

Global Politics

Politics 105, Winter 2020

Sections 03 & 04

9:45 am-11:15 am Tuesday & Thursday, CGL 214

3:15-4:45 pm Tuesday & Thursday, CGL 214

Professor Zoila Ponce de Leon

Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 5-6:30 pm

Office: Huntley Hall 210

E-mail: zponcedeleon@wlu.edu

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the study of global politics from a comparative perspective. Comparative politics is a subfield of political science which attempts to answer questions like: Why do some countries become democratic, while others do not? Why do some countries develop economically, while others' economies stagnate? Why do political institutions matter, and can they be tailored to best fit particular societies?

The course is aimed at students with no prior knowledge of the area or the study of comparative politics, but a desire to understand how governments are organized and the major problems faced by their societies. This makes it important to go beyond the stereotypes that have traditionally shaped the perceptions of certain regions' histories, cultures, and economic, political, and social structures.

In the first portion of class, we will discuss the comparative approach to politics to lay the foundation to better understand the concepts discussed in this class. Next, we will study foundational topics like ideology, nationalism, and modern statehood. From there, we will delve into democracy, authoritarianism, and the design of political institutions. In the last segment of the course, we will cover specific topics of importance for countries around the world, including political violence, identity, and economic development.

The scope of the course is broad, mastering the minutiae of individual topics is not our objective. We discuss global politics to develop and apply critical thinking skills, questioning assumptions and deconstructing concepts often taken for granted. Our goal is to learn *how*, not what, to think about global affairs.

Course Objectives

- Develop tools to better examine a wide range of political outcomes in order to increase your understanding of politics around the world.
- Learn the vocabulary and common approaches that political scientists use to describe, classify, and explain political outcomes.

- Gain a deeper substantive knowledge of several countries to develop a better understanding of leading theories in comparative politics.
- Critically examine the course material presented, including academic readings, news articles, and lectures. Critical thought does not necessarily imply criticism, but a careful and creative consideration of the subject matter and awareness of multiple viewpoints.
- Learn to employ the comparative method, analyzing several country cases in greater detail and identifying commonalities and contrasts across cases.
- Improve writing skills and creative thinking through the research paper assignment, advancing logical arguments supported with evidence.
- Develop public speaking skills through class presentations, communicating thoughts clearly and concisely.

Course Requirements

The course will meet twice a week in plenary session. The requirements for the course are class attendance, reading of the assigned materials, and **active participation** in class discussions.

Attendance is obligatory. You have one unexcused absence and I will excuse your absence in reasonable cases. However, you need to contact me ahead of the class session that you miss. **If you miss more than 4 classes without prior and valid excuse, you will fail this course.** I will let you know when you have accumulated 4 absences and will automatically give you a failing grade if you miss another one. Classes missed immediately before and after holidays are particularly noticed. I expect everyone to **arrive on time**. Late arrivals are disruptive and distracting. I appreciate your cooperation.

You are required to have all course-related files saved on an **online drive** of your preference (i.e. Dropbox, Google Drive, etc.).

Come to office hours or contact me by e-mail if you have questions or concerns. If you have any kind of problem with the course or with life, please **communicate** with me (no need to give me any specific details regarding the situation you might be going through). Let me know if my office hours are not at a convenient time for you and we will set an appointment. I am willing to work with you to help you succeed, but I cannot do so retroactively at the end of the semester.

Students are expected to come to each session **ready for a lively discussion** that will help us all better understand historic and contemporary trends in global politics. The following are some guidelines to help you get started:

- **Speak up!** Ask the second you have a question or a comment. It is very possible that others may have the same concerns you do.
- **Respect** one another. Differences of opinion are likely and also desirable. **Listen** to other students' questions, express your disagreements with respect and value your colleagues' opinions as if they were your own.
- **Turn off your cell-phones.**
- **Stick to pen and paper** to take notes and forget about your laptop. In exceptional cases, laptops may be employed only for valid educational reasons related to the course. Violations may affect a student's grade and preclude further use of the laptop in class.

Course Evaluation

Participation	25%
Midterm exam	20%
Expert posts	10%
Short research paper	20%
Final exam	25%

Grade Assessment

Grades reflect the following assessment of your work in this course:

A: Excellent performance (90-100). Exceptional grasp of the material and a deep analytic understanding of the subject.

B: Good performance (80-89). Mastering the material, understanding the subject well, and showing some originality of thought and/or considerable effort

C: Fair performance (70-79). Acceptable understanding of the material, but not succeeding in translating this understanding into consistently creative or original work.

D: Poor performance (60-69). Some understanding of the material but exhibiting significant deficiency in comprehension and/or effort.

F: Fail (59 and below). Failing to complete assignments or to comprehend the basics of the material.

Minus grades at each increment are below 63, 73, 83, and 93, and plus grades above 67.9, 77.9, and 87.9. I don't round up .5 grades. In other words, 87.5 is not a B+ and 89.5 is not an A-.

If you have concerns about your grade in the course, please come talk to me as soon as possible about strategies to improve your performance.

Re-grading: I do not discuss grades via email. Please take 24 hours to review the initial feedback. Then, bring to my office a written note explaining the error that you think I have made. When I review the assignment again, your grade may go either up or down in order to more accurately assess your performance.

Participation

Participation is key for this course. Forget about the percentage of your overall grade it counts towards, the actual value of participation is much greater than this because it will help you to do better on all of the assignments and exams in this course.

Class meetings will combine short lectures and **group discussion**. Students are expected to read the assigned materials prior to each class and **participate actively**. It is essential that you come to class prepared so that you can engage in discussion and ask questions. We will also integrate current events. Making a habit of the daily act of reading news can be very helpful. Occasionally, I will send links to short news article to read before class.

Participation performance is not based on the number of times you speak up during class but on the **quality** of your input. By no means, this should be understood as having to "be right"

every time. Any comment or question that contributes to our analysis of course contents and discussion is highly regarded. Questions are an excellent way to participate. They show your interest in the course and your ability for critical thought.

We will be dealing with interesting and controversial issues in class, and I hope that we will have lively debates. It is important that you **respect** one another and the instructor. Differences of opinion can provide an opportunity for intellectual growth.

Exams

The **midterm** exam will be a self-timed written exam, consisting mainly of short-answer questions. You will have 60 minutes to complete the exam. No books, notes, or sources may be used. The exam will be posted on Canvas on Tuesday, **February 18th** at 5 pm and due by 8 am on Thursday, **February 20th**. Extensions for the exam will only be offered in cases of medical or family emergencies and must be arranged prior to the exam date. There will be no exceptions to this policy.

The **final** exam will be a self-timed written exam and consist of multiple choice, short-answer questions, and essay questions. It will take place during finals week (April 11-17) and will be posted on Canvas.

Expert Posts

Each student must select a country for the entire semester. You will write two expert posts that apply class concepts to your selected country. Each post should be two-paragraphs long and be uploaded to Canvas. The first one is due any time **before the midterm** (February 18th). This first post should also include a short reflection on what you already knew about the country before this assignment and why you picked it. The second post is due any time **before the final review** (April 9th). It should also include a reflection on what you learned about your country throughout the term and what surprised you.

You are also required to comment on a classmate's posts. I will randomly assign you a classmate and you must provide comments within a week of the deadline. If you fail to provide this feedback by the deadline, your own expert post grade will drop by one letter grade.

Short Research Paper

Each student must write a 5-page research paper due on Friday, **April 3rd** via Canvas. The papers have to be double-spaced and 12-point font. You will need to consult a minimum of 4 scholarly sources other than the materials presented in class. I encourage you to seek the help of the Writing Center if this is your first or second research paper:

<https://www.wlu.edu/writing-program/writing-center>

If this is your first Politics paper, I strongly recommend you seek the advice of the Williams School Communication Center. You can schedule an appointment via www.wlu.edu/the-williams-school/commcenter

The paper will be on a topic of your choice. I will post a list of suggested paper topics and instructions on Canvas. If you have an idea for a topic that would interest you more, you must

clear this topic with me before you start working on it. You may elaborate a single-country case study, a comparison of two countries, or a comparison of a country at two periods in time. Your paper should intend to answer a **why** question and explain a political phenomenon rather than just describe it.

You will be evaluated based on the clarity of your research question, the organization and clarity of your **argument**, the supporting evidence that you provide, and the quality of your writing. I will penalize **late papers**, with one letter grade per day late.

An **abstract** (one or two paragraphs stating the research question you will pursue and how you will do it) and an **outline** of the paper will be due on Friday, **March 6th** via Canvas (as a Word Document). You will also send a **copy** to a classmate who will provide comments on your progress. I will return your abstract and outline with comments. You should incorporate this feedback into your paper.

Peer-review: You will give comments to a classmate on their abstract and outline by Thursday, **March 12th**. You will bring your comments to class to share directly with your peer. If you fail to provide this feedback by the deadline, your own paper grade will drop by one letter grade.

Honor Code

For all course work, the Honor System applies. Familiarize yourself with the System at www.wlu.edu/executive-committee/the-honor-system/the-white-book#The_Honor_System

You also need to familiarize yourself with the concept and practice of plagiarism in order to make sure that you avoid it. Any sign of plagiarism in your paper will **automatically lead to an F** for that assignment. From the Catalog: "Plagiarism describes the use of another's words or ideas without proper acknowledgment. The students of Washington and Lee University have considered plagiarism a violation of the Honor System; therefore, all forms of plagiarism including Internet plagiarism are taken very seriously. Plagiarism takes many forms, including the wholesale copying of phrases or texts, or the use of ideas without indicating the source."

Ask me if you have any questions. Leyburn Library has helpful advice on avoiding plagiarism: <https://libguides.wlu.edu/c.php?g=99506&p=644455>

Disability Accommodations

Washington and Lee University makes reasonable academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. All accommodations must be approved through the Office of the Dean of the College. Students requesting accommodations for this course should present an official accommodation letter within the first two weeks of the term and schedule a meeting outside of class time to discuss accommodations. It is the student's responsibility to present this paperwork in a timely fashion and to follow up about accommodation arrangements.

Diversity Statement

Washington and Lee affirms that diverse perspectives and backgrounds enhance our community. We are committed to the recruitment, enrichment, and retention of students, faculty, and staff who embody many experiences, cultures, points of view, interests, and

identities. As engaged citizens in a global and diverse society, we seek to advance a positive learning and working environment for all through open and substantive dialogue.

Important dates

February 18-20	Midterm Exam
March 6	Paper Abstract & Outline
March 12	Peer-review
April 3	Final Paper
April 11-17	Final Exam

Course Book

We will use Dickovick, J. Tyler, and Jonathan Eastwood. *Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases*. **3rd Edition**. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018, available in the W&L University Store.

I will post the remaining required readings on Canvas.

Course Schedule

Please note that I reserve the right to make changes to the course schedule, including assignments due dates, when unforeseen circumstances occur.

January 9: Course Overview

January 14: Introduction to Comparative Political Analysis

- Dickovick and Eastwood Chapters 1, 2 & 16

January 16: The State

- Dickovick and Eastwood Chapter 3.
- Tilly, Charles. 1985. "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime." pp. 169-186 in *Bringing the State Back In*, Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, & Theda Skocpol, eds. Cambridge University Press.

January 21 & 23: Nationalism

- Dickovick and Eastwood Chapter 13.
- Nagel, Joane. 1994. "Constructing Ethnicity." *Social Problems* 41(1): 152-176.

January 28: Ideology

- Dickovick and Eastwood Chapter 15.

January 30 & February 4: Democracy and Democratization

- Dickovick and Eastwood Chapter 6.
- O'Donnell, Guillermo and Philippe C. Schmitter. 1986. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. Chapter 2 (pp. 6-8) & Chapter 3.

Recommended: Schmitter, Philippe C. and Terry Lynn Karl. 1991. "What Democracy Is... and Is Not." Journal of Democracy, 2(5): 22-33.

Volokh, Eugene. May 13, 2015. "Is the United States of America a Republic or a Democracy?" *The Washington Post*.

February 6 & 11: Varieties of Authoritarianism

- Dickovick and Eastwood Chapter 7.
- Linz, Juan J. *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, Chapters 1 & 2.

Recommended: Gandhi, Jennifer and Ellen Lust-Okar. 2009. "Elections Under Authoritarianism." Annual Review of Political Science 12: 403-422.

February 13: Case Study: Mexico

- Langston, Joy. 2017. *Democratization and Authoritarian Party Survival: Mexico's PRI*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Chapters 1 & 2.
- Dickovick and Eastwood Mexico Country Profile and Case.

Recommended: Flores-Macías, Gustavo. 2013. "Mexico's 2012 Elections: The Return of the PRI." Journal of Democracy, 24.1: 128-141.

February 18: Midterm Review

Midterm Exam (Feb 18-20)

February 20: Political Institutions I: Legislatures & Discussion of Paper Assignment

- Dickovick and Eastwood Chapter 9.

February 25 & 27: Washington Break - No Classes

March 3: Political Institutions II: Presidential and Parliamentary Systems

- Dickovick and Eastwood Chapter 10.
- Mainwaring, Scott and Matthew Shugart, "Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy: A Critical Appraisal." *Comparative Politics* 29, No. 4 (July 1997), pp. 449-469.

March 6: Paper Abstract & Outline Due (Canvas)

March 5 & 10: Political Institutions III: Political Parties and Representation

- Dickovick and Eastwood Chapter 11.
- Shuster, Simon. "The Populists." *TIME*.
- Ferguson, Niall. 2016. "Populism as a Backlash Against Globalizations." *Horizons – Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development* 8: 12-21.

March 12: Case Study: United Kingdom

- Dickovick and Eastwood UK Country Profile and Case.

Peer-review Due in Class

March 17: Political Economy and the Welfare State

- Dickovick and Eastwood Chapter 4.

Recommended: Hall, Peter A. and David Soskice. 2001. "An Introduction to Varieties of Capitalism." In Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage. Edited by Peter A. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (pp.1-33)

Przeworski, Adam and Fernando Limongi. 1997. "Modernization: Theories and Facts." *World Politics* 49: 155-183.

March 19: Political Violence I

- Dickovick and Eastwood Chapter 12.

Recommended: Skocpol, Theda. 1994. Social Revolutions in the Modern World. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 11 & Conclusion.

March 24: Political Violence II

- WATCH History Channel's short video "Here's How the Arab Spring Started and How It Affected the World"

March 26: No Class. Paper Workshop

March 31: Class Canceled

April 2: Political Identity

- Dickovick and Eastwood Chapter 14.

April 3: Final Paper (upload to Canvas)

April 7: Case Study: South Africa

- Jung, Courtney and Ian Shapiro. 1995. "South Africa's Negotiated Transition: Democracy, Opposition, and the New Constitutional Order," *Politics and Society* 23: 269-308.

April 9: Final Review