UNIVERSITY OF NORTH GEORGIA
Department of Political Science and International Affairs

POLS 2301_OLA:
Introduction to Comparative Politics
Spring 2015

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This is a fully online course—this course takes place in an online environment ONLY. YOU MUST ENSURE YOU HAVE FULL ACCESS TO D2L AND UNG EMAIL. You are responsible for all of the policies and information provided in this syllabus. Please read the syllabus carefully and direct any questions to me. In addition, you are responsible for all course-related materials, information and announcements sent individually or class-wide through email (either UNG or D2L) and/or posted on D2L. Certain aspects of the study of comparative politics are such that it is not feasible to provide all of the course content in advance; we will have to wait and see how the “real world” transpires over the coming months. Therefore, I reserve the right to change the schedule as I deem appropriate and necessary.

IMPORTANT

On-line course “contact” confirmation
Each student must send me an email from an active and valid email account within 4 days of course start (i.e., on or before 9 Jan). Send the email to larry.morton@ung.edu. I will respond individually to each email I receive to ensure we have basic electronic connectivity with each other. Within the email please include your full name (and nickname if you prefer to use one) and course number, plus a little background about why you are taking this course and why “on-line”.

NOTE: Students who do not comply with this requirement will be dropped from the course. If you do not get a response to your email within 48 hours, please advise Mr. Andrew D. Eade, Administrative Assistant for the Department of Political Science & International Affairs @ 706-864-1628.
In addition, Module 00 contains an assignment for a posting to the D2L “Discussion Board” that must also be completed on or before 9 Jan. This post is a great way to introduce yourself to your classmates and will confirm for me you have been able to get into D2L.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Course Objectives

Welcome to Introduction to Comparative Politics (a.k.a. Governments of the World). One purpose of comparative politics is to study the domestic politics of individual countries and to create typologies of regimes and forms of government. In addition to this basic purpose, contemporary studies in comparative politics also include examination of issues, themes and concepts such as democracy, nationalism, civil society and the like in order to establish cross-country patterns and to allow the student to make generalized statements about government behaviors both domestically and internationally. To this end, the overall purpose of this three credit hour course is to introduce you to the primary types and structures of governmental systems that are (or have been) active on the global stage, as well as provide a foundation for more advanced study within the political science sub-discipline of comparative politics. The course has two primary objectives:

The first objective is to acquaint you with the universal political principles and the key terms, theories and concepts used to describe the fundamental political structures and practices humans use to try to bring order to their respective societies. To do this we will explore such general topics as political ideology, political economy, economic systems (including the role of the government), political culture, regime type and institutional structure, and political behavior. Gaining a basic understanding of the terminology and concepts generally used to describe governments and governmental systems will help you build the analytical and critical thinking skills necessary to gain a better understanding of how the world’s countries function and for evaluating and comparing the diversity of political systems operating around the globe.

The second objective is a bit more specific -- the course will provide you the opportunity to gain a broad overview of the basic structure and workings of several of the major state actors currently playing roles on the international stage. Although there is no intent to make you 'country-experts' in the inner-workings of any particular country, having a basic understanding of how particular governments (and their respective societies) function is an important component for you to better understand the diverse actions and interactions currently seen within the global political and economic arena.

By providing a forum for you to gain a basic knowledge of Western and non-Western governments and political systems around the world, this course will help you develop a global perspective. Such a global perspective will, in turn, give you a better appreciation for why the world is as it is, as well as promote your understanding and appreciation of other peoples, cultures, and societies.

Student Learning Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

• Define the primary political terms and concepts used to describe political and economic systems.
• Describe in general terms the various structures that comprise any contemporary governmental system.
• Describe the basics of the governmental systems and structures in use in specific states active on the contemporary global stage.
• Compare and contrast political institutions and processes across countries and derive generalizations about any particular country’s functioning.
• Identify the location of the major countries of the world.

Course Overview & Content
The course consists of four separate, but in no way distinct, blocks of instruction.

In Block I, “Terms and Concepts” we will discuss thematically the overarching terms and concepts that are used to describe governmental and economic systems in general. These themes include topics such as sovereignty, authority, and power; citizens, society and the state; and political and economic ideology.

Block II is dedicated to a general overview of “Governmental Organizations, Structures and Operations.” The organization of state institutions around the world varies widely -- federal and unitary; constitutional monarchy and republic; presidential, parliamentary and semi-presidential; autocratic and theocratic. We begin with a basic look at these categories and the various types of regimes, and then take a closer look at the major political institutions themselves that comprise a “government” and how a state is “governed.” These include components such as the executive, the law-making bodies, the judiciary, political parties, political party systems, electoral systems, civil societies, public policy apparatus and levels of government. We finish with a look at how various states “deal” with political and economic change.

As an integral component of Blocks I & II, country-specific case studies are used to illustrate the terms and concepts associated with governmental systems, and also to provide concrete examples of various contemporary political systems and institutions.

Block III, “Case Studies,” is shorter than the other two, but just as important. The intent of Block Three is to provide you the opportunity to tie together the overarching terms & concepts from Block I with the general structures and operations of governmental systems from Block II in order to describe a specific country “of interest” in today’s world. At the close of Block III you will have the opportunity to share your new-found knowledge and world-view with your classmates.

Block IV will provide a brief look those issues and events that are not only shaping the contemporary world, but that will more than likely have a major, and at times, profound, affect on the states and governments of the world in the coming years.

REQUIRED COURSEWORK & GRADES
Note: This course is based on a fairly intensive reading and writing program.

Reading Assignments

The assigned readings provide both initial and supplementary information on the topics being covered in the course. Reading and understanding them is the basis for learning in this course.

Reading assignments are drawn from:


• Current articles and other supplemental reading materials I will provide and post on D2L (either .pdf or link). Some of the supplemental readings are not posted yet because the world around us is in flux. I will have them posted at least a week prior to the applicable lesson.

• Powerpoint presentations (.pdf format) titled “Module Summary.” These presentations are designed to be an aid to you in understanding the material presented in the formal readings. I use these “slides” to expand on and provide context and depth to the textbook and the supplemental readings. I will spend some time discussing the readings, but will not be a substitute for you reading the assignments yourselves. Some information I’ll review, some I’ll highlight, some I’ll clarify, some I’ll expand on, and some information I’ll present new. Most information you have to pick up on your own. To the degree the world around us cooperates, I will interweave current events into the material.

• Regular reading of a major daily newspaper such as the Wall Street Journal (http://online.wsj.com/public/us); the International Herald Tribune (www.iht.com); the Washington Post (http://www.washingtonpost.com); and the New York Times (http://www.nytimes.com). Additional sources are posted on D2L in the folder “News & Information Sources”.

A word of caution. Note that the reading assignments for many of the Modules are fairly extensive. In addition, there is a good deal of factual information you must master in order to be able to understand the overall subject area and to be able to coherently describe specific governmental systems. Do NOT put off reading until the tail end of the Module. I placed a short handout titled “Guide to Effective Reading” in D2L that contains several tips you may find useful.

**Grades**
Your final grade is a direct reflection of the effort you put in. There is no curve. All excellent work will receive an A. All good and competent work will receive a B. Work with some flaws will receive a C. Work with very significant flaws will receive a D, along with recommendations or requirements to speak with me or any special counseling and advising services as appropriate.

The following components contribute to your final grade:

- **Chapter Quizzes.** Officially, whether you read or not is your choice – you are adults. That said, you will quickly discover that your overall learning is a direct function of the time you spend reading and digesting the material. To help you get into the reading habit, I have set up a total of five quizzes; these are identified in the Learning Modules and on the course calendar. They cover the assigned reading for the respective subject area. The quizzes are available in D2L and can be completed any time prior to 11:59 pm on the Friday of the applicable Module. There will be 15 questions on each quiz worth .66 point each. You will have two independent attempts for each quiz; I will count the higher score. You will have 30 minutes per attempt once you start and must complete it in one sitting. Although the quiz is open book, I strongly suggest you do your reading before beginning the quiz. The quizzes together are worth 5% of the final grade. Remember, you
MUST complete (and submit) the quiz prior to 11:59 pm eastern time of the Friday identified in the Learning Module.

- **Topical Discussions.** During 10 of the 16 weeks of the course you will have the opportunity to share your insights, opinions and questions about topics integral to the week’s Learning Module via D2L discussion boards. These discussion boards provide you a forum and the opportunity to interact with your fellow students and with me in “almost” the same way we could in a physical classroom. For each of the 10 “discussions” you will have one or perhaps several different topics to select from, think about and comment on. Some of the topics may be more factually oriented and others may be more personal opinion oriented. Regardless, your participation in the discussions is an integral part of this course and your learning. We will see how the “discussions” progress as we move along the course. For now, the basic “ground rules” and detailed guidance regarding the submission of and grading of this aspect of the course is in “Discussion General Information” under Module 00 in the D2L Content Browser (as well as in the “Help” section). The discussions together contribute 28% toward your final grade.

- **Exams.** There will be three “End-of-Block” exams and a comprehensive Final. Blocks I & II are each worth 90 points; Block III is worth 70 points; and the Final is worth 200 points. Each of the end-of-block exams will consist of objective questions (multiple choice; true/false & fill-in-the-blank); they will include some questions on basic world geography also, as one cannot compare governments without having at least a working knowledge of where the world’s countries are in relation to each other. The questions will be based on the information presented in all required readings. The three end-of-block exams will be administered on-line via D2L. The Final will be a comprehensive exam covering information presented during the entire course and WILL REQUIRE your physical attendance on campus. The exams together provide 45% of your overall grade.

[Note: The Final Exam is a proctored event scheduled for 10:20-12:20 on 30 April. Your physical attendance is required in keeping with the guidelines found in Banner: "Students are expected to participate in at least one proctored activity (e.g. exam). Proctored activities are held on campus by the instructor (free) or at an authorized testing center (for a fee)." For those who cannot make the formal time, I will try to set up at least one additional “physical” test opportunity and will also set up a test opportunity via Proctor U in accordance with UNG policy. As soon as I have the details I will pass them on to you. If you anticipate taking the Final Exam via ProctorU, I highly recommend you visit https://proctoru.com/portal/ung/ as soon as possible in order to learn about the procedures for registering and taking the exam, including technology requirements. I have also placed some information in the “Help” folder in D2L.]

- **Case Study.** As a part of Blocks I and II we will be using a number of country case studies (provided by Dr O’Neil, et. al.) to help illustrate the various terms, concepts and ideas being explored. The countries selected by Dr. O’Neil are generally considered “important” in the world of comparative politics. However, there are other countries that are also “important” in today’s world. Knowledge of these countries will be provided via an Individual research paper AND a Group presentation.

The basic assignment is for each of you to conduct research as appropriate and construct a “case study” patterned after Dr. O’Neil’s cases. The country you select will be a country “in the news” (and NOT one covered by O’Neil). A partial list of such countries includes: N Korea; Syria;
Afghanistan; Iraq; Turkey; Greece; Vietnam; Israel; Pakistan; Egypt; Cuba; Peru; and Argentina. Additional details will be discussed at a later date.

**Research Paper.** The research paper is individual work and makes up 20% of your final grade. Papers will be a minimum of 10-12 pp long and submitted via Turnitin.com (class ID: 9173616; password: morton) no later than 12:30 pm eastern time on 17 April 2015.

I use a 200-point grading scale for the paper; half for content and half for communication. Content includes your demonstration of research, understanding and critical thinking; communication includes structure and grammar. Although this is not an English class, I consider this second part as important as the first – even the best analysis is for naught if you can’t communicate your ideas to others in a coherent and comprehensible way. I placed several handouts in D2L containing guidance and tips for writing essays.

**Group Presentation.** Each student will be required, together with other classmates sharing the same country, to prepare an overview of your assigned country and share that with the rest of your classmates. Your work will be posted on D2L as part of the assigned readings for Learning Module 10. More details regarding this assignment will be passed in a few weeks. This group project is worth 20 pts and comprises 2% of the final grade.

**Extra credit.** I am a firm believer there is more to your learning experience than simply reading a textbook or sitting in class and listening to a lecture. You can earn extra credit (maximum of 40 pts) for attending outside lectures/presentations/etc. (up to 15 points per event/3 events max). I will let you know of upcoming events I consider acceptable. You will need to write at least a 2-3 page summary of the event along with your personal observations, critique, etc. If you have ideas for events, please let me know in advance and I will evaluate them and include them if appropriate.

Note: You will not receive any extra credit points if you do not complete **ALL** regular assignments on time (this includes quizzes, the research paper and accompanying group work, and exams). Any extra credit points earned prior to a late or missing submission will be removed.

There are 1000 total points available during the course. Your final grade will be based on the university’s grade distribution as follows:

- A = 900-1000 points  (90-100%)  – excellent work
- B = 800-899 points   (80-89%)  – good work
- C = 700-799 points   (70-79%)  – average work
- D = 600-699 points   (60-69%)  – below average
- F = 599 points       (59%) and below  – failing

**Lesson Plan**

This is just a bare-bones version of what you and I will be doing this semester. For details on each individual session, including specific Learning Objectives and Required Readings, click on the designated “Learning Modules” tab in D2L.

**FOR SPECIFIC DATE INFORMATION REGARDING THE MODULES and DEADLINES FOR ALL ASSIGNMENTS PLEASE REFER TO D2L CALENDAR. ANY CHANGES TO THE SCHEDULE WILL BE RECORDED IN THE D2L CALENDAR.**
Week 1 (5 Jan)
• LM 00 -- Welcome & Introductions. Course overview.

Block One: Terms and Concepts

Week 2 (12 Jan)
• LM 1 -- Introduction to comparative politics & country overview.

Week 3 (19 Jan)
• LM 2 -- Units of comparison – The State

Week 4 (26 Jan)
• LM 3 -- Units of Identity -- nations and societies; nationalism; ethnicity & religion

Week 5 (2 Feb)
• LM 4 -- Political Ideologies, Political Attitudes, & Political Culture

Week 6 (9 Feb)
• LM 4 (cont.)

Week 7 (16 Feb)
• LM 5 -- Political Economy

Week 8 (23 Feb)
• LM 5 (cont.)

27 Feb -- last date to withdraw without academic penalty

Week 9 (2 Mar)
End-of-Block Exam (Exam #1)

Block Two: Governmental Organizations, Structures and Operations
• LM 6 -- Types of Regimes

Week 10 (9 Mar)
• LM 6 -- (cont.)

Week 11 (16 – 20 Mar) Spring Break

Week 12 (23 Mar)
• LM 7 -- Government Structure – institutions, branches, electoral systems, local government

Week 13 (30 Mar)
• LM 8 -- Political Conflict & Competition – party systems, elections, electoral systems, civil society

Week 14 (6 Apr)
• LM 9 -- Political Violence

Week 15 (13 Apr)
End-of-Block Exam (Exam #2)
Block Three: Case Studies

- LM 10 -- States & Governments in the “News”
  - Case Study Presentation Due 15 Apr.
  - Case Study Paper Due 17 Apr.

Week 16 (20 Apr)
End-of-Block Exam (Exam #3)

Block Four: A ‘Look Ahead’

- LM 11 -- The World Today & Tomorrow / Course Wrap-up & Review

Week 17 (27 Apr)
FINAL Exam
- 30 Apr 10:20 AM - 12:20 PM
  - Possible additional dates TBD

Final Grades Posted 4 May
MY PHILOSOPHY

Rule number 1 -- your education is your responsibility; I am just a facilitator. I ascribe to Albert Einstein’s philosophy: “I never teach my pupils, I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.” In other words, I cannot learn for you, but I will do all I can to help you learn.

Rule number 2 -- You are adults and I will treat you as such; I expect you to act as such in return. I ask you to show respect for your classmates and for me.

Learning about the political and governmental systems of other countries can sometimes get confusing, but can also be fun. While no prior knowledge of politics or even of the world is necessary to excel in this course, what is necessary is a desire to learn. My intent is to use my posted “lectures” to expand on and provide context and depth to the textbook and the accompanying readings. While I will spend some time discussing the highlights from the readings, those postings cannot substitute for you reading the assignments yourselves. Via directed questions and the various writing assignments I will try to challenge your thinking and your ability to dissect and comprehend what you see and hear about the world around us.

My first goal with respect to this course is to replicate the learning that occurs in the face-to-face version of the course. In other words, this course is not “easier” simply because it is on-line. I expect you to put in the same amount of effort and be just as prepared for the weekly discussions and assignments as those students who take the classroom-based version. This means you need to dedicate at least 12-15 hours on average per week to Comparative Politics.

Although the idea of “going to college in my pajamas whenever I want” has a major draw conceptually, it is one that very easily works against success. Be careful you do not fall into the trap that often meets students – that online learning gives you freedom to procrastinate an assignment (supposedly in favor of a more convenient time). Do your best to not miss a day or get behind in the material. Remember that you’re on your own as far as being systematic, reading, taking quizzes and posting discussions. You have to get into the habit of consistently checking in online or you will get behind and fail this course. I highly recommend you set up and adhere to a structured schedule (as you would a physical class) to the degree your life allows. You do not necessarily need to follow that schedule rigidly, but having a certain amount of structure to your day/week and your studies will allow you to be a better learner.

Since the course revolves around the discussion of politics, culture, and current events, we will sometimes delve into controversial topics. Please remember to respect the opinions of your classmates, even if you do not agree. When you critique or respond to something, critique or respond to the words, NOT to the person. One of the main lessons I want you to internalize by May is that opinions are not right or wrong -- just different!

I take very seriously my responsibility to assist you in both your educational and your life endeavors and am more than happy to provide advice or support to the degree I can. I will talk with you about subjects and issues inside of, as well as, outside the course -- student-related, life-related, future profession-related, etc. I am not, however, in a position to discuss school-related financial issues such as scholarships. If there is something going on in your life that is family-, health-, work-, whatever else-related that is impacting your coursework, get in touch with me as soon as you can. If you don’t communicate with me I can’t work with you or help you.
One last bit of information. Like you, I have a life beyond the immediate confines of the classroom and this course. I plan on being “on-line” at least between 7 & 9 pm on Wednesdays, and also during my physical office hours in the DoB on Tuesday & Thursday mornings. If you need to meet with me at some other time, please contact me and I will try to accommodate your schedule (either physically or virtually). In addition to these specific times I will generally check my e-mail twice a day and will try to answer your e-mails within 24 hours M-F; do not expect a reply on the weekends (though I may surprise you). In addition, I will do my best to have written assignment and exam scores posted within a week following the respective activity.
UNG GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES.
This course addresses the following outcomes. The student will:
1. Communicate effectively using multiple literacies and forms of expression;
2. Demonstrate analytic, contextual, and holistic thinking;
3. Engage in integrative learning;
4. Reflect critically and take informed action individually as citizens;
5. Analyze ethical interactions in local and global communities

INFORMATION LITERACY STATEMENT.
The research, writing, and discussion activities at UNG are designed to create an information literate student, one who can effectively and efficiently read, access, weigh and apply information within the moral, social, cultural and economic context given.

So what exactly is Information Literacy (IL)? Information literacy, the topic of North Georgia’s Quality Enhancement Plan, is the ability to know when information is needed and to access, evaluate and use information effectively and ethically. Information literacy, with its focus on definable skills and critical thinking, supports and extends the institution's overall learning outcomes. Please read and think about the statements below as you complete your work for this course.

Information Literacy Learning Outcomes:
1. The information literate student determines the nature and extent of the information needed. (Know)
2. The information literate student accesses needed information effectively and efficiently. (Access)
3. The information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system. (Evaluates)
4. The information literate student, individually or as a member of a group, uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose. (Use)
5. The information literate student understands many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally. (Ethical/Legal)

*Learning Outcomes adapted from the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) standards.

ATTENDANCE POLICY
It is very important for you to be “visible” and active throughout the semester, and interact with your classmates and with me in the online environment. Your presence and participation is vital for understanding and learning the material covered in this course. Since this is a web-based course, there is no regular attendance that is required for this class. You work on your own time and focus on getting the assignments in on time. That said, there is one mandatory session (Final Exam) requiring your physical presence on campus. Attendance at this proctored event is a course requirement. Failure to attend will result in “failure” of the course.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS
NOTE: You are responsible for making sure your D2L and UNG email is working without a problem. Technical glitches are not my fault and will not be considered a valid reason for missing information or for missing deadlines.
There are several aspects of technology you need to understand in order to effectively participate in this class. If you have issues or problems with any of these elements please contact me, the UNG Helpdesk (http://www.northgeorgia.edu/helpdesk) and/or the GA View 24/7 Help Center (https://d2lhelp.view.usg.edu/georgia_kb_search.do).

1. Ability to use email and attachments
2. Ability to use and submit materials via Microsoft word or in PDF format
3. Ability to sign into and navigate D2L
4. Ability to sign into and submit written work via Turnitin.com

One thing you do need to watch for when working with D2L is pop up blockers. Make sure when you are in D2L that your pop up blocker is turned off.

If you anticipate taking the final exam via Proctor U, there are some specific technology requirements you will need to meet; I highly recommend you visit https://proctoru.com/portal/ung/ as soon as possible to ensure you are prepared.

INSTRUCTOR-STUDENT COMMUNICATION
I will use D2L for the majority of the communications regarding course content, assignments, deadlines, etc. However, I prefer to use the regular UNG email system (not D2L email) for normal communication. Please check email and announcements in both systems daily to make sure you are up to date on all new developments in the course and any changes to this syllabus or to the Learning Modules.

EXAM MAKE-UP POLICY
Since the three end-of block exams are available for several days on-line, there is essentially no excuse for not completing them on-time. IF circumstance arise that cause you to miss completing the exam, you must have a valid reason and be able to offer proof to support your position. Employment conflicts or just not feeling up to it are not valid excuses. If at all possible, contact me prior to the test period -- send me an email.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS POLICY
NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED!!!!!!

The research paper must be uploaded to Turnitin.com no later than 12:30pm on the 17th of April. I WILL NOT accept late papers. The on-line quizzes and end-of-block exams will be available well before the submission deadline; they cannot be submitted after the designated close-out time and date. The same applies to the discussion posts.

I will try very hard to be fair and consistent. Almost everyone works hard and carries many burdens around here. Flexibility may be possible ahead of time; very little is possible after the fact. I urge you to try to complete your assignments ahead of the deadline. Believe it or not, there is absolutely nothing wrong with completing and turning in an assignment ahead of time! Bottom Line -- Get used to meeting deadlines as most bosses in the real world will demand you do so, and rather than your course grade, your continued paycheck may be riding on it.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY
The UNG honor policy will be strictly enforced. The Integrity Code reads as follows:

“On my honor, I will not lie, cheat, steal, plagiarize, evade the truth or tolerate those who do.”

(Honor Code, Undergraduate Bulletin, pp. 81-84)
Suspected violations of the Academic Integrity policy should be referred by students to me. If I conclude a violation of the Academic Integrity policy has occurred, I will either (at my discretion) penalize you and file an incident report with the Academic Integrity Council or refer the matter directly to the Academic Integrity Council. If I intend to file an incident report, I will review the completed report with you and will request you sign the report as an indication you are aware of the contents of the report.

➢ **PLAGIARISM**

**DO NOT CHEAT. YOUR WORK MUST BE YOUR OWN.** Any instance of plagiarism or cheating will result in a zero grade for the assignment and/or a failing grade for the course (“F”) depending on the severity of the offense as determined by me.

➢ **TUTORING**

Tutor.com is an on-line tutoring service available to students seven days/week, 5:00 PM to 12:00 midnight. UNG students can access Tutor.com from any PC or Mac by:

- From UNG Homepage, click on Current Students and Cadets
- Scroll down and click on Academic Support Programs
- Find and click on Tutoring Services
- Click on the Tutor.com icon

If you prefer individual face-to-face tutoring, please contact Melissa Lach for a peer-tutor in any and all subjects. For more information contact Melissa Lach at mjlach@northgeorgia.edu or call 706-864-1433.

➢ Refer to the UNG [SUPPLEMENTAL SYLLABUS](#) for the following information:

- Academic Success Plan Program
- Students with Disabilities
- Academic Integrity Policy
- Disruptive Behavior Policy
- Class Evaluations
- Academic Exchange
- Inclement Weather
- Course Grades and Withdrawal Process