

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 nation-states, provinces, or municipalities pursue radically different approaches to the same policy challenges? Consider the issue of climate change: why is it “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 are some countries 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 can be 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. Along the way, we introduce the comparative method, a handy tool for explaining variance in policy responses among broadly similar countries (or policy convergence among dramatically dissimilar countries). Afterward, we will explore 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 sustainability puzzle.

LEARNING GOALS

- Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of principal contemporary global challenges in the field of international affairs.
- 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 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)
- documentary 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 – Course Overview & Requirements

Lecture topics:

- August 20: Lecture 1-Course Overview
- August 22: Lecture 2-Course Requirements

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://ips-dc.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 – Comparative Method & Classical Paradigm**Lecture topics:**

- August 27: Lecture 3-Comparative Method
- August 29: Lecture 4-Classical Paradigm

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);
- Andrew C. Janos, *Politics and Paradigms: Changing Theories of Change in Social Science* (Stanford University Press, 1986), pp. 1-96 and 127-156

Assignments:

- Discussion Post / Peer Review #1
 - Discussion post due: August 28 (by 11:59PM)
 - Canvas assigns peer preview:
 - Peer review due: August 31 (by 11:59PM)

Module 3 – Neo-Liberalism & Neo-Marxism

Lecture topics:

- September 3: Lecture 5-Core Theory #1 – Neo-Liberalism
- September 5: Lecture 6-Core Theory #2 – Neo-Marxism

Required readings:

- 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 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)
- 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

Module 4 – Modernization & Cultural Theory

Lecture topics:

- September 10: Lecture 7-Core Theory #3 – Modernization & Development
- September 12: Lecture 8-Core Theory #4 – Cultural Theory

Required readings:

- 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. 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
- 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

Assignments:

- Discussion Post / Peer Review #2

Module 5 – Institutionalism & United Kingdom**Lecture topics:**

- September 17: Lecture 9-Core Theory #5 – Institutionalism
- September 19: Lecture 10-Country Case Study: United Kingdom

Required readings:

- Samuel P. Huntington, “Political Development and Political Decay,” *World Politics*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (April 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
- Douglass C. North, “Institutions and economic growth: An historical introduction,” *World Development*, Vol. 17 (Issue 9, September 1989), pp. 1319-1333
- 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 (Group) due

Module 6 – New Zealand/Australia & Japan**Lecture topics:**

- September 24: Lecture 11-Country Case Study – New Zealand & Australia
- September 26: Lecture 12-Country Case Study – Japan

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.>)

Assignments:

- Discussion Post / Peer Review #3

Module 7 – Denmark & China**Lecture topics:**

- October 1: Lecture 13-Country Case Study – Denmark
- October 3: Lecture 14-Country Case Study – China

Required readings:

- 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
- 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

Module 8 – Fiji & Sustainable Development**Lecture topics:**

- October 8: Lecture 15-Country Case Study – Fiji
- October 10: Lecture 16-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
- 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
- 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:

- Documentary Critique/Peer Assessment

Module 9 – Disaster Governance**Lecture topics:**

- October 15: Fall Break – no class
- October 17: Lecture 17-Disaster Governance

Required readings:

- Kathleen Tierney, “Disaster governance: social, political, and economic dimensions,” *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, Vol. 37 (2012), pp. 341–63
- Brian Woodall et al., “Institutional resilience and disaster governance: How countries respond to Black Swan events,” *Progress in Disaster Science*, Vol. 22C (April 2024), 100329
- Purna Singh et al, “Lessons from Case Studies of Flood Resilience: Institutions and Built Systems,” *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, Vol. 9 (2021)

Module 10 – Course Recap & Midterm Examination

- October 22: Lecture 20-Course Recap & Examination Review
- October 24: Midterm Examination

Module 11 – Group Project Set-up**Group Project:**

- October 29: Lecture 21-Group Project Set-up
- October 31: Group Work

Assignments:

- Status Report #1 (due November 2)

Module 12

Group Project:

- November 5: Group Work
- November 7: Group Work

Assignments:

- Status Report #2 (due November 9)

Module 13

Group Project:

- November 12: Group Work
- November 14: Group Work

Assignments:

- Status Report #3 (due November 16)

Module 14

Group Project:

- November 19: Group Work
- November 21: Elevator Speeches

Thanksgiving Holiday – November 26 & 28 – no class

Module 15 - Group Presentations, Policy Briefs, and Peer Assessment

- Policy Brief (due by **noon** on December 2)
- Oral Presentation (due in class on December 3)
- Anonymous Peer Assessment – Oral Presentations (due by **noon** on December 4)
- Anonymous Peer Assessment – Policy Briefs (due by **noon** on December 4)