This is a *Core IMPACTS* course that is part of the [Social Sciences](#) area.

*Core IMPACTS* refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help students master course content, and support students’ broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad **Orienting Question**:  
- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following **Learning Outcome**:
- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following **Career-Ready Competencies**:
- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion

**COURSE OBJECTIVES AND ORGANIZATION**

Why do broadly similar communities – e.g., nation-states, provinces, and municipalities – pursue radically different approaches to common policy challenges? Consider the issue of climate change: how can it be “impossible” to achieve lower carbon emissions in one country when this objective is being realized through policymaking or social change in a broadly similar country? Likewise, why is one country markedly more resilient than another in preparing for, managing, and resiliently responding to the large-scale disasters that are becoming more frequent, more destructive, and locally more variegated as a result of climate change? The theories and methods of comparative political analysis are potentially useful in solving such puzzles.

This course begins with a survey of the field of comparative politics, focusing on its analytic domain and core theories. We will then introduce the comparative method, a tool for explaining why and how broadly similar entities employ different approaches to solve common problems. Afterward, we will embark upon a series of case studies of different types of countries. The final
weeks of the seminar will be devoted to a problem-based learning exercise that focuses on the puzzle of why one country is markedly more resilient in the face of disaster than other broadly similar countries. This group exercise will require application of the comparative method and one or more of the core theories of comparative politics in proposing a practical solution to a real-world puzzle of sustainability.

LEARNING GOALS

- Students will become more aware of the diversity of cultural and ethical systems in the world and be able to identify, critically analyze, and apply distinguishing traits/perspectives/formulations/institutions in comparative cases or issue areas.
- Students will acquire a basic understanding of the core theories, paradigms, and models that comprise the theoretical core of comparative politics.
- Students will apply the comparative method to critically assess the core theories’ ability to explain political, economic, and social change.
- Students will apply the comparative method and best practices in teamwork to solve a current problem of comparative politics.
- Students will defend their critical assessments and problem-solving proposals through compelling, evidence-based, arguments in written, oral, and audio-visual formats.

INSTITUTE POLICIES

- **Honor Code**: Academic honesty is required of all Georgia Tech students by the Institute’s honor code, the text of which is found at honor.gatech.edu.
- **Special Accommodations**: Students requesting academic accommodations based on a documented disability are required to register with the Access Disabled Assistance Program for Tech Students (ADAPTS) at http://www.adapts.gatech.edu.
- **Diversity & Inclusion**: The Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts – of which the Nunn School is a constituent part – supports the Institute’s commitment to creating a campus free of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. We further affirm the importance of cultivating an intellectual climate that allows us to better understand the similarities and differences of those who constitute the Georgia Tech community, as well as the necessity of working against inequalities that may also manifest here as they do in broader society.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course grades will be determined by your performance on a combination of individual and group assignments. Course grades will be weighted as follows:

**Individual work**
- discussion post / peer review: 15 points (three posts / reviews; 5 points each)
• movie critique / peer review: 5 points
• midterm examination: 20 points
• anonymous peer assessment of oral presentations: 10 points

Group Work
• research design exercise: 10 points
• oral presentation: 20 points
• policy brief: 20

DISCUSSION TOPICS AND COMMON READINGS

The required textbooks for this course are listed below. Common readings are available on the INTA 3203 Canvas or through the Georgia Tech Library’s website.


Students wishing to pursue a particular topic in more depth should consult with the Instructor.

LEARNING MODULES

Module 1
Lecture topics:
• January 8: Course Requirements
• January 10: Course Overview

Required readings:
• “Globalisation: the rise and fall of an idea that swept the world,” The Guardian (February 14, 2017)

Module 2
Lecture topics:
- January 15: Official Institute Holiday - No class
- January 17: Comparative Method

Required readings:
- Jay Steinmetz, “Chapter 8: Comparative Politics” in Power, Politics, and Purpose: An Orientation to Political Science,” *FHSU Digital Press*, 2021 (https://scholars.fhsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=all_oer);
- Witt, M. A. Witt et al., “Mapping the business systems of 61 major economies: A taxonomy and implications for varieties of capitalism and business systems research,” *Socio-Economic Review*, 16 (No. 1, 2018), pp. 5-38

Module 3

Lecture topics:
- January 22: Classical Paradigm
- January 24: Core Theory #1 – Neo-Liberalism

Required readings:

Assignments:
- Discussion Post / Peer Review #1

Module 4

Lecture topics:
- January 29: Core Theory #2 – Neo-Marxism
- January 31: Core Theory #3 – Modernization & Development

Required readings:
- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848) (online at: https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ Links to an external site.)
Module 5

Lecture topics:
- February 5: Core Theory #4 – Cultural Theory
- February 7: Core Theory #5 – Institutionalism

Required readings:

Assignments:
- Discussion Post / Peer Review #2

Module 6

Lecture topics:
- February 12: Country Case Study #1 – United Kingdom
- February 14: Country Case Study #2 & #3 – New Zealand & Australia

Required readings:

Assignments:
- Research Design Project

Module 7

Lecture topics:
- February 19: Country Case Study #4 – Japan
- February 21: Country Case Study #5 – Denmark
Required readings:

- “Government and Politics in Modern Japan,” Asia for Educators (Weatherhead East Asia Institute, Columbia University) (http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/japan_1950_politics.htm)
- Anne Skorkjær Binderkrantz and Peter Munk Christiansen, “From classic to modern corporatism: Interest group representation in Danish public committees in 1975 and 2010,” Journal of European Public Policy, Vol. 22 (No. 7, 2015), pp. 1022-1039

Midterm Examination:

- February 26: Midterm Review
- February 28: Midterm Examination

Module 8

Lecture topics:

- March 4: Country Case Study #6 – China
- March 6: Country Case Study #7 – South Korea

Required readings:

- Steve Tsang and Olivia Cheung, “Has Xi Jinping made China’s political system more resilient and enduring?,” Third World Quarterly, Vol. 43 (No. 1, 2022), pp. 225–243

Module 9

Lecture topics:

- March 11: Country Case Study #8 – Fiji
- March 13: Sustainable Development

Required readings:

Assignments:
• Discussion Post / Peer Review #3

Spring Break: March 18 & March 20: Spring Break – No class

Module 10
Lecture topics:
• March 25: Flood Resilience
• March 27: Megaregion Sustainability

Required readings:
• Stephen Wheeler, “Regions, Megaregions, and Sustainability,” Regional Studies, Vol. 43 (No. 6, 2009), pp. 863-876

Assignments:
• Movie / Documentary Critique

Module 11
Lecture topics:
• April 1: Disaster Governance
• April 3: Group Project Set-up

Required readings:
• Patrizia Isabelle Duda et al., “Informal disaster governance,” Politics and Governance, s
• Brian Woodall et al., “Institutional Resilience and Disaster Governance How Countries Respond to Black Swan Events,” Preprint available at http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4442737

Module 12

Group work:
• April 8: Group Work
• April 10: Group Work

Assignments:
• Status Report #1 (due April 13)

Module 13

Group work:
• April 15: Group Work
• April 17: Practice Presentations

Assignments:
• Status Report #2 (due April 20)

Module 14

Group work:
• April 22: Practice Presentations
• April 24: Oral Presentations

Assignments:
• Oral Presentation (April 24)
• Policy Brief (April 24)
• Anonymous Peer Assessment – Oral Presentations (due April 25)
• Anonymous Peer Assessment – Policy Briefs (due April 25)