

INTA 3203: Comparative Politics (Spring 2012)

Instructor:	Dr. Esther Skelley Jordan
Instructor Email:	estherjordan@gatech.edu
TA:	Devin Page
TA Email:	devin.page@gatech.edu
Class time:	M, W, F, at 10:05 – 10:55 a.m.
Class location:	IC 117
Office Hours:	By appointment and highly encouraged
Office Location:	Clough #457N

Course Description

Comparative politics is the study of political systems and problems in comparative perspective. This course will explore comparative politics in three components. The first component will provide a foundational understanding of the primary approaches and issues in comparative politics, with an emphasis on the core theories of the field. The second component will then apply these theories to in-depth country case studies through comparative and critical analysis. The cases will include: Britain, France, Germany, Japan, Russia, China, Mexico, India, Iran, South Africa, The European Union, and Nigeria. The third component, which will be dispersed throughout the entire semester, will include a research competition in which student teams seek to solve political problems in three categories of particular relevance today: After the Revolution, Organized Crime, and Income Inequality. Prizes will be awarded to winners of the competition.

Education research and the instructor's experience have proven that students learn by doing far more than they learn by listening. Therefore, this course will employ active learning. This means that class time will consist of discussions and short group activities, with minimal lectures. Students will bring responses to reading reflection prompts to each class and will contribute to class discussion based on their findings on a regular basis.

Learning Goals

1. Students will summarize the theories, paradigms and models that comprise the theoretical core of the field of comparative politics.
2. Students will use the comparative method to critically assess the ability of the theoretical core of comparative politics to explain the political and economic paths of development in ten country-cases.
3. Students will apply the comparative method and best practices in team work to solve a current political problem in the country of their choosing.
4. Students will prepare compelling, evidence-based, arguments to defend their critical assessments and problem-solving proposals. These arguments will be presented in written, oral, and poster formats.

Required Reading

Wiarda, Howard J., *Comparative Politics: Approaches and Issues*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007.

Kopstein, Jeffrey and Mark Lichbach, *Comparative Politics: Interests, Identities, and Institutions in a Changing Global Order, 3rd Ed.*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Various assigned articles, including some selected by research teams, will be posted in the “Resources” section of TSquare. **(TSquare)**

Class Requirements

Participation (33%)

Participation will account for 33% of your total grade. Credit will be given in three categories: Attendance, Daily Reflections, and Class Discussion.

Attendance (11%): One point will be given for each class that you attend out of 44 non-exam meetings.

A = 42-44, B = 40-41, C = 38-39, D = 36-37, F = 0-35

Daily Reflections (11%): For each reflection essay that you submit, you will be given one point for submission or two points for high quality. In order to earn the one point for submission, each reflection question must be answered in a manner that demonstrates that you did the reading. In order to earn two points for high quality, each reflection question must be answered in a manner that demonstrates a very thorough and critical reading of the assignment. By the second week of class, examples of essays that earned two points will be posted on Tsquare. Each reflection essay should be about one page in length and must be submitted at the start of class each day. It is expected that it will take you one to two hours to read each assignment and up to one hour to write each reflection, in keeping with the institutional expectation that undergraduates spend two to three hours studying outside of class for every one hour spent in class. Grades for this category will be calculated out of 88 total points, as follows.

A = 79-88, B = 70-78, C = 61-69, D = 52-60, F = 0-51

Class Discussion (11%): Your grade for class discussion will be based on the quality and consistency of contributions you make to class discussion and in class group activities. High quality contributions include prepared and informed comments and questions which demonstrate critical thinking regarding assignments and lectures. You must demonstrate orally that you have thought critically about each reading assignment, and about the comments made by your peers and instructor. Comments which stimulate an engaging and respectful debate among your peers are particularly appreciated, as are contributions which help your peers better understand the material. This part of your grade will be awarded subjectively, at the instructor’s discretion. The class will also be surveyed to assess participation grades, as a check on the instructor’s perspective. This student survey will be used only to *improve* student class discussion grades. The anonymous survey will be administered

through Survey Monkey. Grades for this category will be calculated out of 100 points, as follows.

A= 90-100, B = 80-89, C = 70-79, D = 60-69, F = 0-59

Exams (33%)

There will be two take-home essay exams, worth 100 points each and graded on the 100 point scale, listed above. Each will be worth 16.5% of your grade. You will be asked to respond to one of two possible essay questions, and will be given 48 hours to do so. The expected length of each essay is approximately five pages. A rubric will be provided in advance so that you will know exactly what is expected of your answers.

Team Research (34%)

Students will be assigned to research teams of 3 people, based on research interests within one of three categories: After the Revolution, Economic Inequality, and Organized Crime. Each team will write two essays and present a poster to the class and a panel of judges. The first essay (15%) will identify a problem in one country that is related to the team's assigned category. The second essay (19%) will propose a solution found in any other country, by using Mills Method. The poster will summarize the problem and solution, and will be presented to the class and a panel of judges. Rubrics will be provided ahead of time so that you know what is expected of your essays and poster. Team member assessments of each other's contributions will be incorporated into the grading process.

Prizes will be awarded as follows. The first prize "Best in Class" will be two points extra credit for each team member's course grade. The second prize, for "Best in Category" will be two points extra credit on the Team Research category. One team per category will be awarded extra credit. All students and a panel (including the TA, instructor, and outside judges) will vote to determine the winners.

It is highly recommended that you meet with me to discuss your research project very early in the semester. You must turn in a STAPLED HARD COPY of each paper at the beginning of the class session in which it is due. Email submissions will not be accepted. Instructions for these assignments will be found on Tsquare in the Resources section. Each of these assignments will be graded on the 100 point scale, listed above.

Make-up Policy

Extensions and make-up exams will only be offered in cases of documented medical emergencies or official university excuses. Students must bring any such case to the instructor's attention as soon as they become aware of it.

Disability or Health Related Issues

Students with a disability or a health related issue who need a class accommodation or are concerned about class performance should **make an appointment to speak with me during the first week of class or as soon as the health concern arises.**

Academic honesty

All coursework must meet the Georgia Tech standards of academic honesty. Each student is responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. See: <http://www.osi.gatech.edu/plugins/content/index.php?id=46>

Specific instructions regarding collaboration and citations will be provided for each assignment. Deviations from the instructions will be reported to the Dean Of Students.

NOTE: The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary and will be announced.

Week	Notes & Major Assignments	TOPIC	Wiarda	Kopstein and Lichbach	Other
		UNIT 1: APPROACHES AND ISSUES			
1/9/12		Introduction to Comparative Politics; Research Projects/Working in Teams	Wed: 1, 2		
1/16/12	Mon: No Class, MLK Day Wed: Research Topic Preferences Due	Political Development; Political Culture	Wed: 3; Fri: 4		
1/23/12		Corporatism; Indigenous Theories; Political Development Revisited	Mon: 5; Wed 6; Fri: 7		
1/30/12		Research Problems: After the Revolution, Organized Crime, Income Inequality			Readings to be announced
2/6/12	Wed: Group Research Problem Paper Due	Comparative Democracy; Civil Society	Mon: 8; Wed: T.B.A.; Fri: 9		
2/13/12		Economic Development; The Great Systems Debate; Review	Mon: 10; Wed: 12, 13		
		UNIT 2: COUNTRY CASE STUDIES			

2/20/12	Mon: Exam 1	An Alternative Approach to Comparative Politics; Research Workshop		Wed: 1; Fri: 2	
2/27/12		Early Developers: Britain; France; Comparative Perspective		Mon: 3; Wed: 4	
3/5/12		Middle Developers: Germany; Japan; Comparative Perspective		Mon: 5; Wed: 6	
3/12/12		Late Developers: Russia; China; Comparative Perspective		Mon: 7; Wed: 8	
3/19/12	No Class: Spring Break				
3/26/12		Experimental Developers: Mexico; India; Comparative Perspective		Mon: 9; Wed: 10	
		Experimental Developers: Iran; So. Africa; Comparative Perspective		Mon: 11; Wed: 12	
4/2/12	Monday: No Class	Experimental Developers: EU; Nigeria		Wed: 13; Fri: 14	
4/9/12	Friday: Exam 2	Comparative Perspective Conclusion; Review			
4/16/12		Research Solutions: After the Revolution, Organized Crime, Income Inequality			Readings to be announced
4/23/12		Poster Presentations/Adjudication; Wrap-up			
4/30/12	Finals week: Final Research Reports due Mon., 04/30, by 11:30 a.m. in Dr. Jordan's Office				