

## International Affairs 3203

### Comparative Politics

Instructor: Brian Woodall

Email: [brian.woodall@inta.gatech.edu](mailto:brian.woodall@inta.gatech.edu)

Office: Habersham 146

Office hours: by appointment

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, or 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 country case studies. 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 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](http://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 other groups' oral presentations and policy briefs: 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

## **LEARNING MODULES**

### **Module 1**

### ***Lecture topics:***

- January 7: Course Overview
- January 9: 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

## **Module 2**

### ***Lecture topics:***

- January 14: Classical Paradigm
- January 16: Comparative Method

### ***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
- 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](https://scholars.fhsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=all_oer))

### ***Assignments:***

- Discussion Post / Peer Review #1

## **Module 3**

### ***Lecture topics:***

- January 21: Core Theory #1 – Neo-Liberalism
- January 23: 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](http://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**

### **Lecture topics:**

- January 28: Core Theory #3 – Modernization & Development
- January 30: 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

### *Lecture topics:*

- February 4: Core Theory #5 – Institutionalism
- February 6: Country Case Study #1 – 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. 1319-133

### *Assignments:*

- Research Design Exercise

## Module 6

### *Lecture topics:*

- February 11: Country Case Study #2 & #3 – New Zealand & Australia
- February 13: Country Case Study #4 – Japan

### *Required readings:*

- 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
- “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](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**

### ***Lecture topics:***

- February 18: Country Case Study #5 – Denmark
- February 20: Research Design Discussion

### ***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

### ***Assignments:***

- Research Design Discussion

## **Module 8**

### ***Lecture topics:***

- February 25: Country Case Study #6 – South Korea
- February 27: Country Case Study #7 – China

### ***Required readings:***

- Chalmers Johnson, “The Democratization of South Korea: What Role Does Economic Development Play?” *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 2 (No. 1, 1989), pp. 63-79
- 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.
- 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

### ***Assignments:***

- Documentary Critique and Peer Review

## **Module 9**

### ***Lecture topics:***

- March 4: Country Case Study #8 – Fiji
- March 6: Disaster Governance

### ***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.
- 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
- 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, 22 (2024), 100329, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pdisas.2024.100329>

### ***Midterm Examination:***

- March 11: Midterm Review
- March 13: Midterm Examination

***Spring Break:*** March 17-21

## **Module 10**

### ***Lecture topics:***

- March 25: Group Project Set-up
- March 27: Group Work



*Assignments:*

- Elevator Speech #1

**Module 11**

*Lecture topics:*

- April 1: Group Work
- April 3: Group Work

*Assignments:*

- Teammate Assessment #1

**Module 12**

*Group work:*

- April 8: Group Work
- April 10: Group Work

*Assignments:*

- Elevator Speech #2

**Module 13**

*Group work:*

- April 15: Group Work
- April 17: Group Work

*Assignments:*

- Teammate Assessment #2

**Module 14**