

Global Politics (POL 105)

Winter 2023

Sections 04 & 05

TR 1:30-3:00 pm & 3:15-4:45 pm, CGL 214

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Office Hours: Wednesday 10:30 am-12 pm & Thursday 5-6:30 pm

Course Description

This course introduces the study of global politics from a comparative politics perspective. Comparative politics is a subfield of political science that 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 of study, 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' cultures, and economic, political, and social structures. In the first portion of the course, 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, including political violence, identity, and economic development.

The scope of the course is broad, hence 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 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.
- Learn to employ the comparative method, analyzing several country cases in greater detail and identifying commonalities and contrasts across cases.
- 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. Critical thought does not necessarily imply criticism, but a careful and creative consideration of the subject matter and awareness of multiple viewpoints.
- Improve writing skills and creative thinking through the expert post 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. The requirements for the course are class **attendance**, **reading** of the assigned materials, and **active participation** in class discussions.

If you need to miss class, please send me a quick note ahead of the class session you must miss. Classes missed immediately before and after holidays are particularly noticed. I expect everyone to **arrive on time**. Late arrivals are extremely disruptive. I appreciate your cooperation.

Contact me 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 are 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.

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

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 queries you do.
- **Respect** one another. Differences of opinion are likely and desirable. **Listen** to your peers' questions and comments and express your disagreements with respect.
- **No cellphones in class.**
- **Stick to pen and paper** to take notes. In exceptional cases, tablets or laptops may be employed only for valid educational reasons related to the course. Violations will affect your grade and preclude further use of the device in class.

Course Evaluation

Participation	25%
Midterm exam	25%
Expert posts	25%
Final exam	25%

Grade Assessment

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 made.

There are no extra credit assignments in this course. 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. Grades reflect the following assessment of your work:

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-.

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 the assignments 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 a 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. Comments or questions that contribute to our analysis of course content and discussion are highly regarded. Questions are an excellent way to participate; they show your interest in the course and your ability for critical thought.

To achieve an **A** for participation, your engagement in class discussions must be exceptional, contributing to a lively conversation consistently and displaying that you master the material. You must be active in both class-wide and small-group discussions on a regular basis.

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

Exams

The **midterm** will be a self-timed written exam, consisting mainly of short-answer questions. You will have 90 minutes to complete it. No books, notes, or sources may be used. The exam will be posted on Canvas on Thursday, **February 16th** at 5 pm and due by 10 am on Saturday, **February 18th**. Extensions for the exam will only be offered in cases of emergencies and must be arranged prior to the exam date.

The **final** will be an oral in-person exam. It will take place during finals week (**April 12-14**).

Expert Posts

Each student must select a country of study (except the U.S.) for the entire semester. You will write two expert posts that apply class concepts to your selected country. Each post should be between two and three paragraphs long. The first one is due **by February 15th**. This first post should start with a short reflection on why you picked this country.

The second post is due **by April 5th** and should apply concepts studied after the midterm exam. It should end with a short reflection on what you learned about your country throughout the term and what surprised you. I encourage you to submit those as early as you can.

You will need to consult a minimum of two scholarly sources other than the materials presented in class for each post. I encourage you to seek the help of the [Writing Center](#) if this is your first or second Politics writing assignment.

You will be evaluated based on the clarity and precision of your application of concepts, the organization and clarity of your writing, and the supporting evidence that you provide. I will penalize **late posts** with one letter grade per day late.

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 on time, your expert post grade will drop by one letter.

Honor Code

For all course work, the [Honor System](#) applies. You need to familiarize yourself with the concept and practice of plagiarism to make sure that you avoid it. 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."*

Ask me if you have any questions. Leyburn Library has helpful advice on [avoiding plagiarism](#).

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. Please read the [Politics Department Statement on Diversity and Inclusion](#).

[Policy on Prohibited Discrimination](#)

The University prohibits and this policy addresses discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, veteran's status, and genetic information in its educational programs and activities and with regard to employment. Additionally, the University prohibits retaliation against any individual who brings a good faith complaint under this policy or is involved in the complaint process. Students, faculty, and staff found to have violated this policy will be disciplined appropriately, up to and including termination from employment or dismissal from the University.

[Sexual Discrimination & Misconduct Policy](#)

W&L prohibits all forms of sexual misconduct-which includes sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual intercourse, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual exploitation, domestic and dating violence, and stalking-and retaliation. This policy provides guidance to assist those who have experienced or been affected by sexual misconduct, whether as a complainant, a respondent, or a third party. It includes detailed information about what conduct is prohibited, confidential and reporting resources, and resolution procedures.

Course Book

Dickovick, J. Tyler, Jonathan Eastwood, Robin M. LeBlanc, and Zoila Ponce de Leon. 2022. *Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases*. 4th Edition. New York: Oxford University Press. [E-book](#) or print edition (W&L Store).

I will post the remaining required readings on **Canvas**. If you need access to a laptop, you may request one through the [Laptop Lending Program](#).

Course Schedule

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

January 10: Introduction to Comparative Politics

- Dickovick et al. Chapters 1 & 2
- [Complete Canvas assignment](#)

Recommended: Dickovick et al. Chapter 16

January 12 & 7: The State

- Dickovick et al. 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.
- Hansen, Valerie. "Old World Order: The Real Origin of International Relations" (Foreign Affairs review of *Before the West: The Rise and Fall of Eastern World Orders*. New York: University of Cambridge Press, 2022).

January 19 & 24: Nationalism

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

January 26: Ideology

- Dickovick et al. Chapter 15

January 31 & February 2: Democracy and Democratization

- Dickovick et al. 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.

February 7 & 9: Varieties of Authoritarianism

- Dickovick et al. Chapter 7
- Linz, Juan J. 2000. *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 14: Case Study: Mexico

- Langston, Joy. 2017. *Democratization and Authoritarian Party Survival: Mexico's PRI*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1.
- Dickovick et al. Mexico Country Profile and Case Studies.

Recommended: Flores-Macías, Gustavo. 2013. "Mexico's 2012 Elections: The Return of the PRI." Journal of Democracy, 24(1): 128-141.

February 15: Last Day to Upload 1st Post

February 16: Midterm Review

Midterm Exam (Feb 16-18)

February 28: Political Institutions I: Legislatures

- Dickovick et al. Chapter 9

March 2: Political Institutions II: Presidential and Parliamentary Systems

- Dickovick et al. Chapter 10.

- Mainwaring, Scott and Matthew Shugart. 1997. "Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy: A Critical Appraisal." *Comparative Politics* 29(4): 449-469.

March 7 & 9: Political Institutions III: Political Parties and Representation

- Dickovick et al. Chapter 11.
- Ferguson, Niall. 2016. "Populism as a Backlash Against Globalizations." *Horizons – Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development* 8: 12-21.

March 14: Case Study: United Kingdom

- Dickovick et al. UK Country Profile and Case Studies.

March 16: Expert Post Workshop

March 21: Political Economy & the Welfare State

- Dickovick et al. 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 23: Contentious Politics I

- Dickovick et al. Chapter 12.

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

March 28: Contentious Politics II

- WATCH History Channel's short video ["Here's How the Arab Spring Started and How It Affected the World"](#)
- WATCH Frontline PBS ["Egypt in Crisis"](#)

March 30: Political Identity

- Dickovick et al. Chapter 14.

April 4: Case Study: South Africa

- Dickovick et al. South Africa Country Profile and Case Studies.

Recommended: Tshishonga, Ndawkhulu. 2019. "The Legacy of Apartheid on Democracy and Citizenship in Post-Apartheid South Africa: An Inclusionary and Exclusionary Binary?" Affrika: Journal of Politics, Economics and Society, 9(1): 167-91.

Jung, Courtney and Ian Shapiro. 1995. "South Africa's Negotiated Transition: Democracy, Opposition, and the New Constitutional Order," Politics and Society 23(3): 269-301.

April 5: Last Day to Upload 2nd Post

April 6: Final Review

Final Exam (April 12-14)