

Comparative Politics

PSC 203-002 | Spring 2019 | 3 Credit Hours

Lecture

Ms. Erin Little

Contact Information

UA Campus Directory:

- Ms. Erin Little (<https://www.ua.edu/directory/?i=eklittle#listing>)

Office Hours: ten Hour 322

1-2pm Monday and Friday, or by appointment

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Prerequisites

UA Course Catalog Prerequisites:

No prereqs found

Course Description

Course Description and Credit Hours

Theoretical approaches to the comparative study of national political systems.

The overarching question we seek to answer in this course is, "What explains variation in state development?" We discuss the approach to political inquiry that defines comparative politics as a subfield of political science, and emphasize the ways in which interests, identities, and institutions develop states. The course is taught through the lenses of 22 in-depth country case studies in 6 global regions, through an active simulation, and through self-guided learning.

The course is divided by region, beginning with Europe and across East and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, and finally North America. Four countries for each region (and 2 for North America) have been selected to provide meaningful variance and depth to our understanding of state development and regional interdependence. Students will have the opportunity to expand their understanding of a particular region by selecting a country to research and compare, one which we have not discussed in class for their essay assignment. A semester-long simulation, taking place in a post-conflict territory, which give students the experience see how interests, identities, and institutions shape state development, a question we ask again at the end of the semester.

Required Texts

Required Texts from UA Supply Store:

- KOPSTEIN / COMPARATIVE POLITICS (**Required**)

Comparative Politics: Interests, Identities, And Institutions In A Changing Global Order 4th Edition (Kopstein)

Electronic resources and readings will be provided when necessary.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Students gain a global understanding of sub-national political dynamics
- Students learn how interests, identities, and institutions frame state development
- Students answer critical questions concerning current global issues
- Students explain variation in state development across countries and regions
- Students interact with state development through a semester-long post-conflict simulation

Other Course Materials

Electronic resources will be provided throughout the semester.

Outline of Topics

Week 1 (*Jan 9, 11*): Introduction, "What is Comparative Politics?" (Read Chs 1 & 2)

Part I: EUROPE

Week 2 (*Jan 14, 16, 18*): Britain and France (Read Chs 3 & 4)

- Friday, January 18th: NO CLASS (Out of town)

Week 3 (*Jan 21, 23, 25*): Germany and Russia (Read Chs 5 & 7)

- Monday, January 21st: NO CLASS (MLK, Jr. Day)

Part II: AFRICA

Week 4 (*Jan 28, 30, Feb 1*): South Africa and Nigeria (Read Chs. 12 & 14)

Week 5 (*Feb 4, 6, 8*): Nigeria and Tunisia (Read Ch 14, tba)

Week 6 (*Feb 11, 13, 15*): Tunisia and North/South Sudan (tba)

- Friday, February 15th will be an optional review day for Midterm Exam #1

Part III: MIDDLE EAST

Week 7 (*Feb 18, 20, 22*): Israel and Iran (Read Ch 11, tba)

- Monday, February 18th is Midterm #1

Week 8 (*Feb 25, 27, Mar 1*): Iran and Saudi Arabia (Read Ch 11, tba)

Week 9 (*Mar 3, 6, 8*): Saudi Arabia and Syria (tba)

Part IV: EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

Week 10 (*Mar 11, 13, 15*): NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)

Week 11 (*Mar 18, 20, 22*): Japan and China (Read Chs 6 & 8)

Week 12 (*Mar 25, 27, 29*): Vietnam and India (Read Ch. 10, tba)

Part V: LATIN AMERICA

Week 13 (*Apr 1, 3, 5*): Brazil and Chile (tba)

- Monday, April 1st is Midterm Exam #2
- Friday April 5th: *Salvador Allende* (documentary)

Week 14 (*Apr 8, 10, 12*): Chile and Venezuela (tba)

Week 15 (*Apr 15, 17, 19*): Venezuela and Guatemala (tba)

- Essay is due Friday, April 19th by 11:49pm

Part VI: NORTH AMERICA

Week 16 (*Apr 22, 24, 26*): "What is State Development?" (Mexico and the U.S.) (tba)

FINAL EXAM: Friday, May 3rd from 11:30am-2pm

Exams and Assignments

There will be three exams in this course: **two** cumulative midterms (15% each) and **one** non-cumulative final (20%). These exams will be multiple choice and cover notable topics from the book and lectures. Exam dates are listed in the course outline.

There are two graded assignments: a **simulation (25%)** and an **essay (20%)**. The **simulation** will run throughout the semester, predominantly on Fridays. Details will be provided the first couple of weeks of class. The environment will be a post-conflict territory in which the students will be responsible for developing a new state. Students will be assigned group identities with a set of objectives to meet throughout the semester. Grades will depend on whether students achieve those objectives, through their inclusion in a state constitution, to be written by the end of the semester. Possible actions are open-ended, to include negotiations, insurgency, and declaring independence.

The essay will require students to research a country of their choice *not* discussed in class, focusing on how interests, identities, and institutions help answer state development. They will compare this country to one of the countries we *did* discuss in class. This essay will be due **Friday, April 19th**, and a detailed rubric will be provided in advance.

Grading Policy

Class attendance and participation is vital to this course. Material discussed in class will appear on both the midterm exam and the final, regardless of whether it appears in the assigned readings.

Participating in class by asking questions, making thoughtful comments, and adding new information is important for everyone's continuing education. Discussions are intended for the mutual benefit of all students; disrespectfulness will not be tolerated. Removal from the classroom for any reason will be treated as an absence. Students are expected to come to class prepared to answer questions, make comments and enter into the discussions.

The grading policy for this course is outlined below:

10% - Attendance and participation

15% - Assignment #1: Essay

25% - Assignment #2: Simulation activity

15% - Midterm Exam #1

15% - Midterm Exam #2

20% - Final Exam

The University of Alabama grading scheme will be followed: 99-100 = A+, 92-98 = A; 90-91 = A-; 88-89 = B+; 82-87 = B; 80-81 = B-; 78-79 = C+; 72-77 = C; 70-71 = C-; 68-69 = D+; 62-67 = D; 60-61 = D-; less than 60 = F

Policy on Missed Exams and Coursework

Students who miss exams or coursework due to observance of religious practice, documented (by a doctor or health clinic/hospital) sickness, or death of a relative or close friend should contact me by email or during my office hours to schedule a make-up. I reserve the right to reject the option of a make-up for missed exams and coursework due to any reason not listed above

Attendance Policy

Attendance will be taken at the start of each class. Absences will only be excused for the following, discussed with me in advance: observance of a religious practice, documented (by a doctor or health

clinic/hospital) sickness, or death of a relative or close friend. More than three cumulative absences without an above listed excuse will affect students' attendance and participation grades. Three unexcused absences are permitted without penalty. However, the fast-paced nature of this course and the use of supplemental materials in class, which will also appear on exams, will make it more difficult for students to do well in this course without being present.

Notification of Changes

The instructor will make every effort to follow the guidelines of this syllabus as listed; however, the instructor reserves the right to amend this document as the need arises. In such instances, the instructor will notify students in class and/or via email and will endeavor to provide reasonable time for students to adjust to any changes.

Statement on Academic Misconduct

Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the official Code of Academic Conduct (<http://catalog.ua.edu/undergraduate/about/academic-regulations/student-expectations/code-academic-conduct/>) provided in the Online Catalog.

Statement On Disability Accommodations

Contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) (<http://catalog.ua.edu/undergraduate/about/support-programs/disability-services/>) as detailed in the Online Catalog.

Severe Weather Protocol

Please see the latest Severe Weather Guidelines (<http://catalog.ua.edu/undergraduate/about/support-programs/severe-weather-guidelines/>) in the Online Catalog.

Pregnant Student Accommodations

Title IX protects against discrimination related to pregnancy or parental status. If you are pregnant and will need accommodations for this class, please review the University's FAQs on the UAct website (<https://www.ua.edu/campuslife/uact/information/pregnancy>).

Religious Observances

Under the Guidelines for Religious Holiday Observances, students should notify the instructor in writing or via email during the first two weeks of the semester of their intention to be absent from class for religious observance. The instructor will work to provide reasonable opportunity to complete academic responsibilities as long as that does not interfere with the academic integrity of the course. See full guidelines at Religious Holiday Observances Guidelines (http://provost.ua.edu/uploads/3/9/7/6/39760652/0aa_guidelines_for_religious_holiday_observance.pdf).

UAct Statement

The UAct website (<https://www.ua.edu/campuslife/uact/>) provides an overview of The University's expectations regarding respect and civility.