CPO 3103

Comparative Politics

Fall 2021

Instructor: Jonathan Knuckey

Course Overview

"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*

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 then make generalizations about political phenomena.

This course will provide you with an overview of the major theoretical approaches and debates to the study of comparative politics. While the comparative approach seeks to make generalization across nations, we will also utilize a case study approach to focus on the history, political system, political institutions, political cultures and political behavior of the following nations:

- China
- France
- India
- Iran
- Japan
- Mexico
- Nigeria
- Russia
- South Africa
- United Kingdom

These nations will help illustrate many of the broader concepts and ideas we will encounter this semester. They will also provide a solid background and introduction for any future courses you may take on one or more of these nation's political system, or for doing independent research such as an Honors Undergraduate Thesis.

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

Office Hours & Contact Information.

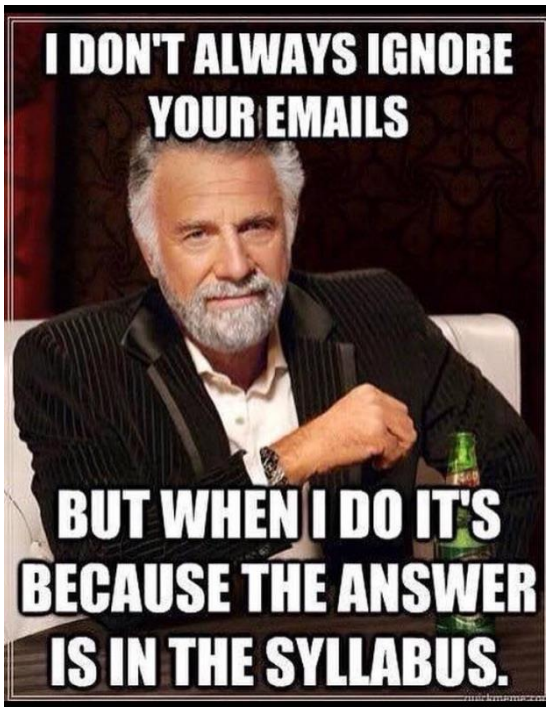
Office hours: Via Zoom, Tuesday & Thursday, 10.30am-12.30pm

Email: Use email in Webcourses. If you write me M-F, I should get back to you within 24 hours. If I don't, please feel free to send me a reminder!

Please don't use the comments box on assignments to message me. I receive no notification of messages sent here (why it is set up that way, I have no idea!). So always use the email in Webcourses if you wish to follow up on any assignment.

I will answer any message within 24 hours. Remember to allow adequate time for a reply to a question about an assignment. If you send a question a few hours before an assignment is due, I may not see it in time to provide help you out.

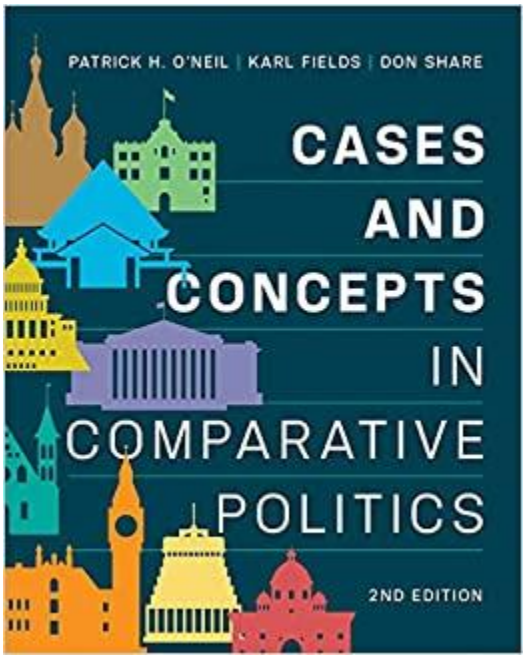
A note on etiquette: You are what you email, which means your instructors will often shape their opinion of you according to the quality of the email messages you are sending. To that end, be sure to please keep the tone of your emails professional, sign your emails with your name and include an appropriate salutation (Hint: you can't go wrong with "Dear Dr. Knuckey").



Textbook

We will use the following textbook, and you will need to buy it (and of course read it) to do well in this class:

- Patrick H. O'Neil, Karl Fields, and Don Share, *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics* 2nd edition



Please make sure this is purchased no later than the end of the first week of the semester. Take this into account if ordering from a third party vendor (like Amazon). And make sure you buy the 2nd Edition of the book, shown above.

Used copies of the textbook are fine -- and less likely to blow a hole in your budget.

Used copies of the textbook is fine -- and less likely to blow a hole in your budget. Ebooks are also fine, and probably a lot more convenient.

Modules

Requirements for the class will be detailed in modules that are accessed in Webcourses. A new module detailing quizzes and written assignments will open each week. Requirements for a module must first be completed prior to moving on to a new module

Student Conduct

All students are expected to adhere to the UCF Golden Rule, which includes conducting oneself in a professional manner both in the classroom and in written and verbal communication with me and to other students. Violations of the Golden Rule -- both academic and non-academic -- can result in a referral to the Office of Student Conduct.

Unauthorized Use of Class Materials

There are many fraudulent websites claiming to offer study aids to students but are actually cheat sites. They encourage students to upload course materials, such as test questions, individual assignments, and examples of graded material. Such materials are the intellectual property of instructors, the university, or publishers and may not be distributed without prior authorization.

Students who engage in such activity are in violation of academic conduct standards and may face penalties.

Group Chats

Group chats -- via GroupMe, Whats App, etc -- are increasingly common and can be used positively for collaboration and connection with your peers. They can also be used for nefarious purposes such as sharing answers and other forms of cheating. Recently I've had to deal with instances where students are reporting other students for sharing information via the class group chat. **Any students on a group chat where cheating is occurring will all be included in any disciplinary action that results from content shared on the chat.** How can this be avoided, you ask? Just do you own work and don't cut corners. It's pretty easy to avoid.

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.

Your final grade will be weighted as follows:

- Written assignments: 34%
- Quizzes on conceptual chapters of textbook (i.e., chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10): 33%
- Quizzes on country cases study chapters: 33%

As there are ample grading opportunities in this course **there will be no extra credit given.**

Grade boundaries are as follows:

A, 92%+

A-, 90-91.9%

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, 62-69.9%

D- 60-61.9%

F, 59% and below.

A time limit of **1 week** is imposed on all change of grade requests after the grade has posted for a completed piece or work. This is sufficient time to identify any errors. After that, prior grades will not be reviewed.

When grades fall exactly on the borderline of letter grades (91.9%, 89.9%, 85.9%, etc., etc.), I'll take the overall performance of a student throughout the semester into account when deciding whether to round up, i.e., whether all work been submitted throughout the semester, and has there been an attempt to answer all questions on a quiz or assignment.

All work in this course will be graded by me, not a Graduate Teaching Assistant. If you have any questions about grades, please don't hesitate to touch base with me directly.

Grade grievance policies are outlined under the UCF Golden Rule.

Make-up Policy

The time and dates for all assignments are fixed in krypton-coated granite encased in a hydrogen bomb-proof vault! These dates are also known at least one week ahead of time. As noted above you always

get a grace period on any assignment. An extension on any assignment will only be given in the most exceptional circumstances that are beyond the control of a student and will require documentation.

Please note that requests for an assignment extension after an assignment deadline will not be granted, unless a student was unable to make such a request prior to the deadline.

Here are some unacceptable excuses for late-work, and it is by no means an exhaustive list:

- *"My computer is broken...."*
- *"My computer was stolen...."*
- *"I accidentally deleted the file....".*
- *"My computer magically deleted my homework from the hard drive. I do not understand it myself...."*
- *"The internet is broken...."*
- *"I forgot to attach the assignment...."*
- *"I could not find the assignment...."*
- *"I did the quiz but forgot to submit it..."*
- *"I was on holiday..."*
- *"It was my birthday so I never got around to the assignment..."*

The above are all **actual excuses** I have received. Many, as you can see, are computer-related, which are the "dog ate my homework" excuses of the technology age and will not fly. So secure ample time at a computer, make backups of your work, check you did not submit a blank assignment, check you correctly submitted the right assignment and generally plan ahead. Completing an assignment the day before it is due is always a wise move as that provides a cushion for anything that might come up that is unexpected.

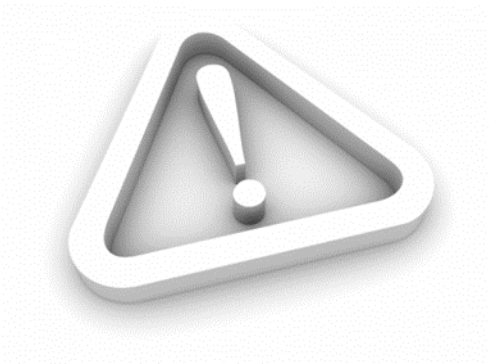
Accessibility Statement

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Accessibility Services before requesting accommodations from the professor.

Deployed Active Duty Military Students

If you are a deployed active duty military student and feel that you may need a special accommodation due to that unique status, please contact me at the start of the semester to discuss your circumstances.

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

All due dates are <u>midnight</u> (actually 11.59pm) on the date noted. However, a grace period is allowed so that work submitted by 5pm the following day will still receive full credit.

Module 1: Studying Comparative Politics

- **Quiz:** Syllabus Quiz (8/25) *(This quiz will be used to demonstrate student academic engagement during the first week of the semester)*
- **Quiz:** *Cases and Concepts of Comparative Politics*, *ch.1* (8/29)

Module 2: Comparing States, Identities & Ideology

- **Quiz:** *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, *"States", ch.2* (9/1)
- **Written assignment:** *Measuring the Power of the State* (9/5)
- **Quiz**: *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, *"Nations & Society", ch.3* (9/8)
- **Quiz:** *Case Study of Politics in India* (9/12)

- **Written assignment:** *Comparing Ethnic Conflict and Political Institutions in India and Nepal* (9/15)

Module 3: Comparing Democratic Political Systems

- **Quiz:** *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics, "Democratic Regimes," ch.6* (9/19)
- **Written assignment:** *What is Undermining Democracy?* (9/22)
- **Quiz:** *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics, "Developed Democracies," ch.7* (9/26)
- **Quiz:** *Case Study of Politics in the United Kingdom* (9/29)
- **Quiz:** *Case Study of Politics in France* (10/3)
- **Written assignment:** *Multiculturalism versus Assimilation and Anti-Immigrant sentiment in French Politics* (10/6)
- **Quiz:** *Case Study of Politics in Japan* (10/10)
- **Written Assignment:** *Explaining the Rise of Authoritarian Values in Developed Democracies* (10/13)

Module 4: Comparing Non-Democratic Political Systems

- **Quiz:** *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics, "Non-Democratic Regimes," ch.8* (10/17)
- **Written assignment:** *The Resource Curse - Do Resources Hinder Democracy?* (10/20)
- **Quiz:** *Case Study of Politics in Iran* (10/24)

Module 5: Comparing Communist and Post-Communist Countries

- **Quiz:** *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics, "Communism and Post-Communism," ch. 9* (10/27)
- **Written assignment:** *Explaining Variations in the Success of Post-Communist Countries (10/31)*
- **Quiz:** *Case Study of Politics in Russia (11/3)*
- **Quiz:** *Case Study of Politics in China (11/7)*

Module 6: Comparing Developing Countries; Comparing Transitions to Democracy

- **Quiz:** *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics, "Developing Countries," ch.10 (11/10)*
- **Written assignment:** *Overcoming the Middle Income Trap (11/14)*
- **Quiz:** *Case Study of Politics in Mexico (11/17)*
- **Quiz:** *Case Study of Politics in Nigeria (11/21)*
- **Quiz:** *Case Study of Politics in South Africa (11/28)*
- **Written assignment:** *Comparing the Transition to Democracy in South Africa and Zimbabwe (12/1)*