CPO 3103
Comparative Politics
Spring 2016

Instructor	Dr. Jonathan Knuckey
Office	Phillips Hall 302L
Office hours	Wednesday & Thursday, 9.30am-11.30am
Email	Use Inbox, which is the global communication function in Webcourses. I will normally respond to all messages within 24 hours, Monday through Friday.

Course Syllabus

"Although I very rarely spoke of France in my book, I did not write one page of it without having her, so to speak, before my eyes….Without comparisons to make, the mind does not know how to proceed."

– Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*.

"Winds of the World give answer! They are whimpering to and fro. And what should they know of England who only England know?"

– Rudyard Kipling, *The English Flag.*

Course Overview

Welcome to Comparative Politics!

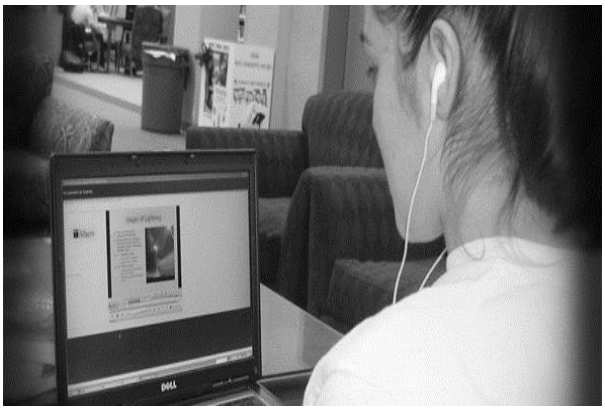
This course is an introduction to the study of comparative politics and is intended to help students compare and contrast the wide variety of political systems, institutions and behavior around the world. Comparative politics is a subfield of political science that can help us make arguments about cause and effect by drawing evidence from across nations and over time that enable us to them make generalizations about political phenomena. The course will analyze the major theoretical approaches and debates to the study of comparative politics. It will also equip students to analyze and interpret data. Therefore, by taking this course you will not only become more knowledgeable about comparative politics but you will become more adept at being a political scientist. Specifically, this course will help you develop skills that are essential for being a good political scientist and citizen:

- The ability to read actively and critically;
- The ability to think logically, analytically and independently;
- The ability to analyze and interpret information;
- The ability to communicate clearly and effectively;
- The ability to become a *producer* -- not just a consumer -- of knowledge in political science.

A particular feature of this class is that you will not just be learning about comparative politics, you will be *doing* comparative politics research in a hands-on way yourself. This is accomplished through MicroCase, the data analysis software that comes with one the textbooks for this class (see below for details). This program will allow you to explore the real world of comparative politics, using the same data and analytical tools used by many of your professors in their research. I should note that MicroCase is exceptionally user-friendly, and requires no prior data analytical or statistical background. Very quickly *you* will be exploring data from over 170 countries and dozens of political issues around the world -- not just reading about what other researchers have found.

I look forward to the class and hope you find it enjoyable and informative. I look forward to learning a lot from you!

Requirements for a Web-Based Class



This is a completely web-based class, and, consequently, requires a different approach in terms of requirements than a regular class. Most obviously, we will not be meeting as a class where you are listening to lectures two or three times a week. However, you should realize that a web-based class does not mean that you will be doing less work. Indeed, as those of you who have taken web-based classes before will attest, a completely on-line class will require that you take a much more active role in your education as compared to a regular face-to-face class. Generally I have found that students who do well in a web-based class are self-motivated and have usually received good grades (B or higher) in regular face-to-face classes.

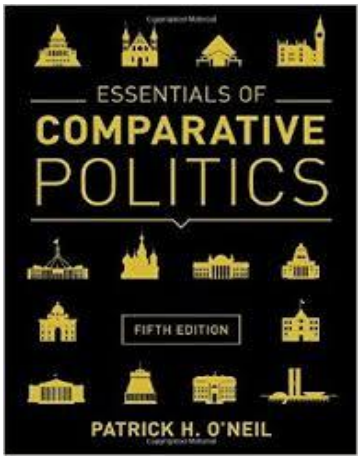
My general rule of thumb for any undergraduate college-level course is that you should devote 2 to 3 hours of study per course credit hour per week. As this is a three credit hour class you should plan on devoting 6 to 9 hours per week to this class. This involves reading, taking notes and taking quizzes and other assignments, as well as contributing to group discussions.

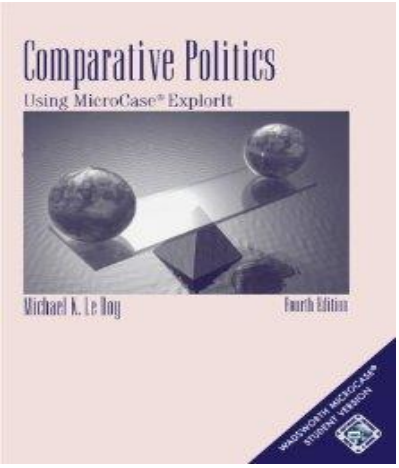
I know you have other commitments—other classes, jobs and life in general—and that you will not *always* be able to devote this time every week. But managing your time is essential to doing well in any class, especially a web-based class. You will also find that much of the material in this class is about applying the material learned, rather than memorizing or looking things up. Thus, to do well in the class you need to make an investment in it throughout the semester—not just the night an assignment is due.

Textbooks

We will use two textbooks for this course:

- Patrick O'Neil, *Essentials of Comparative Politics* (5th edition)
- Michael LeRoy, *Comparative Politics Using MicroCase ExporIT* (4th edition)





Make sure you buy the correct editions of the book, as shown above. Older editions of the textbooks will be no good.

The LeRoy textbook comes with an access code that you will use to download MicroCase, a data analysis program.

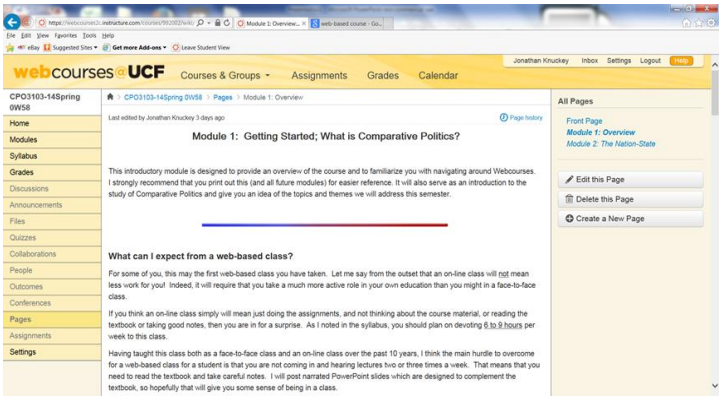
Note: The MicroCase program will run on Windows only. If you are a Mac user you will need to be able to run Windows applications. Yes, I know this is not optimal and have raised the issue with the publisher, but to no avail! There are three alternatives to get around this:

(1) Boot Camp is one of the best programs for running PC applications on a Mac, and comes installed in all new Macs (although you would still need to get the Windows installation disk).

(2) Another option is **Wineskin Winery** which is an open source porting utility to convert Windows programs to Mac OS X.

(3)The Comparative Politics MicroCase program has also been installed in the Political Science Computer Lab (Phillips Hall). If you use the program here, please make sure you are using the version for **Comparative Politics** (*Note: There is also another version of MicroCase used for Scope & Methods courses installed. Make sure you use the Comparative Politics version*).

Weekly Modules



Requirements for each week of class will be detailed in modules that are accessed in Webcourses. I strongly recommend printing out the requirements for each module and making sure you note due dates for assignments.

I do not release all the modules at once in order to provide as much feedback as possible on quizzes and assignments. If every module was released at once some students would invariably rush through several in a week, giving little time to provide feedback and hence facilitate understanding of the material. I believe this approach best captures the pace of a regular course.

Each module will provide an overview to each specific topic, direct you to the required reading, and outline specific tasks, quizzes, assignments and discussion topics. These activities are designed to make sure that you have thought about the material covered in the module, and to provide practical applications of material you will have read in the textbook As well as including assignment instructions, the module overview will often contain some suggestions and tips for the assignments.

Module assignment due dates: Due dates can be found in each module. Modules will usually have multiple due dates, so it's a good idea to note these at the beginning of each week.

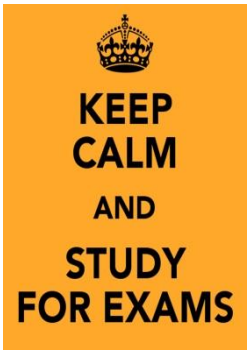
The time that any assignment, quiz discussion post or exam should be submitted on a particular day will always be 5.00pm.

There will be three general types of assignments for this course during the semester:

- Quizzes
- Written assignments
- MicroCase Worksheets

Assignment details will be given in each Module

Exam

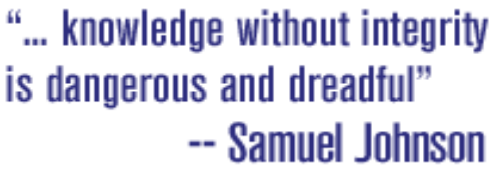


There will be an exam given during finals week. It will involve a series of questions similar to those from the MicroCase worksheets, i.e., where you analyze and interpret data on a number questions relating to topics in Comparative Politics.

A few weeks prior to the exam I will make some sample exam questions available in Webcourses to give you an idea of what might come up. The exam will *not* test anything from the *Essentials of Comparative Politics* textbook, given that material will have been covered in quizzes during the semester.

The exam will be taken in Webcourses. You can take the exam on any day between **Friday April 29th and Monday, May 2nd (5.00pm).** Once you start you will need to complete it within the time limit of three hours.

Academic Honesty



UCF faculty supports the UCF creed. Integrity – practicing and defending academic and personal honesty – is the first tenet of the UCF Creed. This is in part a reflection of the second tenet, Scholarship: "I will cherish and honor learning as a fundamental purpose of membership in the UCF community." Course assignments and tests are designed to have educational value; the process of preparing for and completing these exercises will help improve your skills and knowledge. Material presented to satisfy course requirements is therefore expected to be the result of your own original scholarly efforts.

Violations of student academic behavior standards are outlined in **The Golden Rule Student Handbook.**

Academic Dishonesty is defined as follows:

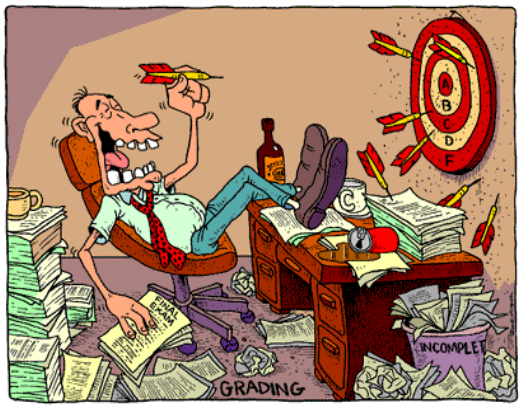
1. Cheating, whereby non-permissible written, visual or oral assistance including that obtained from another student is utilized on examinations, course assignments or projects, is prohibited. The unauthorized possession or use of examination or course related material shall also constitute cheating.

2. Plagiarism, whereby another's work is deliberately used or appropriated without any indication of the source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own, is prohibited. Any student failing to properly credit ideas or materials taken from another has plagiarized.

Please note that any student who has assisted another in any of the aforementioned breach of standards shall be considered equally culpable.

Students who attempt to obtain unearned academic credentials that do not reflect their skills and knowledge can also undermine the value of the UCF degrees earned by their more honest peers. Any form of academic dishonesty will result in you automatically failing the class and referred to the University authorities. Also, please remember that those caught cheating will have a notation made in their University records that they have been found guilty of academic misconduct. This can and will keep you out of law school so do not be tempted to cheat in any way.

Grades



My philosophy of grading is decidedly against what is generally known as "competitive grading" or "grading on the curve." You are not competing against fellow students for grades in this class. You are competing against yourself at all times, hopefully pushing yourself to excel against my objective standards of what students should reasonably get out of this class.

Average mastery of those standards is the baseline for earning an "average" grade of C. Do above-average work, you earn a B. Do excellent work, you earn an A…. and so on. In any case,

please understand that the points you earn toward a final grade will not be jerked around up or down to fit some predetermined grade curve. If everyone deserves an A, they'll get it. If everyone flunks, they'll all get an F and then, in all likelihood, I will leave the jurisdiction quickly under cover of night in heavy disguise and an assumed name!

Your final grade will be weighted as follows:

- Quizzes: 30%
- Written assignments: 25%
- MicroCase Worksheets: 25%
- Final exam: 20%

There will be no extra credit or grading opportunities. If you know you need a certain grade at the end of the semester, you know you need it at the beginning -- go to work to earn it! Under no circumstances can or will a course grade be awarded on any basis other than those stated in the syllabus.

Grade boundaries are as follows:

A, 93%+

A-, 90-92.9%

B+, 86-89.9%

B, 82-85.9%

B-, 80-81.9%

C+, 76-79.9%

C, 72-75.9%

C-, 70-71.9%

D+, 66-69.9%

D, 62-65.9%

D- 60-61.9%

F, 59% and below.

When a grade fall on the boundary between letter grades your overall performance in the course throughout the semester will be taken into account when determining whether to round.

Students typically obsess about grades too late, often at the end of the semester. There is little that can be done at that point. So, if you think you are struggling in this class please come and

talk to me as often as you like - never think you are being a pest! I cannot recall ever failing a student who early sought this kind of help. However, students who are struggling and delay assistance do fail.

You will be able to access your grades in Webcourses. Please make sure that grades entered here are correct. While every effort is made to ensure grades are correct, from time-to-time errors can occur (incorrectly add/subtract, miss points, and even fail to understand what a student wrote).

A time limit of 1 week is imposed on all change of grade requests after the grade has posted. This is sufficient time to identify any errors. After that prior grades will not be reviewed. This is to bring the course grade to completion and to minimize "end of semester" opportunism.

Grade grievance policies are outlined under the UCF Golden Rule.

Make-up Policy and Incompletes

The time and dates for all assignments and the exam are fixed in krypton-coated granite encased in a hydrogen bomb-proof vault! In other words, an extension on an assignment, or make-up exam will only be given in the most exceptional circumstances that are beyond the control of a student.

At the top of the list of unacceptable excuses for late-work are those related to computer problems. I will generally not accept "My hard-drive crashed.... I accidentally deleted the file.... My internet connection is down....Etc...." These are the "dog ate my homework" excuses of the "Technology Age" and will not fly! It is your responsibility to secure ample time at a computer, make backups of your work, and generally plan ahead—do whatever it takes!

From time to time the servers hosting Webcourses at UCF have been known to go down. If this happens UCF will normally post an announcement and if this coincides with the time when an assignment or exam is due, I will make alternative arrangements.

I do not consider vacations or other trips out of town (other than when the student is away from campus representing an official university function) to be exceptional circumstances. Of course, this is an on-line class, so as long as you have reliable internet access being out of town does not really present a problem.

Any student missing any assignments, exam or any other work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor no later than the end of the first week of class of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. This policy shall not apply in the event that administering the test or examination at an alternate time would impose an unavoidable hardship on the instructor or the university.

An incomplete standing will only be granted if requested in writing to me (an email or phone call is not acceptable). You must explain why you are requesting an incomplete standing and include, where appropriate, documentation that must be original and verifiable. Such documentation must be on a letterhead, and contain a contact name and telephone number. An incomplete will only be granted if you have a passing grade in the class.

Remember an incomplete grade is only reserved for when you have missed an assignment or exam for a legitimate reason but are otherwise passing the class. Incompletes are not given because you have achieved a low grade.

Disability Statement

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Ferrell Commons Room 185, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

Disclaimer

I reserve the right to change, add or modify any part of the syllabus. Of course, advance notice will be given of any such changes.

Course Schedule

Note: Full details of each assignment are in each module overview. New modules will usually open on Friday of each week.

All work is due at 5.00pm on the date noted.

January 11th-15th: Module 1 - What is Comparative Politics?

- Acknowledgment of course syllabus and policies (due 1/15)
- Quiz: *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, ch.1 (due 1/15)

January 18th-22nd: Module 2 - The Nation-State

- Written Assignment: Can We Make a Science of Politics? (due 1/18)
- Quiz: *Essentials of Comparative* Politics, ch.2 (due 1/21)
- Written Assignment: Explaining State Failure in Pakistan (due 1/22)

January 25th-29th: Module 3 - Nations and Society

- MicroCase Worksheet #1 (due 1/25)
- Quiz: *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, ch.3 (due 1/28)
- Written Assignment: Containing Ethnic and National Conflict - The Case of India (due 1/29)

February 1st-5th: Module 4 - People, Population & State Capacity

- Written Assignment: Religious Fundamentalism - The Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in Post-Arab Spring Egypt (due 2/1)
- MicroCase Worksheet #2 (due 2/4)

February 8th-12th: Module 5 - Classifying Political Systems

- MicroCase Worksheet #3 (due 2/10)

February 15th-19th: Module 6 - Comparing Democratic Political Systems

- Quiz: *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, ch.5 (due 2/17)
- Written Assignment: Post-Arab Spring and the Transition to Democracy - The Case of Tunisia (due 2/19)

February 22nd-26th: Module 7 - Comparing Developed Democracies

- Written Assignment: Explaining Democratization in Asia (due 2/22)
- Quiz: *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, ch.8 (due 2/25)
- MicroCase Worksheet #4 (due 2/26)

February 29th-March 4th: Module 8 - Electoral Systems & Political Participation in Developed Democracies

- Written Assignment: Alternative Electoral Systems (due 3/1)
- MicroCase Worksheet #5 (due 3/3)

Spring Break

March 14th-March 18th: Module 9 - Comparing Non-Democratic Political Systems

- Quiz: *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, ch.6 (due 3/16)
- Written Assignment: Comparing the Different Paths to Democratization in South Africa and Zimbabwe (due 3/18)

March 21st-25th: Module 10 - Comparing Communist and Post-Communist Countries

- Quiz: *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, ch.9 (due 3/23)
- MicroCase Worksheet #7 (due 3/25)

March 28th-April 1st: Module 11 - Comparing Developing Countries

- Written Assignment: Comparing Political Reform in the Soviet Union and China (due 3/28).
- Quiz: *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, ch.10 (due 3/31)
- MicroCase Worksheet #10 (due 4/1)

April 4th-April 8th: Module 12 - Comparing Islamic Countries

- MicroCase Worksheet #13 (due 4/6)
- MicroCase Worksheet #14 (due 4/8)

April 11th-April 15th: Module 13 - Political Violence

- Written Assignment: Turkish Soap Operas and Culture War in Islamic Nations (due 4/11)
- Quiz: *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, ch.7 (due 4/14)

April 18th-April 22nd: Module 14 - Globalization: It's Causes and Consequences

- Written Assignment: Protest and Revolution in the Middle East - The Origins of the "Arab Spring" of 2011 (due 4/18)
- Quiz: *Essentials of Comparative Politics,* ch.11 (due 4/21)

Final Exam

The exam is taken in Webcourses. The exam can be taken on any day between **Friday, April 29th and Monday May 2nd** (5.00pm). You will have 3 hours to complete the exam once you open the exam.