CPO 3103 - Comparative Politics

Section: BW60

College of Sciences

School of Politics, Security, and Intl Affairs

Course Information

Term: Summer 2025
Class Meeting Days: ASC
Class Meeting Location: Online
Modality: WW
Credit Hours: 3

Instructor Information

Jonathan Knuckey
Office Hours
By appointment via Zoom.
Office Location: HPH 302L
Email: Use email in Canvas

Course Description

CPO 3103 COS-POLS 3(3,0)Comparative Politics: PR: ENC 1102 or POS 2041 or C.I. Government and politics in selected nations, with emphasis upon comparative analysis of contemporary problems, politics, political culture, behavior, and institutions. Spring.

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, utilizing 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
- 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.**

Interestingly, **seven** of the nations we study this semester held general elections last year: the UK, Mexico, France, South Africa, India, Japan and Russia. So studying these nations is especially interesting and timely, especially if you are interested in elections and voting behavior!

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

About me

I joined UCF in 1999. I received my BA in Political Theory and Institutions from the **University of Liverpool,** my MA in U.S. History and Politics from the **University of Keele** and my Ph.D. in Political Science from the **University of New Orleans**.

My main areas of research and teaching are southern politics, voting behavior, campaigns and elections, political parties, race and politics, gender and politics and comparative politics.

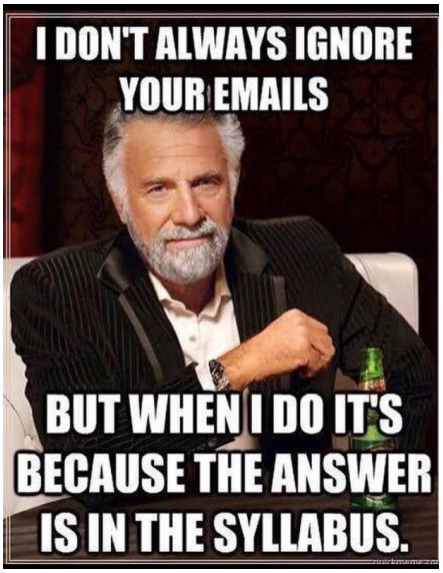
Outside of of my day job I am a huge football (soccer!) fan and an avid supporter of **Liverpool** and, of course, **Orlando City F.C**.

How to Contact Me

Email:

You can contact me via email (use the Inbox in Canvas to message me). I should usually get back to you within 24 hours. If I have not done so, don't hesitate to follow up

with me.



Ok...I won't ever ignore your message, however do please see if a general question you might have about our course is answered in the syllabus before contacting me.

Do allow adequate time for a reply to a question about course material. If you send a question a few hours before an assignment is due I may not see it in time to provide an adequate answer.

Please don't use the comments box on assignments to message me. I receive no notification of messages sent here. So always use the email in Canvas if you wish to follow up on any assignment.

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").

Zoom

During our summer class I am happy to discuss course material questions, politics in general, your future educational and career plans.... and even soccer!

My office hours are by appointment over the summer -- so just let me know a good day or time and we can talk via Zoom. Use the following Zoom link for any time you wish to chat with me: **https://ucf.zoom.us/j/6720872288**

Student Learning Outcomes

1. **Understanding of Political Systems**: Students will develop a comprehensive understanding of the political systems of the nine nations studied, including their structures, institutions, decision-making processes and citizen political behavior.

2. **Analytical Skills**: Through comparative analysis, students will enhance their analytical skills, enabling them to identify similarities and differences between the political systems of different countries, and to evaluate the factors influencing political outcomes.

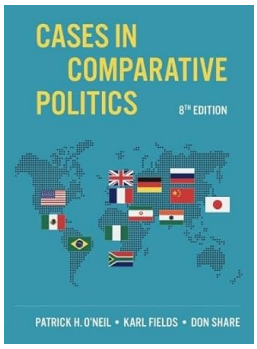
3. **Cultural and Historical Context**: Students will gain insight into how culture and history interact with and shape the politics of the nine nations we will study this semester.

4. **Critical Thinking**: The course will foster critical thinking skills by encouraging students to critically evaluate political theories, ideologies, and policies in the context of real-world examples from the nine nations studied.

5. **Global Perspective**: By studying a diverse set of nations, students will develop a global perspective on politics, gaining awareness of the interconnectedness of political phenomena across borders and the implications of global trends on national politics.

6. **Research and Communication Skills**: Students will refine their research and communication skills through analyzing data, synthesizing information, and presenting arguments supported by evidence in written assignments.

Required Course Materials and Resources



Case in Comparative Politics 8th Edition
Authors: Patrick H. O'Neil, Karl Fields, and Don Share

A Note About Our Textbook

Please note **you will need to purchase and read this book.** You will learn a lot from it about comparative politics and the different political systems of the nine nations we will study this semester. It is also essential for you being able to earn superior grades on quizzes and assignments.

Ebook versions of the book are fine. If you can find a used copy that might save you some money -- although please make sure it is the **8th edition** as shown above. Politics

around the world has changed rapidly in just a short space of time, making prior editions out of date.

Course Assessment and Grading Procedure

Modules

Requirements for the class will be detailed in modules that are accessed in Canvas.

This course is designed to be completed in sequential modules, with each module building on the knowledge and skills developed in the previous one. All assignments within a module must be completed before you can move on to the next module.

I strongly recommend that you pace yourself carefully over our 6-week session. Attempting to rush through the course in a couple of weeks may result in confusion, not benefitting from feedback, lower grades, and missed learning opportunities. Consistent engagement each week will help you stay on track and make the most of your learning experience.

A module will consist of quizzes and written assignments. In total you will take 11 quizzes (including a syllabus quiz at the start of the semester) and there are 5 written assignments. Due dates can be found in the class schedule below.

- ***Quizzes are all timed -- you will have 1 hour to complete each quiz, which consists of 20 multiple choice and 10 true/false questions.*** *I strongly recommend a thorough reading of the chapter and associated Power Point lecture slides prior to taking each quiz. Taking your own notes might be helpful too*
- ***Written assignments are not timed.*** *A written assignment will be a short assignment where you either will find a recent story about the politics of the nation being studied and use it to make connections with the material from our textbook or you will be provided with a political cartoon to interpret relating to a political issue or topic facing the nation and make connections with the material from our textbook. The type of assignment will be randomly allocated for the first written assignment, and you will then alternate the type of assignment for the remaining assignments.*

All work will always be due at **midnight** on the day due.

Grading Procedure

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:

- 11 quizzes: 55%
- 5 written assignments: 45%

These are the only criteria for which a grade can earned for our class. There is no extra credit offered.

Grading Scale

Your overall course grade earned corresponds to the following grade boundaries:

A, 94%+

A-, 90-93.9%

B, 80-89.9%

C, 70-79.9%

D, 60-69.9%

F, 59% and below.

You will be able to access your grades in Canvas. 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 requests to review a grade 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. This is to bring the course grade to completion and to minimize "end of semester" opportunism.

I sometimes get requests to "bump" overall grades up. Only when grades fall **exactly** on the borderline of letter grades (93.9%, 89.9%, 79.9%, 69.9%), will a grade be eligible for the next letter grade. This is not automatic and I'll take the overall performance of a student throughout the semester into account when deciding whether to round up, which includes but is not limited to attempting to complete all quizzes and assignments, attempting to answer all questions on quizzes and assignments, and submitting work by the deadline.

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 contact me directly.

Grade grievance policies are outlined under the UCF Golden Rule.

Policies for Course Grade

Late Assignments

Please note the following policy for late submission of work:

- Work submitted ***after the midnight deadline up to 9.00am the following day*** is considered late, but will fall in the automatic grace period for submission of work and still receive full credit.
- Work submitted ***after 9.00am the following day after a deadline up to midnight*** is considered late but can still be submitted but will only receive half credit.
- *No late work will be accepted for credit after this.*

All deadlines are, of course, for Eastern Standard Time, so keep that in mind if you are in a different time-zone or a different country for part, or all, of the semester!

Remember that you will know what assignment is due, and what that assignment entails, in advance of a due date. The single biggest source of missed points on assignments is starting an assignment too late and not making enough time to complete the assignment.

Even with an after hours submission policy, some students occasionally still want longer to complete an assignment. Such extensions will not be granted unless they genuinely are unexpected or extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the students. Basically, it is an extremely high bar!

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...."*
- *"My computer magically deleted my homework from the hard drive. I do not understand it myself...."*
- *"I did the quiz but Canvas somehow deleted all the answers..."*
- *"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 thought you would give me an extension..."*
- *"I didn't understand the assignment..."*
- *"I forgot what time zone I lived..."*

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! It's your responsibility to plan ahead and avoid procrastination.

Course Accessibility

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need access to course content due to course design limitations should contact the professor as soon as possible. Students should also connect with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) (Ferrell Commons 185, sas@ucf.edu, phone 407-823-2371). For students connected with SAS, a Course Accessibility Letter may be created and sent to professors, which informs faculty of potential course access and accommodations that might be necessary and reasonable. Determining reasonable access and accommodations requires consideration of the course design, course learning objectives and the individual academic and course barriers experienced by the student. Further conversation with SAS, faculty and the student may be warranted to ensure an accessible course experience.

Academic Integrity

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Code of Conduct at Student Conduct and Integrity Office. According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in:

a. Academic misconduct is defined as any submitted work or behavior that obstructs the instructor of record's ability to accurately assess the student's understanding or completion of the course materials or degree requirements (e.g., assignment, quiz, and/or exam). Examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to: plagiarism, unauthorized assistance to complete an academic exercise; unauthorized communication with others during an examination, course assignment, or project; falsifying or misrepresenting academic work; providing misleading information to create a personal advantage to complete course/degree requirements; or multiple submission(s) of academic work without permission of the instructor of record.

b. Any student who knowingly helps another violate academic behavior standards is also in violation of the standards.

c. Commercial Use of Academic Material. Selling of course material to another person and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express written permission of the University and the instructor of record. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, the instructor of record's slide deck, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, and handouts.

d. Soliciting assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements. The solicitation of assistance with an assignment, lab, quiz, test, paper, etc., without authorization of the instructor of record or designee is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to asking for answers to a

quiz, trading answers, or offering to pay another to complete an assignment. It is considered Academic Misconduct to solicit assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements, even if the solicitation did not yield actual assistance (for example, if there was no response to the solicitation).

Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating

Students should also familiarize themselves with the procedures for academic misconduct in UCF's student handbook, *The Golden Rule*. UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and respond to academic misconduct when necessary. Penalties for violating rules, policies, and instructions within this course can range from a zero on the exercise to an "F" letter grade in the course. In addition, an Academic Misconduct report could be filed with the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, which could lead to disciplinary warning, disciplinary probation, or deferred suspension or separation from the University through suspension, dismissal, or expulsion with the addition of a "Z" designation on one's transcript.

Being found in violation of academic conduct standards could result in a student having to disclose such behavior on a graduate school application, being removed from a leadership position within a student organization, the recipient of scholarships, participation in University activities such as study abroad, internships, etc.

Let's avoid all of this by demonstrating values of honesty, trust, and integrity. No grade is worth compromising your integrity and moving your moral compass. Stay true to doing the right thing: take the zero, not a shortcut.

Reporting an Incident or Issue

If you believe you have experienced abusive or discriminatory behavior by any faculty or staff member, contact the Office of Institutional Equity online or at 407-823-1336. You can also choose to report using the UCF Integrity Line and can report anonymously or as yourself at 1-855-877-6049 or using the online form. UCF cares about you and takes every report seriously. For more information see the Reporting an Incident or Issue Webpage.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Group Chats

A note on AI

When you submit any work for our class my assumption is that it involves your own words, thoughts, ideas and reflections. Therefore, content produced or inspired by

generative AI is not permitted for any assignment in this course.

Developing strong competencies in writing and critical thinking will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Part of why you learn to write is learning how to think and how to be a smarter, more articulate, better functioning version of yourself. You lose that if you hand it off to a machine.

Group Chats

Group chats -- via GroupMe, Whats App, etc -- are increasingly common and can be used positively for collaboration and connection with your peers. And that is a positive thing. However, they can also be used for nefarious purposes such as sharing answers and other forms of academic misconduct.

Recently I've had to unfortunately deal with instances where students are reporting other students for sharing information and answers via the class group chat. **All students on a group chat where there are violations of academic integrity 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, ask me if you want clarification on any of the material, and don't cut corners. It's pretty easy to avoid.

Title IX

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at Let's Be Clear and UCF Cares.

For more information on access and community engagement, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF's complaint processes contact:

- Title IX – ONAC – Office of Nondiscrimination & Accommodations Compliance & askanadvocate@ucf.edu
- Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services – Student Accessibility Services & sas@ucf.edu

- Access and Community Engagement (including the Ginsberg Center for Inclusion and Community Engagement, Military and Veteran Student Success, and HSI Initiatives)
- UCF Compliance and Ethics Office – Compliance, Ethics, and Risk Office & complianceandethics@ucf.edu
- The Ombuds Office is a safe place to discuss concerns.

Deployed Active-Duty Military Students

Students who are deployed active duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make related arrangements.

Campus Safety

At UCF Public Safety and Police, safety is the top priority. Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise, it's important to be familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In an emergency, always dial 911.
- Every UCF classroom has an **Emergency Procedure Guide** posted on a wall near the door, which will show you how to respond to a variety of situations. This guide can also be found online here.
- In the event of an active threat, remember **AVOID, DENY, DEFEND**. Choose the best course of action and act immediately. Watch the video here to learn more.
    - **AVOID**. Pay attention to your surroundings and have an exit plan. Get as much distance and as many barriers between you and the threat as quickly as possible.
    - **DENY.** When avoiding is difficult or impossible, deny the threat access to you and your space. Lockdown by creating barriers, turning the lights off and remaining quiet and out of sight. Make sure your cell phone is silenced, but do not turn it off.
    - **DEFEND.** When you are unable to put distance between yourself and the threat, be prepared to protect yourself. Commit to your actions, be aggressive and do not fight fairly. Do whatever it takes to survive.
- For emergencies on campus, UCF will utilize the UCF Alert system. All UCF students, faculty and staff are automatically enrolled to receive these email and text alerts, however, it's a good idea to frequently ensure your contact information is up to date.

Financial Aid Accountability

All instructors/faculty are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete this activity by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

Disclaimer

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

Class Schedule

Modules are available in Canvas.

At the start of the semester only Modules 1 and 2 will be available. Module 3 will open at the end of the second week of the semester on July 5th, and Module 4 at the end of the fourth week of the semester on July 19th.

Module 1: Introduction to Studying Comparative Politics

Quiz: Syllabus Quiz (due 6/27) -- this will be used to document academic engagement for financial aid disbursement

Reading: Cases in Comparative Politics, ch.1

Quiz: Introduction to Studying Comparative Politics (due 6/29)

Module 2: Comparing Democracies - United Kingdom, France and Japan

image.png image.png

image.png

Readings: Cases in Comparative Politics, chapters 2, 4, & 6

Quiz: UK (due 7/1)

Written assignment: UK (due 7/2)

Quiz: France (due 7/6)

Quiz: Japan (due 7/9)

Written assignment: Japan (due 7/10)

Module 3: Comparing Non-Democracies - Russia, China & Iran

image.png

russia-flag.gif image.png

Readings: Cases in Comparative Politics, chapters 7, 8, & 10

Quiz: Russia (due 7/13)

Quiz: China (due 7/16)

Written assignment: China (due 7/17)

Quiz: Iran (due 7/20)

Module 4: Comparing Developing Countries & Transitions to Democracy - India, South Africa, and Mexico

image.png *image.png*

Readings: Cases in Comparative Politics, chapters 9, 11, & 13

Quiz: India (due 7/23)

Written assignment: India (due 7/24)

Quiz: South Africa (due 7/27)

Quiz: Mexico (due 7/30)

Written assignment: Mexico (due 7/31)