Comparative Politics (CPO 3103)

University of Central Florida
Summer 2019

Instructor:
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Virtual Office Hours: Thursday, 3-5 pm

Teaching Assistant:
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I. Description

This three credit online course serves an introduction to comparative politics field of the discipline of political science. Composed of 10 modules, it discusses the comparative method, the nation-state system, the causes of poverty and development, the trajectory of democratization and authoritarianism, the institutional basis of political power, the dynamics of political violence, and the politics of identity in different parts of the world. The tension between the diversity of human experience and the increasing demands for universal norms and standards in a globalized age is a recurring theme in this course. The three major objectives of the course are to

- Introduce students to one of main fields of political science: comparative politics.
- Provide students with a basic understanding of the implementation of different types of regime types, constitutions, legislatives and executives across the globe.
- Develop students' knowledge of cross-national and cross-regional differences in salient political issues such as poverty, democracy, and violence.

On completing this course students will be able to:

- Evaluate the relative merits of causal claims about socioeconomic and political processes.
- Identify different characteristics of political regimes in the world.
- Discuss the relevance of identities to political struggles in different parts of the world.
- Analyze the impact of institutions and government policies upon the democratization process in each country.

II. Instructors

Güneş Murat Tezcür (Dr. T) (PhD, University of Michigan, 2005) is the Jalal Talabani Endowed Chair and Professor at University of Central Florida. He also directs the Kurdish Political Studies Program at UCF. He is a social scientist studying political violence, popular struggles, and politics of identity with a focus on Kurdistan, Turkey and Iran. His scholarly and opinion writings have appeared in many different and prominent outlets including leading political science journals. At UCF, he teaches courses on comparative politics, political violence and nonviolence, the Middle East, democratization, social movements, and research methods.

Tutku Ayhan is a doctoral candidate at the Security Studies Program at UCF. She is primarily interested in politics of gender. She is currently working on her dissertation on gender relations among Yazidis, a religious minority in northern Iraq subjected to genocidal attacks in 2014.

III. Requirements

Exams and Assignments

Grades will be based on four short exams, a research paper, a final exam, and class participation. The distribution of the final grade is as follows:

- 45%: Four short exams
- 40%: Responses to Short Answer Questions in each Module
- 15%: Participation in three discussion boards

- Short exams are composed of multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blanks, and short answers. The first quiz covers Modules 1-2 (10%), the second Modules 3-5 (worth 12.5%), and third covers Modules 6-7 (10%), and the fourth 8-10 (12.5%).

- There will be a single question following the completion of each module. Each response is worth 4% of the final grade. Responses will be two paragraphs (maximum 250 words).

- There will be six-discussion boards that are described at the end of this syllabus. Each student is expected to contribute to three of these boards. Contributions will involve reflections on the topic of discussion as well as reactions to other student comments. Each contribution is worth 5% of the final grade.

Grade and Make-Up Policy

Students who fail to complete short exams, provide answers to module questions, and participate in discussion boards by the deadlines will automatically receive **0 points for the assignment**. Students who miss exams are given make-ups only if they are able to provide **proper documentation** for their absence. Make-ups must be taken only within three days of the original short exam date. No more than one make-up for each student is given throughout the semester.

The following grade scale is applicable in this class: A: 100-94, A-: 93-90, B+: 89-87, B: 86-84, B-: 83-80, C+: 79-77, C: 76-74, C-: 73-70, D+: 69-67, D: 66-60, F: 59-0. Grades are rounded to the nearest integer (e.g., 79.4=79, 79.6=80).

IV. Academic Honesty

As reflected in the UCF creed, integrity and scholarship are core values that should guide our conduct and decisions as members of the UCF community. Plagiarism and cheating contradict these values, and so are very serious academic offenses. UCF's Golden Rule defines plagiarism as follows: "**whereby another's work is used or appropriated without any indication of the source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own.**"

All acts of academic dishonesty including plagiarism, cheating, submitting false documents, and copying another student's work will be penalized by **an F for the course** without any exception and leniency. If you are not sure what constitutes as academic dishonesty while doing your research, you should consult me at once.

V. Title IX - No Discrimination Policy

Title IX is a federal law that prohibits discrimination based on the sex (gender) of employees and students of educational institutions that receive federal financial assistance. Title IX's prohibition of sex discrimination includes prohibition of sexual harassment and sexual violence. UCF does not tolerate sex discrimination, sexual harassment or sexual violence of any kind. This prohibition is further explained in the University's Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment and Related Interpersonal Violence. Any student, faculty, or staff member with questions or concerns about the applicable University policies or who believes that he or she has been the victim of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual violence is encouraged to contact the University's Title IX Coordinator and visit the Let's Be Clear website.

VI. Accessibility

The UCF is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the professor to request accommodations.

Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Student Resource Center Room 132, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before **requesting accommodations from the professor.**

VII. Modules

The following textbook is used in this class. Readings for discussion boards will be made available in advance.

J. Tyler Dickovick and Jonathan Eastwood. *Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases.* Oxford UP, 3rd edition, 2019 (Hence after DE).

Module Topic	Readings	Assignments
I. Comparative Approach & Causal Argumentation	DE chapters 1-2	
II. The State	DE chapter 3	Discussion Board I Exam I
III. Political Economy & Development	DE chapters 4-5	Discussion Board II
IV. Democracy & Democratization	DE chapter 6	
V. Authoritarianism & Democratic Breakdown	DE chapter 7	Discussion Board III Exam II
VI. Constitutions & Parliament	DE chapters 8-9	
VII. Executives & Parties	DE chapters 10-11	Exam III
VIII. Political Violence	DE chapter 12	Discussion Board IV
IX. Politics of Identity - Nationalism	DE chapter 13	Discussion Board V
X. Politics of Identity - Religion & Gender	DE chapter 14-15	Exam IV

VIII. Discussion Board Topics

1. Statehood

Statehood is central to the contemporary international system. The UN had originally 51 members, but has now 193 members. Yet some states remain "fictional;" they lack effective governance over the territories they claim to control. What factors contribute to state failure? How can the international community deal with failed states?

<u>Related Readings</u>:

Rotberg, RI (2002). Failed states in a world of terror. *Foreign Affairs*.

Reno, W. (2017). Fictional states & atomized public spheres: a non-Western approach to fragility. *Daedalus* 146: 139-51.

2. Poverty & Economic Growth

While many countries have achieved remarkable economic growth and improved their citizens' life standards since the mid-20th century, poverty remain pervasive in different parts of the world. What factors are responsible for this divergence? Also, does capitalism remain a viable system especially given the rising levels of economic inequality?

Related Readings:

Acemoglu/Davison and Diamond Debate (2012). What Makes Countries Rich or Poor? *The New York Review of Books*

Rodrik, R. (2012). Designing Capitalism 3.0 in *The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and the Future of the World Economy*.

Kupchan, C. (2012). The Democratic Malaise: Globalization and the Threat to the West. *Foreign Affairs* 62-7.

3. Democracy and Authoritarianism

Some countries are ruled by democratic regimes. Many other countries remain under authoritarian rule or experience zigzags between democracy and authoritarian rule. What factors contribute to democratization? What factors facilitate democratic breakdowns in contemporary times?

Inglehart, R. and Welzel, C. (2009). How development leads to democracy. *Foreign Affairs*.

Bermeo, N. (2016). "On Democratic Backsliding. *Journal of Democracy* 27.

4. Presidentialism and Parliamentarism (Chapter 10 in DE)

The relative merits of presidential and parliamentary systems have been subject of intense scholarly and public debate. Discuss the relative strengths and weaknesses of these two systems by providing examples from various countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, France, Nigeria, and Russia. For instance, which system seems to produce political stability? Which system seems to ensure greater political freedoms?

Related Readings:

Linz, Juan J. "The perils of presidentialism." *Journal of democracy* 1.1 (1990): 51-69.

Mainwaring, S., & Shugart, M. S. (1997). Juan Linz, presidentialism, and democracy: a critical appraisal. *Comparative Politics* 449-71.

5. Civil Wars & Partition

There has been a significant decline in the frequency and intensity of armed conflict at the interstate level since the end of the WWII. At the same time, many parts of the world have experienced civil wars. Some scholars and politicians argue that countries experiencing civil wars among different ethnic groups need to be partitioned to end violence. Could partition an effective solution to end civil wars?

Related Readings:

Muller, JZ (2008). Us and them. The enduring power of ethnic nationalism. *Foreign Affairs*.

Habyarimana, J., Humphreys, M., Posner, D., and Weinstein, J. (2008). Is ethnic conflict inevitable? Parting ways over nationalism and separatism. *Foreign Affairs*

6. Gender Inequality

Countries exhibit significant regarding the levels of gender inequality despite major advances in women's access to health, education, employment, and political power in many different parts of the world. What are indicators of gender inequality? Why do some societies have higher levels of gender inequality than others?

Related Readings:

Sen, A. (1990). More than 100 Million Women are Missing. *The New York Review of Books*.

Jayachandran, S. (2015). The Roots of Gender Inequality in Developing Countries. *Annual Review of Economics* 7:63-88.