

International Affairs 3203**Comparative Politics**

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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.

Andrew C. Janos. *Politics and Paradigms: Changing Theories of Change in Social Science* [Paperback]. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986

Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* [Paperback]. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990

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:

- Barry Eichengreen, "One Economy, Ready or Not: Thomas Friedman's Jaunt Through Globalization," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78 (No. 3, May/June 1999), pp. 118-122
- "Globalisation: the rise and fall of an idea that swept the world," *The Guardian* (February 14, 2017)
- Andres Rodríguez-Pose, "The Rise of Populism and the Revenge of the Places That Don't Matter," *LSE Public Policy Review*, Vol. 1 (No. 1, 2020), pp. 1-9
- John Feffer, "The Return of the Far Right," Institute for Policy Studies (<https://ipsdc.org/the-return-of-the-far-right/>), pp. 181-199
- Adam B. Smith, "2022 U.S. billion-dollar weather and climate disasters in historical context," NOAA Climate.gov; online at <https://www.climate.gov/news-features/blogs/beyond-data/2022-us-billion-dollar-weather-and-climate-disasters-historical>

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:

- Andrew C. Janos, *Politics and Paradigms: Changing Theories of Change in Social Science* (Stanford University Press, 1986), pp. 1-96 and 127-156
- Adam Smith, *An Inquiry Into the Wealth of Nations*, Book I, chapter 2 ("self-love"); Book IV, chapter 2, paragraph 9 ("invisible hand"); Book 4, chapter 9, paragraph 51 ("duties of the sovereign") (online at www.marxists.org/reference/archive/smith-adam/index.htm)
- Robert H. Bates, "Comparative Politics and Rational Choice: A Review Essay," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 91 (No. 3, 1997), pp. 699-704
- Joe A. Oppenheimer, "Rational Choice" in *The Sage Encyclopedia of Political Theory* (Mark Bevir, ed.), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2010, pp. 1149-1158 (available as an eBook through GT Library)

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.)
- Andre Gunder Frank, "The Development of Underdevelopment," *Monthly Review* (September 1966), pp. 17-31
- Herbert Spencer, "The Social Organism," in Herbert Spencer, *The Social Organism* (<http://www.econlib.org/library/LFBooks/Spencer/spnMvS9.html>), 9.0-9.19

- W.W. Rostow, “The Stages of Growth,” *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 12, No. 1 (1959), pp. 1-16
- Elinor Ostrom, “A General Framework for Analyzing Sustainability of Social-Ecological Systems,” *Science*, Vol 325 (July 24, 2009), pp. 419-422

Module 5

Lecture topics:

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

Required readings:

- Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Talcott Parsons, tr.), London: Routledge, 2010 (1930), Chapter 5
- Geert Hofstede, “Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context,” *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, (12-1-2011)
- Robert D. Putnam, “Social Capital and Public Affairs,” *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, Vol. 47 (No. 8, May 1994), pp. 5-19
- Samuel P. Huntington, “Political Development and Political Decay,” *World Politics*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Apr., 1965), pp. 386-430
- Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 3-26, 36-53, 73-117, 131-140

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:

- Douglass C. North, “Institutions and economic growth: An historical introduction,” *World Development*, Vol. 17 (Issue 9, September 1989), pp. 1319-1333
- Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 92-104.
- Nicholas Bromfield and Allan McConnell, “Two routes to precarious success: Australia, New Zealand, COVID-19 and the politics of crisis governance,” *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, Vol. 87, (No. 3, 2021), pp. 518-535

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)
- Brian Woodall, *Japan Under Construction: Corruption, Politics, and Public Works* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 1-23 (“Introduction”) (<https://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft5489n9zf;query=;brand=ucpressLinks to an external site.>)
- Norbert Gotz, “Corporatism and the Nordic countries,” *Nordics Info* (Aarhus University), pp. 1-7.
- 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:

- Peter Evans and Patrick Heller, “The State and Development,” chapter in *Asian Transformations: An Inquiry into the Development of Nations* (Deepak Nayyar, ed.). London: Oxford University Press, 2019,
- 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
- Chalmers Johnson, “Political Institutions and Economic Performance: The Government-Business Relationship in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan,” chapter in *The political economy of the new Asian industrialism* (Frederic C. Deyo, ed.). Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 136-164
- Olli Hellmann, “South Korea’s Democracy and the Legacies of the Developmental State,” chapter in *Stateness and Democracy in East Asia* (Aurel Croissant & Olli Hellmann, eds.). London: Cambridge University Press, 2020, pp. 47-70.

Module 9**Lecture topics:**

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

Required readings:

- Adelle Thomas, April Baptiste, Rosanne Martyr-Koller,, Patrick Pringle, and Kevon Rhiney, “Climate Change and Small Island Developing States,” *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, Vol. 45 (2020), pp. 1-27.
- Stephen McCarthy, “Soldiers, chiefs and church: unstable democracy in Fiji,” *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 32 (No. 5, 2011), pp. 563-578
- Garrett Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons,” *Science*, New Series, Vol. 162 (No. 3859, Dec. 13, 1968), pp. 1243-1248
- Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 1-28

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:

- Adjo Amekudzi-Kennedy et al, “Value-Focused Infrastructure Development: Affecting the Development of Shared Regional Prosperity,” *Journal of Urban Planning and Development*, Vol. 147 (No. 4, 2021)
- Perna Singh et al, “Lessons from Case Studies of Flood Resilience: Institutions and Built Systems,” *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, Vol. 9 (2021)
- Stephen Wheeler, “Regions, Megaregions, and Sustainability,” *Regional Studies*, Vol. 43 (No. 6, 2009), pp. 863-876
- Brian Woodall et al., “The Megaregion – Forms, Functions, and Potential? A Literature Review and Proposal for Advancing Research,” *International Journal of Urban Sciences*, Vol. 27 (No. 3, 2023)

Assignments:

- Movie / Documentary Critique

Module 11**Lecture topics:**

- April 1: Disaster Governance
- April 3: Group Project Set-up

Required readings:

- Scott Dance, “How a deadly blizzard forced a snow-hardy city to reckon with disaster risks,” *Washington Post*, December 22, 2023.
- Kathleen Tierney, “Disaster governance: social, political, and economic dimensions,” *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, Vol. 37 (2012), pp. 341–63
- 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)