

POS 241: INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS¹

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

Dates of course: August 31, 2020- December 11, 2020

Time: T, Th 2:00-3:15 pm

Instructor: Charmaine N. Willis

Contact: charmaine.willis@maine.edu

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.

Virtual (Zoom) office hours: T-Th: 3:15-4:15 pm and by appointment



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? What is democracy, and why does it emerge in some contexts but not others? Why do some countries struggle to develop economically? In this course, we will explore the theories and concepts through which political scientists try to answer these important questions. In doing so, we will examine both classical and contemporary debates in the subfield of comparative politics as well as a variety of case studies. At the conclusion of the course, students will not only understand major theories and concepts in this political science subfield but will also be to apply them to some of the most pressing political issues of our time.

Learning Objectives

This course endeavors not only to help students learn about comparative politics 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 field of comparative politics.**
- **Apply these key concepts and theories to real world cases.**
- **Practice making an argument supported by evidence.**
- **Distill key ideas from academic articles and discuss them with others.**

¹ This course is influenced by and benefits from syllabi, materials, and suggestions from Victor Asal, Cheng Chen, Nakissa Jahanbani, Keith Preble, Joseph Roberts, Kristin Vekasi, Keon Weigold, and Meredith Weiss.

Course Policies

Disability Accommodations

If you have a disability for which you may be requesting accommodation, please contact the Office of Disabilities Services, 121 East Annex, phone 581-2319, as early as possible in the semester, and be in contact with the course instructor.

Sexual Discrimination Reporting

The University of Maine is committed to making campus a safe place for students. Because of this commitment, if you tell a teacher about an experience of sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, relationship abuse (dating violence and domestic violence), sexual misconduct or any form of gender discrimination involving members of the campus, your teacher is required to report this information to the campus Office of Sexual Assault & Violence Prevention or the Office of Equal Opportunity. If you want to talk in confidence to someone about an experience of sexual discrimination, please contact these resources:

- For confidential resources on campus: Counseling Center: 207-581-1392 or Cutler Health Center: at 207-581-4000.
- For confidential resources off campus: Rape Response Services: 1-800-310-0000 or Spruce Run: 1-800-863-9909.
- Other resources: The resources listed below can offer support but may have to report the incident to others who can help:
 - **For support services on campus:** Office of Sexual Assault & Violence Prevention: 207-581-1406; **Office of Community Standards:** 207-581-1409;
 - **University of Maine Police:** 207-581-4040 or 911. Or see the OSVP website for a complete list of services at <http://www.umaine.edu/osavp/>

Religious Holidays

The University of Maine recognizes that when students are observing significant religious holidays, some may be unable to attend classes or labs, study, take tests, or work on other assignments. If they provide adequate notice (at least one week and longer if at all possible), these students are allowed to make up course requirements as long as this effort does not create an unreasonable burden upon the instructor, department or University. At the discretion of the instructor, such coursework could be due before or after the examination or assignment. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to a student's grade for the examination, study, or course requirement on the day of religious observance. The student shall not be marked absent from the class due to observing a significant religious holiday. In the case of an internship or clinical, students should refer to the applicable policy in place by the employer or site.

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. Note that written assignments will be submitted through Turnitin, a plagiarism checker. Deviations from academic honesty will be reported to appropriate administrative personnel and disciplinary action taken.

Respect for Diversity

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups.²

Voter Registration and the 2020 Election

This semester coincides with an extremely important national election on Tuesday, November 3rd. The University of Maine is committed to empowering all eligible students to exercise their right to vote as democratic citizens. The university will offer numerous opportunities in the lead-up to the election for you to register to vote, learn how to request an absentee ballot, and get non-partisan information so that you can make informed choices at the polls.

Note that if you are living locally while attending UMaine, you are likely eligible to register to vote in the community in which you currently reside.

For information on how to register to vote, how to request an absentee ballot and more, visit <https://umaine.edu/studentlife/uvote/> or follow UMaine UVote on Facebook or @um.uvote on Instagram. If you have questions about voting, you can contact a UMaine UVote team member at um.uvote@maine.edu.

Course materials, grading, course structure, and assignments

- **Texts:**
 - O'Neil, Patrick H., Karl J. Fields, and Don Share. *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*. Norton, 2018. <https://wwnorton.com/books/9780393631302>.
 - Available at the UMaine bookstore, Amazon, Norton website
 - All other texts for this course can be found on Brightspace or linked in the syllabus
- **Recommended:** I recommend that you follow a major news source for international events such as Al-Jazeera, BBC, 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 course your final grade will be based on your total number of points earned throughout the course.

² Respect for Diversity statement from <https://www.brown.edu/sheridan/teaching-learning-resources/inclusive-teaching/statements>

- **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: F

- **Structure**³: most of the course will be conducted remotely through Brightspace and Zoom. There will be both “synchronous” (live) and “asynchronous” (on your own time) components of the course.
 - **Synchronous component:** Apart from the simulation in October and the week of Thanksgiving, each student will virtually attend the course via Zoom once per week during our scheduled class time, 2:00-3:15 pm. **Half of the class will attend class on Tuesday during our scheduled class time; the other will attend on Thursday. Students whose last names begin with the letters A-K will attend class on Tuesdays; students with last names L-Z on Thursdays. You are expected to attend class on your assigned day throughout the semester (for example, only attending class on Tuesday), with the exceptions listed above.** These meetings are required, and I will take attendance.
 - **Asynchronous component:** You will also have required course components such as pre-recorded lectures and readings that you are expected to complete before our synchronous session every week. These will all be made available to you via the Brightspace platform (besides the textbook) and are organized into weekly modules.

The course will use the following technologies extensively. Please prepare accordingly.

- **Brightspace:** All course materials (besides the textbook) and asynchronous work will be available through Brightspace. Please be sure that you are able to access Brightspace, and that all mails that I send through Brightspace are getting to an inbox that you check regularly.
 - Technical support: tel: 207.581.2506; email: help@maine.edu
 - <https://umaine.edu/it/umaine-brightspace-101-for-students/>
- **Zoom:** Our synchronous class sessions will be held via Zoom. Zoom is an interface for creating real-time meetings online. Please be sure to test Zoom to be sure it is working prior to our first live session.
 - Technical support: tel: 207.581.2506; email: help@maine.edu
 - <https://umaine.edu/it/>

³ Section adapted from materials from the Office of Teaching and Learning, University of Denver.

- **Zoom Etiquette and Expectations:**⁴
 - **Sign in with your full first name and last name as listed on the class roster.** Do not use a nickname or other pseudonym when you log in as it makes it difficult to know who is in attendance. **If you currently use a different name than what is listed on the official roster, please send a private email to me (charmaine.willis@maine.edu) so this can be noted on the roster and you can use your current name on Zoom.**
 - If you do not have access to a computer or smartphone with internet access, call into class using a landline phone. This is not optimal; please try to locate an internet-enabled device to use for class.
 - **Stay focused.** Please stay engaged in class activities. Close any apps on your device that are not relevant and turn off notifications.
 - **Turn on your video when possible.** It is helpful to be able to see each other, just as in an in-person class. If you have limited internet bandwidth, no webcam, or are otherwise unable to find an environmental without a lot of visual distractions, it is ok to not use video.
 - **Keep it clean.** Don't share anything you wouldn't put up on the projector in class!

- **Attendance:** For your benefit and my own, I expect you to attend each class session. We will be regularly working together in class to practice the skills outlined in the learning objectives. Therefore, missing class will result in a missed opportunity for practice and feedback and should be avoided. However, I understand that many things can happen over the course of a semester (especially during a pandemic!) and an absence may be necessary. **If you must miss class for any reason, I ask that you notify me via email (charmaine.willis@maine.edu) as soon as possible, preferably before the class that you will miss.**



- **Assignments:** this course is reading and writing intensive. You are expected to complete all the reading assignments before your class session and be prepared to discuss those readings online

⁴ Adapted from materials from Kansas State University.

with your classmates and with me. Further information about the Ancaram simulation, short papers, and op-ed will be posted to Brightspace.

The primary course learning activities will be reading the required readings for each week, actively participating in discussions about those readings, writing an op-ed, writing four short papers about at the culmination of each unit, weekly quizzes, and a simulation:

- **Participation (100 points):** participation in class not only benefits you but myself and your classmates as well and, as such, it is very important. Our discussions benefit from your active participation, in terms of both exchanging ideas and having fun!
 - **Introduction (50 points for completion):** During Week 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. More information about this assignment will be provided on Brightspace under Week 1- Introduction. Due by **September 6 at 11:59 pm**.
 - **Quizzes on Lecture Videos (200 points total, 20 points each):** for most weeks there will be a quiz associated with the video lectures. As you will notice, there are 12 quizzes in total, **only your top ten quiz scores will count towards your quiz grade**.
 - **Short papers (400 points total, 100 points each):** to conclude each unit 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 due dates are as follows: **Unit 1 paper due October 4, Unit 2 paper due October 25, Unit 3 paper due December 6, and Unit 4 paper due December 17 (our exam day). All papers are due by 11:59 pm that day on Brightspace**. 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 other papers will be posted about a month in advance of their due date.
 - **Ancaram Simulation (100 points total: 50 points for position paper, 50 points for participation):** in this course, you will participate in a class-wide simulation that relates to our units on identity and collective action. The class will be split up into four teams and assigned specific roles. Each person is responsible for writing two short papers at the beginning and end of the simulation (the position and debriefing papers) as well as actively participating in the simulation. **As this will involve the entire class, all of us will meet virtually Tuesday and Thursday during the weeks of October 12 and 19.**
 - **Op-Ed and Pitch (150 points total: 50 points for submission of pitch, 100 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 (“**opposite the editorial page**”) on any topic related to comparative politics of your choosing. This assignment is broken into two parts. By the end of Week 9, you will submit a 2-3 sentence “pitch” describing the topic you will write about; you will receive 50 points for submitting the pitch by **November 1 at 11:59 pm**. The final op-ed should be 700-800 words long (about 3 pages, double spaced) and submitted **December 18 by 11:59 pm**.
- **Grade Appeals:** Students who feel that their assignments have been graded incorrectly should follow a three-step procedure. First, the student carefully reads the assignment and identifies the

precise problem(s) with the grading. Second, the student sends a written appeal via email explaining why their answer was appropriate to the instructor; you must wait **24 hours** after receiving your grade to submit an appeal. Third, the instructor will regrade the assignment, taking the appeal into account. Note that the instructor may assign a higher or lower grade following such an appeal.

- **Questions?** There is a thread in the Activity Feed on Brightspace about 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 charmaine.willis@maine.edu with any questions or concerns.

Course Schedule

*Textbook abbreviated as C&C

<i>Week</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Readings and Assignments</i>
Week 1- August 31		Course Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions in Brightspace Due Sunday, September 6
Week 2- September 7		What is Comparative Politics?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 1 • C&C Chapter 1 • Hoover Green (2013): How to Read Political Science
Week 3- September 14	Unit 1: Identity	States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 2 • C&C Chapter 2 • Tilly (1985): War Making and State Making as Organized Crime
Week 4- September 21		National and ethnic identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 3 • C&C Chapter 3 • Barrington (1997): "Nation" and "Nationalism" • Lepore (2019): A New Americanism
Week 5- September 28	Unit 2: Collective Action	Political Violence Guest Lecturer: Dr. Nakissa P. Jahanbani, USMA at West Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 4 • C&C Chapter 5 • Jahanbani (2020): Beyond Soleimani • Unit 1 Short Paper Due Sunday, October 4

Week 6- October 5		Social Movements and Protest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 5 • Snow et al. (2019): Mapping and Opening the Terrain (p. 1-10) • Morris (1999): A retrospective of the Civil Rights Movement • Turner (2020): Beware the "Outside Agitator" Dog Whistle
Week 7- October 12		Simulation (T & Th)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Position Papers Due Tuesday in Class
Week 8- October 19		Simulation (T & Th)	
Week 9- October 26	Unit 3: Regime Type	Democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 6 • C&C Chapter 6 • Schedler (2002): The Menu of Manipulation • Unit 2 Short Paper Due Sunday, November 1 • Op-Ed Pitch Due Sunday, November 1
Week 10- November 2		Consolidated Democracies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 7 • C&C Chapter 7 • C&C: Read one of the following cases: UK, France, Germany, Japan
Week 11- November 9		Communism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 8 • C&C Chapter 9 • C&C: China
Week 12- November 16		(Other) Non-Democracies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 9 • C&C Chapter 8 • C&C: Read one of the following cases: Russia, Iran
Week 13- November 23		Unit 4: Economic Development	Comparative Political Economy
*Note: both sections of the course will meet on Tuesday, November 24			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Thanksgiving Break starts November 25</i> 			
<p>Week 14- November 30</p>		<p>Economic Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 11 • C&C Chapter 10 • C&C: Read one of the following cases: India, Mexico, Brazil, South Africa, Nigeria • Unit 3 Short Paper Due Sunday, December 6
<p>Week 15- December 7</p>		<p>Globalization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 12 • C&C Chapter 11 • What is Globalization?
<p>Unit 4 Short Paper Due Thursday, December 17</p>			
<p>Final Op-ed Due Friday, December 18</p>			