Introduction to Comparative Politics – INTA 3203 – A
Spring 2019
Ivan Allen College G17—MWF 9:05-9:55am

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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 9:55-11:55am in Habersham 212A, or by appointment

Course Content and Student Learning Goals

This course is designed to introduce students to the study of comparative politics. We will be examining political institutions, discussing how these institutions were shaped by politics, and looking at how these institutions shape politics today. Throughout the course, we will analyze current events to see how political institutions and world politics interact. Besides familiarizing students with countries that they may not have studied before, this course is intended to provide students with the theories and concepts they need to understand world politics, help them learn how to compare and assess the merits of various political systems, and enable them to analyze politicians' actions and current events (Increasing cultural, contextual, and ethical awareness). Consequently, this course will consist mainly of interactive lectures, short small group activities, and large group discussions.

Book


Readings + Other Assignments

While the only book you need to own is the Dickovick and Eastwood (D&E) book mentioned above (yes, you do need the current edition), I will also be assigning news articles and additional readings. These will be posted on Canvas or the links will be provided in the syllabus. Because we will be discussing current events, which (for obvious reasons) cannot be listed on the syllabus in advance, it is your responsibility to check Canvas to make sure you have read everything assigned for a given class period. If there are
any links on the syllabus do not work for you, use the titles and authors provided in the syllabus to google the articles and find them that way.

While there may be occasional homework assignments besides the assigned readings, most of your homework in this class consists of reading things and then thinking about what you’ve read. Consequently, I expect you to actually do the readings. Letting your eyes wander over the page does not qualify as “reading;” you must also understand and retain the main points of the material. Lectures are designed with the expectation that you have read the assigned material before class begins. You will not do well in this course unless you do the readings. I also reserve the right to give you pop quizzes if I feel it is necessary. These will count towards your participation grade.

You are responsible for being in class, checking your GA Tech email, checking Canvas, and learning about homework assignments from a fellow student if you miss class. I may assign readings that are not on this syllabus; you are expected to keep track of and read those assignments, as well.

I will not accept late assignments unless there are extreme extenuating circumstances. Start your papers early and save them to a cloud platform (Dropbox, iCloud, Google Drive, etc.). Computer emergencies happen at unpredictable times—always have your work backed up! For the papers, if you find yourself in a position where you are sending me an assignment via email (which should not happen unless you have discussed it with me beforehand and I have given you permission to send an electronic copy), it is your responsibility to make sure you correctly attach a readable version of your assignment. Forgetting to attach a document or attaching an unreadable or incomplete version of your assignment does not count as having turned in your work, and all late work policies will apply.

Course Requirements

1. Participation (10%). This consists of attendance, class conduct, homework, and regular participation.

   Attendance and participation are required. I will take attendance every day. If you are going to miss a class and want that absence to be excused, you must contact me *before* class with a valid excuse *and then* provide written verification for your excuse. I
will **not** remind you to bring in the verification for your excuse; that is your responsibility. Even if you contact me before class with an excuse that I approve as valid, your absence will not be marked as excused until you present the necessary verification. **After the first week of class, you are allowed 4 unexcused absences; every unexcused absence after that will automatically cause your participation grade to drop by ½ a letter grade (5 points).** Unexcused absences are not “get out of class free” cards; they exist to cover unexpected circumstances such as flat tires, head colds, oversleeping, etc., and you are still responsible for all of the material you missed during your absence. If you use all of your unexcused absences and then experience one of these surprise events, do not expect me to excuse your absence.

As mentioned in the “readings and homework” section of the syllabus, students are expected to come to class prepared (i.e. having read and thought about the readings & homework) and ready to **actively** participate. I will reiterate that in order to do this, you must read before class starts.

Do not expect an A just for showing up—regular attendance denotes average performance, which equates to a grade of 75% (C). Raising this grade hinges on demonstrating that you have both read and thought about the reading. The only way for you to do this is to actively participate. An easy way to do this is to come to class with prepared comments and/or questions relating to the week’s readings, the lectures, or to how current events reflect what we are studying in class. I will give you ample opportunities to participate in class.

One of the goals of this class is to give you a safe environment in which to speak so that you can practice analyzing political events and applying the theories we learn in class to real-world events. To this end, we will frequently engage in discussion. **Guidelines we will follow to help foster meaningful discussion:**

- **Be respectful.** Different opinions are healthy and welcome in the classroom. However, it is essential that we treat one another with respect. You do not have to agree with someone’s view, but you do have to be respectful. Disrespectful students may be asked to leave the classroom. Please take a look at GA Tech’s anti-harassment
policy if you have questions
(http://www.policylibrary.gatech.edu/anti-harassment-policy)

- Speaking in front of groups can be intimidating to some students; it is my goal to ensure that this class is a comfortable space where everyone can participate. Our discussions will be most successful when all voices are heard. If speaking in front of the class makes you nervous, come talk to me as soon as possible so that we can figure out some strategies you are comfortable with to help you earn points towards your participation grade. I cannot give you full credit if you do not speak in front of the full class.

- Don’t be afraid to ask questions! Everyone has different areas of expertise, and I don’t expect you to understand or remember everything immediately, so don’t demand that of yourself, either. I will be of limited help to you if you don’t speak up when you need clarification, and the discussion portions of the class will not work unless you participate.

2. Two Short Papers (15% for the first one; 20% for the second one). You will have two 5-page papers due over the course of the semester. The due dates are February 22 and March 27. The first paper you turn in will be worth 15% of your final grade. The second paper will be worth 20% of your final grade. Note that you must give me a stapled hard copy of your paper at the start of class (the start of class ≠ when you show up to class). If you do not do this then the paper is late, and I will not accept it. The full prompts, guidelines, and expectations will be posted on Canvas, but here is a short overview of what is expected:

You will select one country to analyze in both papers. Refer to the 2018 Freedom in the World report from Freedom House (https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2018), and select a country that is rated partly free. A rating of partly free indicates that your country is somewhere between a functioning liberal democracy and a wholly authoritarian regime. Democratic institutions may be present, but they are not functioning properly.

- For Country Paper #1, you will describe and classify your regime and examine the current challenges to democracy. How would you classify the current regime in your country and why? Is it closer to a
consensual democracy, a majoritarian democracy or a non-democratic system? What are the main problems for democracy?

• For Country Paper #2, you will examine ways that your country can become more democratic in the future, with a focus on political institutions – presidential vs. parliamentary systems, electoral systems, constitutional design, and any additional political institutions that may impact the state of democracy. How would you suggest that the country move toward improving democracy given its own unique history? Would the country be better suited to a presidential or a parliamentary system? What electoral system would be likely to function well given the demographic breakdown and political cleavages? Are there other institutional changes that would improve the quality of democracy?

3. Midterm (20%). The midterm will be on Friday, March 8, and it will consist mainly of short answer questions. It will be closed book, and it will take place in class.

4. Group Project (10%). The group presentations are based on the country papers and will take place the last full week of class (April 15, 17, and 19). Having completed two research papers on your country, you are the class’s expert on that case. You will be put into groups with other ‘experts,’ defined by world region (e.g. Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, etc.). Each group will come to a consensus about democracy in their region and will present their findings to the class, along with relevant comparisons and contrasts across their cases. Everyone is expected to participate in the Q&A after each presentation. A full description of the assignment will be posted on Canvas.

5. Final (25%). The final will be on Wednesday, May 1, at 8am. It will be closed book, and it will consist mainly of short answer questions.

Grading Scale

A 90-100
B 80-89.99
C 70-79.99
D 60-69.99
F 0-59.99
**Honor Code**

It is expected that all work you do in this course will be original work not previously or simultaneously handed in for credit in another course. Your work must follow the Georgia Tech Honor code. Please take the time to read the Honor Code carefully (https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-affairs/academic-honor-code). Suspected cases of cheating or other forms of academic dishonesty will be investigated by the Office of Student Integrity. For further information: http://osi.gatech.edu/

**Familiarize yourself with what constitutes plagiarism in order to make sure that you avoid it.** Plagiarism is defined as deliberate or reckless representation of another's words, thoughts, or ideas as one's own without attribution in connection with submission of academic work, whether graded or otherwise. Consult the information at http://libguides.gatech.edu/citationtools/aboutplag and ask me if you have any questions.

**Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement**

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. See http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/22/ for an articulation of some basic expectations that you should have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

**Students with Disabilities**

Students with a documented disability should register with the Access Disabled Assistance Program for Tech Students (ADAPTS) so that I am able to provide you with the accommodations you need. Please contact the ADAPTS office (http://www.adapts.gatech.edu) and turn the ADAPTS form in to me as soon as possible.

**Questions**
If you have questions about the course, please come see me after class or during office hours. Please email me if you absolutely cannot come to office hours. Some questions cannot be easily resolved by email, so we can set up another time to meet if necessary. Please do communicate with me early if you have any challenges that you expect to impact your performance in this course; **I will not be able to help you if you do not ask for help.**

**Rescheduling Exams**

If you have to miss class on the day of an exam or wish to reschedule an exam, then you must write and explain beforehand in all but the most unusual circumstances. If you are going to miss an exam for an event you know about well in advance, please come speak to me in first week or two of class) so that we can make appropriate arrangements. Please note that I cannot allow you to take the final on a different day or at a different time without the approval of Academic Scheduling; therefore, contact them if you have a conflict with the time of the final and need to change it.

**Conduct in Class + Additional Info**

Feel free to bring your laptops to class—if you do, however, I expect you to use them for activity related to this course. Playing on the Internet during class is highly disrespectful to people who are trying to pay attention. I may not call you out for being on Twitter during class, but I will notice, and it will affect your final grade. **You may not have your laptops open during any sort of student presentation.** If, during the course of the semester, I see that the laptops are acting as more of a distraction than a help, I reserve the right to restrict their usage.

Do not use your cell phone during class. I can tell when you're using it. Don't do it.

If you are going to spend class time playing on your computer or your phone, then please respect your classmates, use one of your unexcused absences, and do not come to class.

You must include a proper, formal salutation and ending with your message, otherwise I will not respond to you. Do not address me as "Hey" or "What's
up." Do not send professors emails that look like text messages. I am your professor, not your buddy.

I will not respond to emails asking questions whose answers are on this syllabus. This saves both my time and yours; it is quicker for you to read a syllabus than it is for you to write me an email and wait for my reply.

If you email me after 8pm on the day before an exam, I might not see it in time to respond.

As a general rule, I will not email you your grades, nor will I discuss your grades with you within 24 hours of handing graded assignments back. That being said, if you have questions about my comments on your assignments, I am happy to talk to you. If you want me to regrade something, you will need to provide me with a written statement in which you specifically respond to the feedback I have given you and explain why you feel you deserve a higher grade.

**Course Schedule**

Introduction to Comparative Political Analysis

**January 7**—Go over syllabus, introductions

**January 9**—Have read: D&E Ch. 1 (23pp)

**January 11**— Have read: D&E Ch. 2 (23pp)

The State, Development, Democracy, and Authoritarianism

**January 14**—The State
Have read: D&E Ch. 3 (24pp)

**January 16**—Political Economy
Have read: D&E Ch. 4 (26pp)

**January 18**— Political Economy, cont.
Have read:

**January 21**—No class; MLK Day

**January 23**—Development
Have read: D&E Ch. 5 (24pp)

**January 25**—Development, cont.
Have read:


**January 28**—Democracy and Democratization
Have read: D&E Ch. 6 (26pp)

**January 30**—Democracy and Democratization, cont.
Have read:


**February 1**— Democracy and Democratization, cont.


**February 4**—Authoritarian Regimes and Democratic Breakdown

Have read: D&E Ch. 7. (27pp)

***Country Selection Due—email me your top 3 country choices by the start of class (9:05am), otherwise I will pick a country for you***

**February 6**—Authoritarian Regimes and Democratic Breakdown, cont.

Have read:


**February 8**—Authoritarian Regimes and Democratic Breakdown, cont.

Have read the following 5 articles:


Institutions of Government

**February 11**—Constitutions and Constitutional Design
Have read: D&E Ch. 8 (27pp)

**February 13**—Constitutions and Constitutional Design, cont.
Have read:

moraless-reelection-bid-bolivia/?utm_term=.0f6a55e5c4c3 (Also available on Canvas) (2pp)

February 15—Constitutions and Constitutional Design, cont.
Have read:


February 18—Legislatures and Legislative Elections
Have read: D&E Ch. 9 (28pp)

February 20—Legislatures and Legislative Elections, cont.
Have read: News articles, TBA (see Canvas)

February 22—Legislatures and Legislative Elections, cont.
***Paper #1 Due***
Have read: News articles, TBA (see Canvas)

February 25—Executives
Have read: D&E Ch. 10 (25pp)

February 27—Executives
Have read:

December. Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2018/12/12/venezuela/?utm_term=.336ccc99b529 (Also on Canvas) (2pp)

**March 1— Executives**

Have read:


**March 4—Political Parties, Party Systems, and Interest Groups**

Have read: D&E Ch. 11 (26pp)

**March 6— Political Parties, Party Systems, and Interest Groups, cont.**


**March 8—***Midterm*****

Have read: Study!

**Politics, Society, and Culture**

**March 11— Revolutions and Contention**

Have read: D&E Ch. 12 (28pp)

**March 13— Revolutions and Contention, cont.**

Have read the following 6 articles:

Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/06/world/africa/kenya-election-kenyatta-odinga.html (Also on Canvas) (6pp)


March 15—Discuss how the group projects will work
Have read: N/A

March 18—22—No class; Spring Break

March 25—No official class meeting so that you can work on your project

March 27—Nationalism and National Identity

***Paper #2 Due***
Have read: D&E Ch. 13 (20pp)

March 29—Nationalism and National Identity, cont.
Have read:
Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/08/world/asia/china-uighur-muslim-detention-camp.html (Also on Canvas) (11pp)


April 1— Nationalism and National Identity, cont.

April 3—Race, Ethnicity, and Gender
Have read: D&E Ch. 14 (23pp)

April 5—Race, Ethnicity, and Gender, cont.
Have read and listened to:


April 8—Race, Ethnicity, and Gender, cont.
Have read:


**Transitional Justice**

**April 10**—What is it, what does it do?

**April 12**—Transitional Justice in Practice
Have read: Go to https://www.ictj.org/our-work (International Center for Transitional Justice). Pick three of the available countries and read the “Background” and “ICTJ’s Role” sections.

**Presentations**

**April 15—19—***Group Project Presentations***
Homework: Prepare for your presentation!

**April 22—Last Day!** Fill out course evaluations, review for exam
Homework: Prepare questions to ask in class

**FINAL EXAM: ***Wednesday, May 1, 8am*** (in our regular room)