80-82.9%

C+: 77.5-79.9% C: 70-77.4%

D: 60-69.9%

F: Less than 60%

Course Rules and Penalties:

- 1) **Late submission** will result in a grade reduction of 1/3 the letter grade per day (e.g., “A” will be lowered to “A-” if submission is one day late). No paper will be accepted that is more than one week late.
- 2) **Plagiarism Policy:** According to the NIU Undergraduate Catalogue “Students are guilty of plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging them. Students guilty of, or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university.” In short, all ideas that are not your own or are well known must be footnoted. A general rule is that if the

information cannot be found in three or more commonly available sources, it should be footnoted. All direct quotations must be placed in quotation marks. If you are unsure as to what should be footnoted either play it safe and footnote, or ask for assistance. Failure to adhere to the University's plagiarism policy will result in punishments ranging from a failed course grade to suspension and even expulsion, depending on the egregiousness of the infraction.

3) **Make-up assignments (e.g., exams):**

- a) A make-up exam is permitted only under a justifiable circumstance. If you have to miss an exam on a given due date, you will have to request permission from the instructor to make up the missed exam on an alternative date at the department. Submit a supporting document to seek permission in order to make an arrangement with the instructor. You have to make an arrangement no later than one week after a due date.
- b) In case of you have to miss a quiz, students should contact TA or the instructor to seek permission to make up the missed quiz. Otherwise, the same rule with the exams applies.

4) **Basic Classroom Rules:**

- a) TURN OFF all your electronic devices unnecessary to participate in class (e.g, smartphones, iPad, cell phones)
- b) NO crosswords, Sudoku, or any other game or activity is permitted.
- c) Students are NOT permitted to leave the classroom without prior permission.
- d) RESPECT the instructor and other people: NO chatting is permitted when other people are talking. Students are expected to express their views in a civil manner and respect other people's views.
- e) Students are asked to leave the class if their behaviors are deemed inappropriate and/or destructive to other people. You will also lose an attendance point (see *Course Requirement 1.c*).
- f) Under any reasonable circumstances, the instructor retains full discretion to advise whether students could stay in the course.
- g) See Appendix A "Classroom Decorum" for further information.

Course Readings:

The following textbooks have been ordered at the university bookstore and are available for

purchase. Students are required to obtain two text books. The recommended book is recommended to read in order to complete a term paper assignment but is optional according to students' needs and budget. The rest of the required readings (except the textbooks) will be available in the E-reserve in Black Board so that students could download or read them online. All the books are reserved in the library reserve section so that students could borrow and read them for a limited time to complete their assignments. Students are free to search an alternative outlet (e.g., Amazon) to purchase any of the assigned books but will have to read the latest editions assigned by the instructor.

Textbooks to purchase:

- O'Neil, Patrick H. 2015. *Essentials of Comparative Politics*. Fifth ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- O'Neil, Patrick, Fields, and Share, 2015. *Cases in Comparative Politics*. Fifth ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Recommended book:

- Zakaria, Fareed. 2007 (revised). *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company (especially, Introduction, chaps.2-4).

Class Schedule:

PART I: INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

1. (Aug 28/30) Course Introduction/Concepts and Issues in Comparative Politics

08/30 NO CLASS – the instructor attending a conference

- What is Comparative Politics? Why do we study it?

Required Readings:

O'Neil, Fields, and Share, chap.1.

PART II: STATES, NATIONS AND REGIMES

2. (Sep4/6) States and State Formation

**09/04 Labor Day Holiday – NO CLASS

- What is the state and what does it do?
- Where does it come from?

Required Readings:

O’Neil, chap.2.

“Getting There From Here: How should Obama reform health care?” *The New Yorker*, January 26, 2010.

3. (Sept 11/13) Nationalism and Nation-Building

- Where does a “national identity” come from?
- What model is the best for accommodating immigrants into a nation peacefully?
- Video: Inside Story “French banning of headscarves”

Case: Europe (Britain/France)

Required Readings:

O’Neil, chap.3.

“France’s ban on the burqa,” *The Economist*, January 14, 2010.

“Who are we? The Politics of Immigration and Identity in Britain,” *The Economist*, April 29, 2010.

“Europe’s far right: Culture matters more,” *The Economist*, August 11, 2012.

4. (Sept 18/20) Democracy

- What is democracy and what is not?
- What are the prerequisites for democracy?

Required Readings:

O’Neil, chap.5.

“What’s gone wrong with democracy”, *The Economist*, March 1, 2014.

<http://www.economist.com/news/essays/21596796-democracy-was-most-successful-political-idea-20th-century-why-has-it-run-trouble-and-what-can-be-do>.

Recommended Readings:

Zakaria, Introduction.

Huntington, Samuel P. 1991. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press: chap.1 (pp.3-30).

5. 1 (Sept 25) Authoritarianism

- What is authoritarianism/autocracy?
- Under what conditions does authoritarian rule emerge and survive?

Required Readings:

O’Neil, chap.6

5. 2 (Sept 27) Political Economy

- What is Political Economy?
- How and why does the state regulate the economy? What are the benefits and costs of state regulation of economy?

Required Readings:

O’Neil, chap.4.

“The global revival of industrial policy: Picking Winners, saving losers,” *The Economist*, August 5, 2010.

PART III: ADVANCED LIBERAL DEMOCRACIES

6. (Oct 2/4) Liberal Democracy: United Kingdom

- How does a parliamentary democracy differ from a liberal/presidential democracy?
- Does the British Prime Minister or the American President have more power?

- Video

Required Readings:

O’Neil, Fields, and Share, chap.2.

“Bagehot: Brexitland versus Londonia,” *The Economist*, July 2, 2016.

“Brexit: An aggravating absence, *The Economist*, July 2, 2016.

“Liberalism after Brexit: The politics of anger,” *The Economist*, July 2, 2016.

Recommended Readings:

“Constitutional Reform: Lording it,” *The Economist*, July 14, 2012.

“Reforming the House of Lords: The coalition’s millstone,” *The Economist*, July 14, 2012.

“Scottish Nationalism: How did it come to this?” *The Economist*, July 12, 2014.

“Scottish Independence: Don’t leave us this way,” *The Economist*, July 12, 2014.

7. (Oct 9/11) Mid-term Review/Exam

10/9 – Term Paper Draft Due

10/11 – Mid-term Exam

8. (Oct 16/18) Liberal Democracy: France

- Dual-executive system
- Multi-party system
- Why do the French hate “headscarves”?

Required Readings:

O’Neil, Fields, and Share, chap.4.

“For Macron’s Party in France, Success Is Broad. But How Deep?” *The New York Times*, June 12, 2017

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/12/world/europe/for-macrons-party-in-france-success-is-broad-but-how-deep.html>.

“Macron Decisively Defeats Le Pen in French Presidential Race” *The New York Times*, May 7, 2017

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/07/world/europe/emmanuel-macron-france-election-marine-le-pen.html>.

“Violent strikes against labour reforms are causing chaos in France,” *The Economist*, May 27, 2016.

“What Price to Keep France Safe? Perhaps a Nation’s Core Values, Many Fear,” *The New York Times*, August 5, 2016.

9. (Oct 23/25) Liberal Democracy: Japan

- Where does Japan’s liberal democracy come from?
- How can we explain Japan’s post-war rapid growth and economic success?

Required Readings:

O’Neil, Fields, and Share, chap.6.

“Japan Election, a Landslide for Abe, Could Allow a Bolder Military,” NYT, July 11, 2016.

“Japan and America: Close Allies,” *The Economist*, May 17, 2014.

“Japanese women and work Holding back half the nation,” *The Economist*, March 29, 2014.

“The Patriot, Shozo Abe dreams of a more powerful, assertive Japan. Why that makes many people uncomfortable,” *Time*, April 28, 2014.

Recommended Readings:

“Japan’s Political Revolving Door,” *BBC News*, September 27, 2008.

“Japan as Number Three: Watching China Whizz By,” *The Economist*, August 19, 2010.

PART IV: AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES: COMMUNIST POST-COMMUNIST STATES

10. (Oct 30/Nov 1) Illiberal Democracy: Russia

- Is Russia a liberal democracy?
- What has gone wrong with democratic transition in Russia?
- How does Putin remain in power?

Required Readings:

O’Neil, Fields, and Share, chap.7.

“Briefing Putin’s Russia: Call back yesterday,” *The Economist*, March 3, 2012.

“Mikhail Khodorkovsky’s case,” *The Economist*, April 22, 2010.

“Russia and the world: The triumph of Vladimir Putin,” *The Economist*, February 1, 2014.

Recommended Readings:

Zakaria, chap.3.

11. (Nov 6/8) Authoritarianism: China

- Where does China’s authoritarianism come from?
- What explains the resilience of China’s authoritarian regime?
- Why does economic growth not produce democracy in China?

Required Readings:

O’Neil, Fields, and Share, chap.8.

“China Special Report,” *The Economist*, April 19, 2014 (pp.3-16).

“Chinese civil society: Beneath the glacier,” *The Economist*, April 12, 2014.

Recommend Readings:

Nathan, Andrew J. 2003. China's Changing of the Guard: Authoritarian Resilience. *Journal of Democracy* 14 (1):6-17.

PART V: STATES AND REGIMES IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

12. (Nov 13/15) Democracy and Culture

- Civil society and social capital
- How does civil society affect democracy?
- Are certain cultural traits required for democracy? Is Islam an exception?

Case: US

Required Readings:

Putnam, Robert D. 1995. Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital. *Journal of Democracy* 6 (1):65-78.

Zakaria, chap.4.

13. (Nov 20/22) Thanksgiving Holidays

14. (Nov 27/29) Theocracy: Iran

- What is a theocratic state? How does it work?
- What is the role of religious leaders?

Required Readings:

O'Neil, Fields, and Share, chap.10.

“Iran and its region: A supreme leader at bay,” *The Economist*, January 7, 2010.

15. (Dec 4/6) Review/Catch-up week

12/04 -- Term Paper Due (in class)

December 11 FINAL EXAM

- In class

* The final exam is strictly administered according to the University's final exam policy. No unjustifiable exception is allowed. Please check the university website (<http://www.niu.edu/regrec/dates/finalexam.shtml>) for the final exam date and relevant policy.

Appendix A: Tips for Doing Well in this Class

1. Do the readings AND come to class. Lectures will refer to the assigned readings but they will not summarize them and they are not an adequate substitute. Likewise, lectures will cover material that is not in the readings, and that may appear on the exams.
2. Read critically. As you read, note questions that you would like to raise in lecture or section, and think critically about the author's evidence and arguments.
3. Think comparatively. Ask yourself how the particular case you are reading about compares with similar developments in other countries, regions, or periods.
4. Participate actively in discussion sections and in lecture. Take notes on lectures, and be engaged in the question and discussion periods that will be held during the final minutes of class.
5. Keep up with current events. If you do not already do so, read the international pages of at least one major national / international paper every day. Examples include The New York Times, The Chicago Tribune, The Washington Post, The Financial Times, and The Wall Street Journal. Think about how contemporary events relate to the themes and cases studied in class.
6. Know the locations of the countries and regions we cover. Geography is critically important for understanding a nation's historical development and importantly influences national security interests and many other areas of political life. If the name of a country is mentioned that you can't pinpoint on a map (a vague sense of where it is located is insufficient!), locate it on a map. Also note what its neighboring countries and regions are. Maps of the countries and regions of

the world we will cover can be found in the *Essentials of Comparative Politics* text.

7. Follow up on topics you find particularly interesting by reading beyond the assigned texts. Look for hints of where to find additional materials by looking at footnotes and references in the readings or by asking your T.A. or me for suggested additional readings.

8. Take advantage of office hours. The TA's and I are here to help if you're having trouble understanding concepts or if you are simply interested in further discussing topics covered in class (see #7 above).

Other Important Information

Academic Dishonesty

Regarding plagiarism, the NIU Undergraduate Catalog states: "Students are guilty of plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging them. Students guilty of, or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university." The above statement encompasses a paper written in whole or in part by another; a paper copied word-for-word or with only minor changes from another source; a paper copied in part from one or more sources without proper identification and acknowledgment of the sources; a paper that is merely a paraphrase of one or more sources, using ideas and/or logic without credit even though the actual words may be changed; and a paper that quotes, summarizes or paraphrases, or cuts and pastes words, phrases, or images from an Internet source without identification and the address of the web site.

Statement Concerning Students with Disabilities

Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NIU is committed to making reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Those students with disabilities that may have some impact on their coursework and for which they may require accommodations should notify the Disabilities Resource Center on the fourth floor of the Health Services Building. The Disabilities Resource Center will assist students in making appropriate accommodations with course instructors. It is important that the Disabilities Resource Center and instructors be informed of any disability-related needs during the first two weeks of the semester. The Disability Resource Center is located in the 4th floor of the Health Services Building, and can be reached at 815-753-1303 [v],

815-753-3000 [TTY] or email at drc@niu.edu.

Department of Political Science Web Site

Undergraduates are strongly encouraged to consult the Department of Political Science web site on a regular basis. This up-to-date, central source of information will assist students in contacting faculty and staff, reviewing course requirements and syllabi, exploring graduate study, research career options, tracking department events, and accessing important details related to undergraduate programs and activities. To reach the site, go to <http://polisci.niu.edu>

Undergraduate Writing Awards

The Department of Political Science recognizes, on an annual basis, outstanding undergraduate papers written in conjunction with 300-400 level political science courses or directed studies, such as independent studies or honors theses. Winners are expected to attend the Department's spring graduation ceremony where they will receive a certificate and a check for \$50.00. No more than two papers may be submitted by a student. There is no requirement as to the length of papers submitted for the award. Often the Department awards prizes for both an outstanding short paper and an outstanding long paper. The number and types of award is dependent upon the papers submitted for consideration in any given year. Authors do not have to be political science majors or have a particular class standing. Only papers written in the previous calendar year are considered for the award. However, papers completed in the current spring semester are eligible for the following year's competition even if the student has graduated. Papers can be submitted by students or faculty and must be supplied in triplicate to the undergraduate secretary. All copies must have two cover pages – one with the student's name and one without the student's name. Papers are not to be stapled or bound. Instead, please use paper clips. Papers are generally due in March and notice of call for papers and submission deadlines will be published in the department e-announcements. You may also contact the department for information at 753-1015.

Classroom Decorum

Students are to arrive at class on time. Two tardy arrivals are equivalent to one class absence. Students are to remain for the entire session unless excused by the professor beforehand or confronted with a serious personal emergency. For instance, it is not acceptable to students to walk in and out of class to answer cell phones, take casual bathroom and smoking breaks, or attend to other personal matters. Cell phones, pagers, or any electronic devices that make noise

must be *turned off* during class unless the instructor has been notified beforehand of a special circumstance (e.g., sick family member, pregnant wife, special childcare situation, etc.). No one should talk while someone else is talking; this includes comments meant for a classmate rather than the entire group. What may seem like a whisper or a harmless remark to one person can be a distraction to someone else, particularly in a small room. Overall, classroom dialogue and behavior should always be courteous, respectful of others, and consistent with the expectations set forth by the university.

Appendix B: Term Paper Guideline

Write an essay in such a way to answer the following question.

“America's liberal democracy is often considered unique. In what ways do other democracies around the world differ from it?”

In answering the question, you will have to take into account the following:

1. Focus your answer and discussion on superiorities and weaknesses of each regime that you refer to from political, economic and socio-cultural perspectives.
2. Pick and focus on specific country cases (from the selection of countries studied in class) as examples to support your argument.
3. You could draw upon and cite materials provided in the list of required readings and refer to lectures; but also are strongly encouraged to do additional reading and research to strengthen your argument and essay. You should refer to the recommended readings as well as primary sources (e.g., the Economist, New York Times).
4. Please see the assessment rubric below (Appendix C) to know what you are expected to do.

Writing/submission Guideline:

- The paper should be no more than 5-6 pages in length. **Papers which are shorter or longer than this page limit will not be accepted.**
- Hand in a hard copy to the instructor in class before the deadline. A soft copy is acceptable only under an extraordinary circumstance with prior permission from the instructor.
- Post your essay in the Safe Assign section on Blackboard before submission.
- The paper must be typewritten (12 font), double-spaced, and properly cited.
- Refer also to the reading guideline in the course syllabus.

Appendix C: Assessment Standards for Term Paper

A: The argument is clearly articulated and logically developed, using relevant evidence. The research is of high quality, cleverly ordered to support the argument with an original and creative synthesis of materials and displaying understanding of wider issues. The presentation is of high standard.

B: The argument is well proposed but the structure is not fully developed. The research is quite extensive but sources are not fully utilized which limits the ability to be creative and deal with a full range of issues. The presentation is solid but can be improved.

C: The argument is satisfactory, with some limitations, but the structure is not well thought out. The research used is just adequate, but insufficient to develop fully the argument or display much originality. The presentation is adequate but could be improved.

D: While the essay displays a basic understanding of the subject, the argument lacks coherence and logical development. The research is basic and the use of evidence does not sufficiently support the argument nor display originality or understanding of wider issues. The presentation is not of sufficient standard.

F: The presentation is well below acceptable standard. The essay is incoherent with glaring misunderstandings.