

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN OSHKOSH
Department of Political Science
84-101-002 – Introduction to Comparative Politics – **EXPLORE 3 cr.**

Fall 2017: T-TR | 11:30 – 1:00 in Sage 1232

*My office hours are on
Wednesdays 11:30-1:30pm and Thursdays
from 1:00-2:00pm.*

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Politics is the competition for public power, or the power to make decisions for the political community; and Comparative Politics is the study of this competition for power in countries other than our own. We learn a lot about our own country by examining nations, cultures, and societies beyond the United States. How do countries emerge and endure as political communities? Is public power best exercised by a few, or distributed among many? What is the role of religion and cultural diversity in politics? How do government choices produce more or less equitable societies? Why have some countries developed economically or politically more quickly than others? What is the relationship between local, national, and global politics? What explains, contains, or encourages political violence? How do we build and support democracy in diverse and sometimes divided cultural contexts? Over the course of the semester we will examine different theoretical answers to these questions and use country cases to help us evaluate those answers.

My goals for you this semester are that you stretch your academic abilities and gain knowledge and appreciation of cultural and political diversity in our complex and inter-connected world.

EXPLORE COURSES AND YOUR LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION

Introduction to Comparative Politics is an **EXPLORE** course in the University Studies Program (USP) curriculum. One of the goals of the USP is to provide you with a broad understanding of the human experience through an exploration of different disciplines. Major academic divisions like **social science**, and their disciplines, like **political science**, present us with alternative approaches or “ways of knowing” about nature, culture and society. Introduction to Comparative Politics is in the **society category**; this means we want you to start thinking like a “social scientist” and using some of the tools of political science to confront the kinds of fundamental questions posed in the course description above. PS101 is one of the gateway courses to advanced study in Political Science (see the end of the syllabus for more course recommendations.)

This course also satisfies your **USP Global Citizenship Requirement**. *Global Citizenship* is the knowledge of nations, cultures, or societies beyond the U.S.; the recognition of how interaction, interdependence, and inequity among diverse geographical, social, political, or economic systems have shaped historical and contemporary global challenges and opportunities; and the skills to engage with the responsibilities of informed citizenship in a complex, interdependent, and changing world.

Our exploration of the domestic politics of other countries and our exploration of disciplinary “ways of knowing,” including the use of social science methods, are all part of what it means to be **liberally educated**. A liberally educated person is prepared to deal with *complexity*,

diversity, and change. Such individuals possess broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g. science, culture, and society) as well as in-depth knowledge of a specific area of interest. *A liberal education helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, as well as strong and transferable intellectual and practical skills such as communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings* (adapted from AAC&U).

Understanding cultural differences and being able to competently navigate a culturally rich, diverse, and complex world is an essential learning outcome (a core goal) of your liberal education at UWO and an indispensable life skill. ***Intercultural knowledge and competence*** is the understanding of one's own culture as well as cultures beyond one's own; the recognition of the cultural values and history, language, traditions, arts, and social institutions of a group of people; the ability to negotiate and bridge cultural differences in ways that allow for broader perspectives to emerge; and the skill to investigate a wide range of world views, beliefs, practices, and values.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Define and apply key concepts in comparative politics.
- Explain and evaluate the importance of specific historical and global events in the context of the political and economic development of the countries studied.
- Compare and contrast the political systems of the countries explored in the course, paying particular attention to historical, political, economic, geographical, and moral aspects of governance in each country.
- Investigate how differences in world views, beliefs, practices, and values affect the fundamental goals of politics in diverse contexts.
- Understand how different government types respond to political, economic, resource, global and social challenges.
- Explain how different electoral systems impact representation in democracies.
- Use the 'comparative method' and your knowledge of politics in diverse countries to analyze contemporary political problems and issues.

ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING

Assignments: There are multiple assignments and activities associated with this course. Some of these are individual assignment and others will be completed in class either individually or collaboratively. A final cumulative comparative project is due at the end of the semester (we will discuss this in class).

Chapter Quizzes and Exams: You have chapter reading quizzes and a chapter test on every chapter in REVEL. These are taken and graded in REVEL. You will have a short cumulative final exam at the end of the semester.

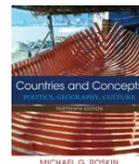
COURSE POLICIES

Readings

Your text is available at the bookstore; it is an e-book with REVEL – *you are buying an access code to the REVEL version of the text.* I chose this format to significantly reduce your textbook costs. If you would like a loose leaf paper copy it is available for purchase separately from the publisher. Directions for accessing your text are on D2L. You will need to have access to a computer or other connected device (tablet, iPad, phone) to complete your readings and

assignments. Computer labs are available across campus and you may check out a laptop or iPad for use at the library as needed.

Text: *Countries and Concepts: Politics, Geography, Culture.* Michael G. Roskin. Published by Pearson, 13th edition.



Supplementary readings and activities are provided within REVEL or on D2L depending on the assignment. **All readings are required.** I encourage you to regularly follow current events through the news feeds available through our course D2L site, the library, and the World Politics News Review blog – the blog is linked to your text in REVEL and provides commentary on current events using the concepts covered in this course.

Study Expectations: It is usually expected that students will spend about 2 hours of study time outside of class for each hour we spend together inside of class – that’s 3 hours a week of class time, and about 6 hours a week on preparing for class. Some students will need more study time, and some less.

Grading: Final Grades will be calculated using UWO’s 93/90/87 grading scale as follows:

Country Mind / Concept Maps	20% of final grade
Current Event Assignments (D2L)	10% of final grade
Activities (in-class)	10% of final grade
REVEL Overall Score (REVEL)	20% of final grade
Exams (1-4)	40% of final grade

You may check your points on REVEL and other grades on D2L at any time. Please let me know right away if there is an issue with a posted grade. If you have grading questions, please come see me. You may challenge a grade—this request must be typed, based on clear reasoning related to the material, and submitted within a week of receiving your graded work.

Tips for doing well in this class:

- **Do your reading before** the class meeting for which it is assigned and be prepared to discuss the material and ask questions
- **Come to class** – really! We will do a lot of work together in-class. Students with poor attendance tend to do poorly. I do keep track of your attendance; but it is not part of your grade.
- **Bring your readings and notes to class** with you so that you can participate fully in these in-class activities and assignments. You may bring a tablet or laptop to access your readings and course materials during group work.
- **Take notes on your reading**, keep a list of key terms and definitions (particularly from the textbook), and write down questions you may have while reading. I highly recommend taking hand written notes.
- **Observe common sense classroom etiquette.** Treat others with respect, and be respectful of, and open to, differing opinions and attitudes.
- **Come see me in office hours** and/or communicate with me about issues, difficulties, absences etc. as they come up. If you are struggling or are not doing as well as you would like to be doing, come talk to me; we can discuss strategies to improve and what further assistance you might need.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty: “Academic Honesty is fundamental to the University, and academic misconduct is taken very seriously. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, *for the appropriate citation of sources*, and for respect of others’ academic endeavors” (UWS, 14.01, emphasis added).

- Plagiarism is using someone else’s ideas, words, theories, evidence, findings, argument, etc. and passing them off as your own by not properly attributing or acknowledging the original source of those ideas.
- Students may inadvertently plagiarize when they fail to provide page numbers for quotations in a paper, or when they paraphrase or summarize the work of others without acknowledging the source in the text of their paper.
- Plagiarism in its many forms is wrong, unethical and dishonest. At minimum plagiarism in this course will result in a failing grade on the specific assignment and may result in other disciplinary action.
- *If you are unsure whether or not what you have written constitutes plagiarism (in this class, or in another class you are taking), or you do not understand how to cite the work of others, don’t hesitate to ask me!*

Excused absences, make-ups and late work: My goal is for you to learn the material, stretch your academic abilities, and gain an appreciation of cultural and political diversity. If you need to miss class, communicate with me so we can work to make sure you don’t fall behind. Making up an in-class assignment requires *an excused absence*. REVEL assignments are fully accessible a week in advance and due prior to class on the due date – they are graded by the publisher at the time they are submitted. Don’t fall behind on these!

Early Alert: In the fifth week of class, IF your grade in the course is low, you will receive an email from the Registrar’s Office letting you know. Pay attention to this email, it has lots of information about support services. You should seek out additional help (from me or others) if you are getting below a C and/or if you are not doing as well as you would like to be doing. We can discuss strategies to improve and what further assistance you might need.

Campus Resources: You know from Quest I that there are many resources on campus dedicated to your academic and personal success. **CLICK FOR A FULL LIST OF RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO YOU ON CAMPUS.**

Note to Political Science Majors: Political Science majors should take Political Methodology (245) in either their sophomore or first semester of their junior year. PS245 is a prerequisite for the senior capstone, Political Analysis (401), and cannot be taken concurrently.

COURSE SCHEDULE BY TOPIC/WEEK/DAY*

PART I INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS (CHAPTER 1)

WELCOME: SEPT. 5 – SEPT. 8

Introduction; how does Comparative Politics work?

- 1.1: The Paralysis Problem

WEEK 1: SEPT. 11 – SEPT. 15

T – What is the difference between *nation* and *state*? How do states form? What do states do (and not do)? What impact does a country's past have on its present politics?

- 1.2: Nations and States
- 1.3: Impact of the Past
- *Problem: State Failure*

TH – How do democracies *govern*? How do democracies conduct *elections*? How and why do these rules matter for democratic politics?

- 1.4: Key Institutions
- *Problem: What does democracy mean?*

WEEK 2: SEPT. 18 – SEPT. 22

T – How do social divisions influence political *culture* and patterns of political *interaction*?

- 1.5: Political Culture
- 1.6: Patterns of Interaction

TH – What are political *quarrels*? Why is economics important as a political quarrel? Does the size of government matter?

- 1.7: What They Quarrel About
- Read on D2L: Alesina, et al., “Why Doesn't the U.S. Have a European-Style Welfare State?”

➤ **Test #1**

PART II: EUROPEAN DEMOCRACIES: UNITED KINGDOM, GERMANY, AND FRANCE

UNITED KINGDOM (CHAPTER 2)

WEEK 3: SEPT. 25 – SEPT. 29

T – Why is the UK important to study? What impact does the history have on current UK politics? How does Britain's parliamentary system of government work?

- 2.1: Impact of the Past
- 2.2: Key Institutions

TH – How does the electoral system—single-member districts with plurality—influence their two-plus party system.

WEEK 4: OCT. 2 – OCT. 6

T – How does class affect politics? How does question time hold government accountable?

- 2.3: British Political Culture
- 2.4: Patterns of Interaction

TH – Brexit: The UK and the EU

- 2.5: What Britons Quarrel About
- *Problem: Why Brexit?*

GERMANY (CHAPTER 4)

WEEK 5: OCT. 9 – OCT. 13

T – How has Germany managed to become a stable democracy? Why is Germany called a “chancellor democracy”?

- 4.1: Impact of the Past - Germany
- 4.2: The Key Institutions

TH – How does the German electoral system differ from that in Britain? How do we design political institutions for desirable outcomes related to democracy such as representation and effectiveness?

- Read on D2L: Allen – “Why doesn’t the US have a multiparty parliamentary democracy?”
- *Problem: “Democratic” Institutional Design.*

WEEK 6: OCT 16 – OCT. 20

T – How and why does Germany’s past linger in current politics? How does it affect political party development and the representation of political values?

- 4.3: German Political Culture
- 4.4: Patterns of Interaction

TH – Understanding Germany’s role in the Europe and the world

- 4.5: What Germans Quarrel About
- *Problem: Migration and cultural change*

➤ **Test #2**

PART III: NON DEMOCRACIES: RUSSIA AND CHINA

RUSSIA (CHAPTER 6)

WEEK 7: OCT 23 – OCT 27

T – Why is it important to study Russia? What effect has the Soviet legacy had on the development of modern-day Russia? Why is Putin so politically popular?

- 6.1: Impact of the Past – Russia
- 6.2: The Key Institutions

TH – Why is “civil society” so important for democracy? What values support democracy? Can you have democracy if these values are missing?

- 6.3: Russian Political Culture

WEEK 8: OCT 30 – NOV. 3

T – Which way Russia?

- 6.4: Patterns of Interaction

TH – Current issues in Russian Politics

- 6.5: What Russian’s Quarrel About

CHINA (CHAPTER 7)

WEEK 9: NOV. 6 – NOV. 10

T – Why is it important to study China? What is China’s “bureaucratic empire” and how does it compares with Europe’s political development.

What does the Chinese political system look like; how is it similar to and different from the Soviet model?

- 7.1: Impact of the Past
- 7.2: The Key Institutions

TH – How did the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution impact Chinese politics and economics? What is the “Chinese Model”? Do you think the Chinese political and economic systems can work long-term?

- 7.3: Chinese Political Culture

WEEK 10: NOV. 13 – NOV. 17

T – How does the Chinese Communist political system work with a partially market-oriented economy?

- 7.4: Patterns of Interaction
- Read Section

TH - Closed politics and corruption

7.5: What Chinese Quarrel

➤ **Test #3**

WEEK 11: NOV. 20 – NOV. 24 (THANKSGIVING WEEK)

Russia and China in Global Context

PART IV: DEVELOPING COUNTRY (CLASS CHOICE)

BRAZIL, MEXICO, OR NIGERIA

WEEK 12: NOV. 27 – DEC. 1

- Impact of the Past

- The Key Institutions

WEEK 13: DEC. 4 – DEC. 8

- Political Culture
- Patterns of Interaction
- Political Quarrels

WEEK 14: DEC. 11 – DEC. 15 (FINALS WEEK)

➤ **Comparative Conclusions, Projects, and Exam #4**

*Course schedule is subject to revision – any changes to the schedule are announced in class and posted on D2L news.



Global Citizenship courses set you on a path to distinguishing yourself as a UWO Global Scholar. To find out more visit the [Global Scholar Website](#).

If you liked this course, you might also enjoy the following courses for which this one is recommended (check the [Political Science Department website](#) for course schedules):

84:301	European Union Politics
84:303	Women and Politics
84:309	West European Politics
84:311	East Asian Politics
84:323	Comparative Constitutional Law
84:326	Politics of Development
84:328	Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism
84:336	Russian Politics
84:379	Latin American Politics
84:383	Latin America in International Relations