

WHAT TO EXPECT?

Political Science 2381 is a course designed to introduce students to the field of Comparative Politics (CP). It aims to provide students with analytical concepts, methods and theoretical approaches used by political scientists and teach them how to “think comparatively.” This involves an ability to understand and compare political processes and institutions across geography (space) and history (time). The course focuses on an integrative approach to theories, methods, and cases, blending the case studies information with themes of Comparative Politics. It examines political institutions, actors and processes from the angle of domestic politics.

Although comparative politics primarily deals with issues of domestic politics, the current era of globalization and growing interdependence blurs the distinction between domestic and international influences in country’s governance. Globalization reinforces an emphasis on change and pushes comparativists to account for these global influences when studying countries and their politics. Comparative politics is also an interdisciplinary field, and it involves many research traditions and approaches: political philosophy, sociology, history, political economy, anthropology, geography, and cultural studies.

We will be reading, analyzing, writing and discussing issues arising in a contemporary fast-paced political environment around the world. What are the key features of democracies and autocracies? Why are some countries rich and others are poor? What is “populism”? How can we classify regimes in Russia and Iran? What effects are social media having on the ways citizens engage in politics and politicians connect with their constituencies? These are some of the questions we will examine in class. Expect lectures, class discussions, online quizzes, assignments in individual and group format, and workshops (aimed to improve your research and writing skills). Class participation is an integral part of this course, and you are expected to have read the materials identified under each theme’s required readings. I assume your interest in the everyday political and social life in Canada and other countries and encourage you read news regularly.

The SMU Brightspace course suite is an important part of the course delivery.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

I have the following goals in mind when developing and delivering this course:

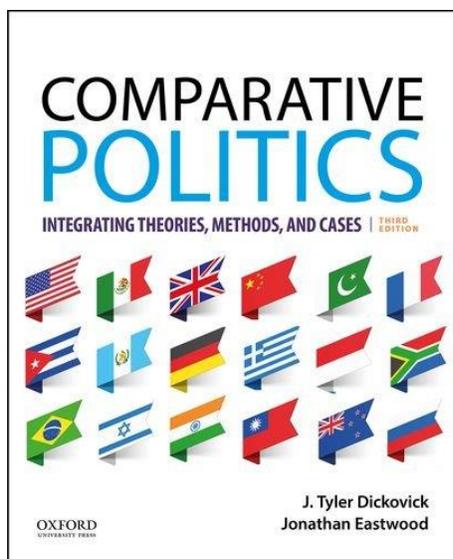
- **Student’s subject knowledge**: a good understanding of the field of comparative politics, including comparative methodology and “big concepts” in CP; enhanced knowledge of the historical development of nation-states, societies and institutions around the world, and a better understanding of the forces that have shaped and continue to shape various societies.
- **Intellectual skills**: the ability to critically assess and apply theories of comparative politics to everyday political realities; the ability to learn from cases and observe trends.
- **Research and information literacy skills**: the ability to research current state policy positions using primary sources available online; improved search skills in university library settings.
- **Writing skills**: an improved ability to develop and implement a research plan and accomplish writing goals.
- **Public speaking skills**: an enhanced ability to express oneself publicly and engage with peers.

RESPECT IN THE CLASSROOM

My goal is to cultivate a culture of mutual respect and collective curiosity in the classroom. I ask that all students arrive to class on time, turn off their cell phones, do not leave the room mid-lecture (unless it is detrimental to your health), and do not engage with materials that are outside of the course during class time.

COURSE DEADLINES AND EXTENSIONS

Late assignments will be accepted but they will incur **a penalty of 5% per day**, including weekend days. Extensions without penalty will be granted only under exceptional and documentable circumstances. It is your responsibility to inform me as soon as it becomes clear that your work will be late.



REQUIRED READING MATERIALS

The textbook is required and may be purchased from the campus Bookstore.

J. Tyler Dickovick and Jonathan Eastwood, *Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases, 3rd edition* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

Other course readings will be available electronically (through the library) or via the course website on Brightspace. A list of readings for each topic appears in the course schedule guide below. I reserve a right to make changes to the required readings as relevant and necessary. Students will be informed a week in advance of any changes to the required readings.

Feel free to approach me if you are interested in further readings on any of the topics covered in the course.

HOW TO DO WELL IN THIS COURSE

This course is a foundational course designed to prepare you for advanced courses in political science. The table below outlines the critical components in the course evaluation. Completing all course components is your path to a success.

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course, and students are expected to attend class regularly, do all the required readings and actively contribute to daily activities happening in class. Physical presence in class will be recorded.

Course Component	Due Date	Weight
Participation and attendance	ongoing	10%
Case Study Presentation	as selected	20%
Chapter quizzes (online in Brightspace)	ongoing	15% (10x 1.5%)
Annotated Bibliography	October 3	5%
Comparative Research Design	November 5	20%
Final Exam	TBA	30%
Total		100%

PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Saint Mary's University is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards and uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Read the provisions "Academic Integrity and Student Responsibility" in the Academic calendar (page 19).

GRADING SCHEMA

F	D	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A	A+
0-49	50-59	60-62	63-66	67-69	70-72	73-76	77-79	80-84	85-89	90 plus

SCHEDULE OF COURSE READINGS AND THEMES

(Dates and topics might be subject to change)

Week	Topic	Readings/Chapter(s)
Sept 5	Welcome to the course	
Sept 10-12	Comparative Politics and the comparative approach	Chapters 1 in <i>Comparative Politics</i> (pp. 1-23) (Online quiz due at 10:00 am on Sept 12)
Sept 17-19	Formation of the Modern State	Chapter 3 in <i>Comparative Politics</i> (Online quiz due at 10:00 am on Sept 17)
Sept 24-26	Political regime: Varieties of democracies	Chapter 6 in CP (Online quiz due at 10:00 am on Sept 24)
October 1	Political regime: Varieties of autocracies	Chapter 7 in CP (Online quiz due at 10:00 am on Oct 1)
October 3	Theories and Cases	<u>Case Study Discussion 1: Iran, Russia, China</u>
<u>October 3</u>	<u>Annotated Bibliography due</u>	
October 10	Constitutions: federations vs unitary political systems	Chapter 8 in CP (Online quiz due at 10:00 am on Oct 10)
October 15	Executives: presidential vs parliamentary rule	Chapter 10 in CP
October 17	Theories and Cases	<u>Case study Discussion 2: USA; UK; France</u>
October 22-24	Legislatures and Electoral Systems: district vs PR system	Chapter 9 in CP (Online quiz due at 10:00 am on Oct 22)
October 29	Political parties and Party systems	Chapter 11 in CP (Online quiz due at 10:00 am on Oct 29)
October 31	Theories and Cases	<u>Case Study Discussion 3: Mexico; Germany; Japan</u>
November 5-7	Political economy and the welfare state	Chapter 4 in CP (Online quiz due at 10:00 am on Nov 5)
<u>November 7</u>	<u>Comparative Research Design due</u>	
	<u>Fall Term Break: No Classes</u>	
November 19	Economic and Social Development	Chapter 5 in CP (Online quiz due at 10:00 am on Nov 19)
November 21	Theories and Cases	<u>Case Study Discussion 4: India; Brazil; Nigeria</u>
November 26-28	Social movements, revolutions and contentious politics	Chapter 12 in CP (Online quiz due at 10:00 am on Nov 26)
December 3	Final Exam Preparation	