

RPOS 102: INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE & INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

***Make sure to check Blackboard for the most up-to-date version of the syllabus**

Dates of course: May 26, 2020- July 3, 2020

Instructor: Charmaine N. Willis

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Email hours: You will generally receive a reply from me within a few hours, but any e-mail correspondence after 7 pm may not receive a response until the next day.



Why do some countries like North Korea pursue nuclear weapons while a majority do not? Why do some countries take more aggressive efforts to try to deter climate change than others? What accounts for the rise in nationalism in many nation-states? What explains the rise of violent transnational extremist groups such as the Islamic State? In this course, we will explore the theories and concepts through which political scientists try to answer these contemporary questions. In doing so, we will examine both classical and contemporary works in the subfields of comparative politics and international relations. At the conclusion of the course, students will not only have an understanding of major theories and concepts in these political science subfields but will also be to apply them to some of the most pressing political issues of our time. Gen. Ed: Social Sciences, Challenges for the 21st Century. **Gen. Ed: International Perspectives.**

Learning Objectives

This course endeavors not only to help students learn about comparative politics and international relations, but also skills critical to success in college. To that end, the learning objectives for this course include:

- **Grasp key concepts and theories in the fields of comparative politics and international relations.**
- **Apply these key concepts and theories to real world cases.**
- **Distill key ideas from academic articles and discuss them with others.**

Course Policies

- Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**
 Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation in this class, please notify the Director of the Disability Resource Center (Campus Center 137, 442-5490). That office will provide me with verification of your disability and will recommend appropriate accommodations. Please also contact me as soon as possible so that we can make arrangements that facilitate your success in this course. More information can be found here: <https://www.albany.edu/disability/current.shtml>.
- Academic Integrity:**
 The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. Plagiarism is the use of someone else's work, words, or ideas as if they were your own without giving the original author credit by citing him or her. If you have any questions about plagiarism, please contact me before submitting graded assignments. See http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html for UAlbany specific guidelines.
- Discussion Etiquette:** Some of the topics that we will cover are controversial. Learning from and attempting to understand other opinions is a crucial part of the learning experience. I expect there to be varying opinions and great debates. However, I also expect civility and respectfulness in our discussions. This means no personal attacks or obscene language. I reserve the right to remove any questionable or offensive material from public areas of this course.
- Late Penalties and Missed Assignments:** As this class is only 6 weeks-long and will go quickly, it is imperative that you do not fall behind on assignments. Assignments should be submitted by 11:59 pm the day that they are due via Blackboard. After that, 10% will be deducted from the maximum possible score for each day that the assignment is late (including weekends). Missed assignments will receive '0' points. **Any assignment more than 5 days late without a documented reason will receive an automatic 0.**

In the case of a catastrophic event or medical issue that may prevent you from submitting an assignment on time, please see the Office of the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education http://bit.ly/UAlbany_AbsenceNote and the University's Medical Excuse Policy https://www.albany.edu/health_center/medicalexcuse.shtml.

- Questions?** There is a section on Blackboard in the Discussion Board entitled "Course-related Questions"; please feel free to ask anything related to the course here, especially as your classmates may have similar questions. Additionally, please do not hesitate to contact me at cwillis@albany.edu with any questions or concerns.

Course materials, grading, course structure, and assignments (the fun stuff)

- Texts:** All texts for this course can be found on Blackboard or linked in the syllabus.
- Recommended:** I recommend that you follow a major news source for international events such as Al-Jazeera, New York Times, or Washington Post,

- **Grading:** the course will be graded on a 1000-point scale. Each assignment and portion of the course is worth a set number of points and will be graded accordingly. At the end of the class your final grade will be based on your total number of points earned throughout the class.
 - **Rubric:**
 - 930- 1000 points: A
 - 900- 920 points: A-
 - 870- 890 points: B+
 - 830- 860 points: B
 - 800- 820 points: B-
 - 770- 790 points: C+
 - 730- 760 points: C
 - 700- 720 points: C-
 - 670- 690 points: D+
 - 630- 660 points: D
 - 600- 620 points: D-
 - 590 points and below: E
- **Structure:** the course will be divided into 12 modules, 2 modules for each week of the course.
 - Each module consists of 2-3 readings (all on Blackboard) and Blackboard discussion. I will post videos to briefly introduce the topic(s) for the week and post a recap discussion at the end of each module to summarize the key points. The course is essentially split into two halves: the first 3 weeks will focus on comparative politics and the last 3 weeks will focus on international relations.
- **Assignments:** this course will be reading and writing intensive. You are expected to complete all the reading assignments by their due dates and be prepared to discuss those readings online with your classmates and with me. As this is a 6-week version of a semester-long class, the amount of reading will be roughly two times the amount per week of a normal full semester class.

The primary course learning activities will be reading the required readings for each module, actively participating in discussions about those readings, writing an op-ed, and writing two short papers about particular real-world events:

- **Introduction (50 points for completion):** in Module 1, I ask everyone to give us an introduction about themselves so that we can get to know each other a little before diving into the study of comparative politics and international relations. More information about this assignment will be provided on Blackboard under Module 1. Due by **May 30 at 11:59 pm.**
- **Completion of plagiarism tutorial (50 points for completion):** as part of Module 1, you will complete the UAlbany plagiarism tutorial, found [here](#). We will be completing several small writing assignments and it is important to understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. Please send the completion report to me, cwillis@albany.edu. **If you have completed this assignment for another course in the previous year, you can email me**

confirmation of completion in lieu of the tutorial. Due by the end of the Module 1, **May 30 at 11:59 pm.**

- **Module 1 quiz (50 points):** short quiz on the syllabus, important course policies, and Module 1 readings in Module 1, due by **May 30 at 11:59 pm.**
- **Op-Ed and Pitch (100 points total; 20 points for submission of pitch, 80 points for op-ed):** an important skill in political science is making an argument with supporting evidence. To that end, you are asked to write an op-ed (“**o**pposite the **e**ditorial page”) on any topic related to comparative politics or international relations of your choosing. This assignment is broken into two parts. By the end of Week 2, you will submit a 2-3 sentence “pitch” describing the topic you will write about; you will receive 20 points for submitting the pitch by **June 6 at 11:59 pm.** The final op-ed should be 700-800 words long (about 3 pages, double spaced) and submitted by the last day of class, **July 3, by 11:59 pm.** More information about the assignment will be available the first week of the course.
- **Blackboard Participation (50 points for each module except Module 1; 550 points total):** you are expected to participate by posting on the class discussion board for **at least twice** for each module (**except for Module 1**).

For Modules 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11, your initial posts should be submitted on Blackboard by **Monday at 11:59 pm** and response posts by **Tuesday at 11:59 pm.** For Modules 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10, the initial posts are due by **Friday at 11:59 pm** and response posts by **Saturday at 11:59 pm.** For **Module 12, initial posts should be made by July 2 at 11:59 pm** and responses by **July 3 at 11:59 pm.** This is to give yourselves time to read through others’ posts before responding.

At the beginning of each module, I will post a question about the topic and the readings in the discussion thread for that module. The purpose of the discussion board is for us to begin a conversation about the topics discussed in the readings. **I am more interested in thoughtful responses that demonstrate that you’ve done the reading than “correct” answers to the questions I pose.** You must post an answer to this question **and** a substantive response to a classmate’s post (i.e. **not** simply “I agree”, “I disagree”, “yes”, “no”, etc.). Ways to respond to a classmate’s post may include (but are not limited to) asking a follow-up question or bringing in a real-world example to support your agreement or disagreement with their post. **The initial post is worth 30 points and should be about 250 words long. The response post is worth 20 points and should be about 150 words long. Most of the post should be your own words and ideas, but make sure to cite where you refer to the readings.**

Points will be lost in the following ways: (1) failure to participate in the discussion for a module regardless of the quality and quantity of discussion in the other module for that week; (2) making posts that violate UAlbany’s Student Code of Conduct by plagiarizing others’ ideas (including not properly citing the assigned readings) or (3) by failing to maintain the civility and decorum expected of in academic discussion as described above. Points will not be lost for making statements, comments, or critiques that the

instructor disagrees with or for disagreeing with posts or responses that the instructor has made. Rather, you are encouraged to be willing to engage in an active academic discourse with your fellow students and the instructor.

A rubric will be provided on Blackboard under Course Content> Course Documents.

- **Short papers (200 points total, 100 points each):** to conclude each section of the course, you will write a short paper (800-1,000 words or approximately 3.5-4 pages, double-spaced) that will apply the concepts and theories that we learned in the course to real-world cases. I will provide you with guiding questions for the papers and some background readings about the cases; no additional research will be necessary. The paper from the comparative politics (first) section of the course will be due by **Saturday, June 20 at 11:59 pm**; the paper from the international relations (second) section will be due by **Friday, July 3 at 11:59 pm**. The rubric, an example paper, and case-specific readings for the first paper will be available during the first week of the course; readings for the second paper will be available by June 15.

Tentative Schedule: (the **really** fun stuff)

<i>Week</i>	<i>Module and Topic</i>	<i>Read</i>	<i>Do</i>
Week 1: May 26- May 30	Module 1: Introduction to Comparative Politics May 26 - May 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hoover-Green (2013): “How to Read Political Science” • Lim (2016): “Getting into comparative politics” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Plagiarism tutorial • Module 1 quiz
	Module 2: Democracy May 27 - May 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedler (2002): “The Menu of Manipulation” • “Grassroots Elections Driving Chinese Democracy” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board posts
Week 2: May 31- June 6	Module 3: Economic Development May 31 - June 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schmidt (2018): “Latin American Dependency Theory” • A Brief Guide to Modernization Theory • Kyrylych (2013): “Problem of Uneven Economic Development of the World Economy: Essence and Causes” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board posts

	<p>Module 4: Nations and Nationalism June 3 - June 6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrington (1997): “Nation and Nationalism” • Lepore (2019): “A New Nationalism” • Martyn-Hemphill (2018): “In Alternative World Cup for Would-be Nations, Karpatalya Beats North Cyprus” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board posts • Op-ed pitch due
<p>Week 3: June 7- June 13</p>	<p>Module 5: Terrorism and Political Violence June 7 - June 9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young and Findley (2011): “Promise and Pitfalls of Terrorism Research” • Gladstone (2018): “Attacks in Canada and Belgium Reflect Fuzzy Definition of Terrorism” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board posts
	<p>Module 6: Social Movements June 10 - June 13</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gurr (2011): “Why Men Rebel Redux” • Snow et al. (2019): Mapping and Opening the Terrain (p. 1-10) • “Thousands Protest Across 3 Continents to Honor George Floyd and Support the Black Lives Matter Movement” • Suggested: Morris (1999): “A retrospective of the Civil Rights Movement” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board posts
<p>Week 4: June 14- June 20</p>	<p>Module 7: Introduction to International Relations (IR) June 14 - June 16</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ackerly and Carella (2020): “What is International Relations?” (p. 214-226) • Martin (2007) “G.W. Bush and North Korea: A Levels of Analysis View” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board posts
	<p>Module 8: Realism June 17 - June 20</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mearsheimer: “Structural Realism” • Talmadge (2019): “Are Nuclear Weapons Keeping the India-Pakistan Crisis from Escalating- Or Making it more Dangerous?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board posts • Short Paper 1 (Comparative Politics)

Week 5: June 21- June 27	Module 9: Liberalism June 21 – 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stein (2008): “Neoliberal Institutionalism” • “The History of the European Union” • “Brexit's Threat to Long-Term European Unity” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board posts
	Module 10: (Social) Constructivism June 24 - June 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jung (2019): “The Evolution of Social Constructivism in Political Science: Past to Present” • Tannenwald (1999): “The Nuclear Taboo” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board posts
Week 6: June 28 – July 3	Module 11: Feminism as an IR Theory June 28 – June 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harel-Shalev (2019): “Feminist International Relations (IR) Theory” • Enloe (2014): “Base Women” (focus on p. 2-8, 29-34, 40-44) • Hassan and O’Grady (2020): “Female World Leaders Hailed as Voices of Reason Amid the Coronavirus Chaos” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board posts
	Module 12: Marxism July 1 – July 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devetak et al. (2011): “Marxism and Critical Theory” • “The global north-south carbon divide” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board posts • Short paper 2 (International Relations) • Op-ed due