

Course Syllabus

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Welcome to PL SC 003: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Course Overview

CATEGORY	INFORMATION
Credits:	3
Prerequisites:	None
Delivery:	Web (Canvas, https://psu.instructure.com)
Dates:	See the Calendar tab in Canvas.
Instructor:	See the Orientation page in Canvas.

Description

This course introduces major concepts in comparative politics. There are many different ways to define comparative politics. Some definitions focus on distinguishing comparative politics based on the use of the comparative method instead of statistical, experimental, or case study approaches. Other definitions identify it as the study of politics within nations as opposed to politics between nations. Yet others point out particular topics that comparative politics focuses on. Contemporary comparative politics scholars are engaged in work that could fall into any of these categorizations and more. We will learn about comparative politics within a scientific framework. This will enable us to systematically examine political phenomena using data and observations.

We will start by setting up the overall framework we will be using with an overview of the scientific method and logic. That is, we will learn about constructing logically consistent and valid arguments, theory building, identifying hypotheses, collecting data, and testing hypotheses. Then we will spend the majority of the course reviewing a number of topics which we will cover using the scientific framework. We will examine theories that explain the emergence of the modern state. We will spend some time

learning about democracy and dictatorships, how to measure these concepts, the factors that lead to the emergence of democratic regime and dictatorships, and the impacts of democracy and dictatorship. Finally, we will explore political institutions such as electoral systems, majoritarian and consensus views of democracy, and fiscal policy.

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Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Describe various methodologies used to examine politics within and between countries scientifically.
2. Explain important concepts related to comparative politics and apply them to current political phenomena.
3. Identify political institutions in context and explain the factors that lead to their emergence.
4. Discuss potential consequences of political institutions.

Organization

This course is made up of 13 lessons.

For each lesson, you will complete the following activities and assignments:

- Explore online course content.
- Read a few assigned readings.

In addition, you will be asked to engage in online discussions, complete short quizzes, take a midterm exam and complete a group-based project.

Online Learning & Attendance

This course has been developed to promote asynchronous learning. The instructor and students do NOT meet on a designated day and time each week. For each lesson, there is a timeframe to complete all activities and assignments, and you may work at your own pace within that timeframe. However, you must adhere to the deadlines outlined on the calendar. (Click the **Calendar** tab in Canvas. Or check the **Orientation** page under the **Modules** tab.) You should log into the course daily to check for updates, review lessons, and participate in activities.

Texts & Other Materials

There is 1 required text:

Clark, William Roberts, Golder, Matt, and Sona Nadenicheck Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. 3rd ed. CQ Press. ISBN 9781506318127.

Any additional readings and other resources will be made available on Canvas.

Library Services

Penn State Libraries provides a wide variety of services and resources. To learn how to take advantage, refer to the [Online Student Library Guide](http://guides.libraries.psu.edu/onlinestudentlibraryguide) (<http://guides.libraries.psu.edu/onlinestudentlibraryguide>) at <http://guides.libraries.psu.edu/onlinestudentlibraryguide>. This guide serves as your starting point for access to all that Penn State Libraries can offer you as an online student. Alternative formats Use this guide if you have questions on library services offered to you, how the library can help you, how to use the library, or what resources you can access via the library! The guide will connect you to important pages and resources within Penn State Libraries and save time from you searching for the information you need.

Access to *New York Times*

As a Penn State student, you have digital access to a variety of local, national, and global newspapers at no cost. This course may reference *New York Times* articles, please use the instructions provided on the [Student News Readership Program website](https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/involvement-student-life/student-services/student-news-readership-program) (<https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/involvement-student-life/student-services/student-news-readership-program>) to activate your complimentary access.

Grading

Final letter grades will be assigned based on the scale below.

Scale

GRADE	PERCENT
A	95-100
A-	90-94.9
B+	87.7-89.9
B	83.3-87.6
B-	80-83.2
C+	75-79.9
C	70-74.9
D	60-69.9
F	0-59.9

Due Dates

Please be aware that Canvas follows the Eastern Time (ET) time zone. Assignment due dates adhere to this time zone, and it is your responsibility to submit them accordingly. If you are outside of the ET time zone, you can set your Canvas account to sync to it. Refer to the [Set a Time Zone article in the Canvas Guide](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-2891) at <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-2891>.

All assignments are due by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on the date indicated on the **Calendar**. (Due dates can be also be viewed under the **Syllabus** tab.) As a general rule, you will NOT be able to go back and make up missed assignments. It is your responsibility to keep up with your assignments. Students with an excused absence (e.g. hospitalization, jury duty, family emergency, or military service) may be asked to produce proper documentation in order to make up graded work. **All make-up work is at the discretion of the instructor.**

Veterans and currently serving military personnel and/or spouses with unique circumstances (e.g. upcoming deployments, drill/duty requirements, disabilities, VA appointments, etc.) are welcome and encouraged to communicate these, in advance if possible, to the instructor in the case that special arrangements need to be made.

Notes

- *To Do List: Some assignments may not appear in the To Do list under the Home tab. Use the Calendar or Syllabus to ensure that you are fully aware of assignment due dates.*

Assignments

Basic information about each assignment group is provided below. For detailed directions about an individual assignment, see the assignment information under the **Modules** tab.

ASSIGNMENT	Weight
Quizzes	30%
Discussions	30%
Group Project	20%
Midterm Exam	20%

Total	100%
Extra Credit (1)	1% Alternative formats
Extra Credit (2)	2%

Quizzes (30%)

There are 10 quizzes. Generally, the quizzes cover topics covered in the associated lesson. Quizzes 3, 4, and 10 are exceptions to this and cover topics from two lessons. While majority of the quizzes include multiple choice and true/false questions only, you may also be asked to respond to 1-3 short answer questions in some of the quizzes.

Discussions (30%)

There are 11 discussions. Discussion posts are guided by a prompt and include applications of course material to current events, brief data analysis activities, and interpretation of empirical results from current political science literature. Each activity is a little different; their guidelines are explained in the assignment page. Discussions are graded using a rubric, available at each discussion activity page. The single lowest discussion grade will be dropped.

Group Project (20%)

This course includes a group project for you to illustrate your ability to apply concepts covered throughout the course. Completing this project as a group will enable you to break down a complex project into smaller tasks. By focusing on a smaller task, you will get a chance to work on your part of the project in greater detail. You will then learn about other parts of the projects from your peers. This exchange will facilitate improving your project through group discussion.

You will be assigned into a group early in the semester. As a group, you will complete this project in two pieces. The first part will be due towards the middle of the semester. The second part will be due at the end of the semester.

For this project, you will be asked to pick a research topic as a group. You will need to determine any data sources and other resources you will need to respond to this question together with members of your group. At the end, each group member's contribution will be combined to generate the final project write-up.

Midterm Exam (20%)

At the middle of the semester, you will take an exam consisting of multiple-choice, true/false, and a few short answer questions. This exam will cover all material in the lesson lectures and readings up to that

point in the course.

Extra Credit (1%)

The first discussion in the course is treated as a small extra credit assignment, asking you to briefly discuss yourself, your interest in the course and your expectations about it.

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Extra Credit (2%)

The last discussion in the course is treated as another small extra credit assignment, asking you to use a data visualization tool to investigate a question of your own interest, then discuss the results and answer a few questions about your findings.

University Policies

Academic Integrity

According to Penn State policy [G-9: Academic Integrity](https://undergrad.psu.edu/aappm/G-9-academic-integrity.html), an academic integrity violation is “an intentional, unintentional, or attempted violation of course or assessment policies to gain an academic advantage or to advantage or disadvantage another student academically.” Unless your instructor tells you otherwise, you must complete all course work entirely on your own, using only sources that have been permitted by your instructor, and you may not assist other students with papers, quizzes, exams, or other assessments. If your instructor allows you to use ideas, images, or word phrases created by another person (e.g., from Course Hero or Chegg) or by generative technology, such as ChatGPT, you must identify their source. You may not submit false or fabricated information, use the same academic work for credit in multiple courses, or share instructional content. Students with questions about academic integrity should ask their instructor before submitting work.

Students facing allegations of academic misconduct may not drop/withdraw from the affected course unless they are cleared of wrongdoing (see [G-9: Academic Integrity](https://undergrad.psu.edu/aappm/G-9-academic-integrity.html)). Attempted drops will be prevented or reversed, and students will be expected to complete course work and meet course deadlines. Students who are found responsible for academic integrity violations face academic sanctions, which can be severe, and put themselves at jeopardy for other outcomes (see [G-9: Academic Integrity](https://undergrad.psu.edu/aappm/G-9-academic-integrity.html)).

Unless your instructor tells you otherwise:

- Always include an in-text citation that includes the author(s) last name(s) and the year the source was published at the end of any sentence or below any image that includes words, images, or ideas you found in a source, always include quoted text within quotation marks, and always include a

reference for any source at the end of your paper (ask your instructor about the format you should use).

- All of your graded coursework must be created by you without help from anyone in the course or otherwise. If you have questions about this, you should ask your instructor before submitting work for evaluation.
- All course materials you receive or access are protected by copyright laws. You may use course materials and make copies for your own use, but unauthorized distribution and/or uploading of materials without the instructor's express permission is strictly prohibited. Students who engage in the unauthorized distribution of copyrighted materials may be held in violation of the University's Code of Conduct and/or liable under Federal and State laws.

Ask your instructor before submitting work for evaluation.

Alternative formats

Disability Access

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. Every Penn State campus has an office for students with disabilities. The Student Disability Resources website provides [contact information for every Penn State campus](https://equity.psu.edu/offices/student-disability-resources/campus-offices) at <https://equity.psu.edu/offices/student-disability-resources/campus-offices>. For further information, please visit the [Student Disability Resources website](http://equity.psu.edu/student-disability-resources) at <http://equity.psu.edu/student-disability-resources>.

In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, [participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation](http://equity.psu.edu/student-disability-resources/applying-for-services) described at <http://equity.psu.edu/student-disability-resources/applying-for-services>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.

Counseling and Psychological Services

Penn State's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) office offers residential and distance-based Penn State students **non-emergency** mental health services in the form of case management, community resource referrals, supportive listening, care giver support, and much more.

Students may request assistance from CAPS regarding a variety of common mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, relationship difficulties, and stress. CAPS services are designed to enhance students' ability to fully benefit from the University environment and academic experience. Call CAPS at 814-863-0395 (8 am-5 pm, Monday-Friday EST) or [submit an inquiry online](https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/form/caps-contact-form) at <https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/form/caps-contact-form> to schedule an appointment with a mental health advocate, who can help you address mental health concerns that may interfere with your academic progress or social development. This appointment will include a one-on-one session that can be conducted via telephone, teleconference (Skype,

FaceTime, etc.), or locally at Penn State University Park. For more information on services provided through CAPS, please visit the [Penn State CAPS website](http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/)  (<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/>) at <http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/>. Students enrolled at the World Campus are also encouraged to visit its [Mental Health Services page](http://student.worldcampus.psu.edu/student-services/mental-health-services)  (<http://student.worldcampus.psu.edu/student-services/mental-health-services>) at <http://student.worldcampus.psu.edu/student-services/mental-health-services>. Alternative formats

*Reminder: These services are for **non-emergencies** only. If you or someone you know is experiencing a crisis situation, please call your local crisis center or 911.*

Nondiscrimination

Penn State is committed to equal access to programs, facilities, admission and employment for all persons. It is the policy of the University to maintain an environment free of harassment and free of discrimination against any person because of age, race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, creed, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), veteran status, sex, sexual orientation, marital or family status, pregnancy, pregnancy-related conditions, physical or mental disability, gender, perceived gender, gender identity, genetic information or political ideas. Discriminatory conduct and harassment, as well as sexual misconduct and relationship violence, violates the dignity of individuals, impedes the realization of the University's educational mission, and will not be tolerated. For further information, please visit the [Affirmative Action Office website](https://affirmativeaction.psu.edu/)  (<https://affirmativeaction.psu.edu/>) at <https://affirmativeaction.psu.edu/>.

Reporting a Bias Incident

Penn State takes great pride to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff. Acts of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment due to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender identity, national origin, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, or veteran status are not tolerated and can be reported through Educational Equity via the [Report Bias webpage](http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/)  (<http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/>) at <http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/>.

TEACH Act

The materials on the course website are only for the use of students enrolled in this course for purposes associated with this course and may not be retained or further disseminated.

University Emergency Procedure

In the event of a University-wide emergency, the course may be subject to changes. Exigent circumstances may require alternative delivery methods, class materials, and interactions with the instructor and/or classmates. In addition, there may be revisions to grading policies and the Calendar, including assignments and their due dates.

In the event of a University-wide emergency, please refer to the Canvas website at <https://psu.instructure.com> for specific information related to the course. For more general information about the emergency situation, please refer to the [Penn State website](https://www.psu.edu)  (<https://www.psu.edu>) at <https://news.psu.edu> or [Penn State News website](https://news.psu.edu)  (<https://news.psu.edu>) at <https://news.psu.edu>.

To register with PSUAlert, a service designed to alert the Penn State community when situations arise that affect the ability of a campus to function normally, please go to the [PSU Alert website](https://psualert.psu.edu)  (<https://psualert.psu.edu>) at <https://psualert.psu.edu>. Subscribers can receive alerts by text message to cell phones, and also can elect to have alerts sent to an email address.

Syllabus Subject to Change

The class will likely adhere to the information outlined in this Syllabus and the Calendar, but adjustments may be made based on what actually transpires during the semester. Remaining in the course after reading this Syllabus will signal that you accept the possibility of changes and responsibility for being aware of them.

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
Mon May 13, 2024	 Lesson 01 (https://psu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=4608838&include_contexts=course_2327033)	12am
Fri May 17, 2024	 Orientation (https://psu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=4608832&include_contexts=course_2327033)	12am
Sun May 19, 2024	 L01 Discussion - Initial Post <u>Due at 11:59pm</u> (https://psu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=4608851&include_contexts=course_2327033)	12am
	 Lesson 01 Discussion (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008150)	due by 11:59pm
	 Lesson 01 Quiz (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008142)	due by 11:59pm
	 Practice Document Drop Box (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008165)	due by 11:59pm

Date	Details	Due
Mon May 20, 2024	 Lesson 02 (https://psu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=4608839&include_contexts=course_2327033)	12am
Fri May 24, 2024	 L02 Discussion - Initial Post Due at 11:59pm (https://psu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=4608852&include_contexts=course_2327033)	12am
Sun May 26, 2024	 Lesson 02 Discussion (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008151)	due by 11:59pm
Mon May 27, 2024	 Lesson 02 Quiz (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008148)	due by 11:59pm
	 Lesson 03 (https://psu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=4608840&include_contexts=course_2327033)	12am
	 Lesson 04 (https://psu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=4608833&include_contexts=course_2327033)	12am
Fri May 31, 2024	 L03 Discussion - Initial Post Due at 11:59pm (https://psu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=4608853&include_contexts=course_2327033)	12am
	 L04 Discussion - Initial Post Due at 11:59pm (https://psu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=4608831&include_contexts=course_2327033)	12am
Sun Jun 2, 2024	 Introduction to Project Group (https://psu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=4608846&include_contexts=course_2327033)	11:59pm
	 Lesson 03 Discussion (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008152)	due by 11:59pm
	 Lesson 04 Discussion (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008153)	due by 11:59pm

Date	Details	Due
Mon Jun 3, 2024	 Lesson 04 Quiz (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008141) <small>due by 11:59pm</small> <small>Alternative formats</small>	
	 Lesson 05 (https://psu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=4608834&include_contexts=course_2327033) <small>12am</small>	
Fri Jun 7, 2024	 Lesson 06 (https://psu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=4608835&include_contexts=course_2327033) <small>12am</small>	
Sun Jun 9, 2024	 L05 Discussion - Initial Post Due at 11:59pm (https://psu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=4608854&include_contexts=course_2327033) <small>12am</small>	<small>due by 11:59pm</small>
Mon Jun 10, 2024	 Lesson 05 Discussion (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008154) <small>due by 11:59pm</small>	
	 Lesson 06 Discussion (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008155) <small>due by 11:59pm</small>	
	 Lesson 06 Quiz (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008143) <small>due by 11:59pm</small>	
Fri Jun 14, 2024	 Lesson 07 (https://psu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=4608841&include_contexts=course_2327033) <small>12am</small>	
	 Midterm Exam Available (https://psu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=4608850&include_contexts=course_2327033) <small>12am</small>	
	 L07 Discussion - Initial Post Due at 11:59pm (https://psu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=4608856&include_contexts=course_2327033) <small>12am</small>	

Date	Details	Due
Sun Jun 16, 2024	 Lesson 07 Discussion (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008156) <small>due by 11:59pm</small> <small>Alternative formats</small>	
Mon Jun 17, 2024	 Lesson 07 Quiz (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008147) <small>due by 11:59pm</small>	
Fri Jun 21, 2024	 Midterm Exam (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008139) <small>due by 11:59pm</small>	
Sun Jun 23, 2024	 Lesson 08 (https://psu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=4608836&include_contexts=course_2327033) <small>12am</small>	
Mon Jun 24, 2024	 L08 Discussion - Initial Post Due at 11:59pm (https://psu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=4608857&include_contexts=course_2327033) <small>12am</small>	
Sun Jun 30, 2024	 Lesson 08 Discussion (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008157) <small>due by 11:59pm</small>	
Fri Jul 5, 2024	 Lesson 08 Quiz (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008140) <small>due by 11:59pm</small>	
Mon Jul 1, 2024	 Lesson 09 (https://psu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=4608842&include_contexts=course_2327033) <small>12am</small>	
	 Group Project - Proposal Dropbox (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008163) <small>due by 11:59pm</small>	
	 Lesson 09 Quiz (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008146) <small>due by 11:59pm</small>	
	 Lesson 10 (https://psu.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=4608843&include_contexts=course_2327033) <small>12am</small>	
	 L10 Discussion - Initial Post Due at 11:59pm <small>12am</small>	

Date	Details	Due
Sun Jul 7, 2024	<p>https://psu.instructure.com/calendar? event_id=4608858&include_contexts=course_2327033)</p> <p> Lesson 10 Discussion (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008158)</p>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Jul 8, 2024	<p> Lesson 10 Quiz (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008149)</p>	due by 11:59pm
Fri Jul 12, 2024	<p> Lesson 11 (https://psu.instructure.com/calendar? event_id=4608837&include_contexts=course_2327033)</p> <p> L11 Discussion - Initial Post <u>Due at 11:59pm</u> (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008159&include_contexts=course_2327033)</p>	12am
Sun Jul 14, 2024	<p> Lesson 11 Discussion (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008144)</p>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Jul 15, 2024	<p> Lesson 12 (https://psu.instructure.com/calendar? event_id=4608848&include_contexts=course_2327033)</p>	12am
Fri Jul 19, 2024	<p> L12 Discussion - Initial Post <u>Due at 11:59pm</u> (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008160&include_contexts=course_2327033)</p>	12am
Sun Jul 21, 2024	<p> Lesson 12 Discussion (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008160)</p>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Jul 22, 2024	<p> Lesson 13 (https://psu.instructure.com/calendar? event_id=4608849&include_contexts=course_2327033)</p>	12am
Fri Jul 26, 2024	<p> L13 Discussion - Initial Post <u>Due at 11:59pm</u></p>	12am

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Date	Details	Due
Sun Jul 28, 2024	<p>Lesson 13 Discussion (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008161)</p> <p>Lesson 14 (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008145)</p>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Jul 29, 2024	<p>L14 Discussion - Initial Post Due at 11:59pm (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008162)</p>	12am
Fri Aug 2, 2024	<p>Lesson 14 Discussion (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008161)</p>	12am
Sun Aug 4, 2024	<p>Group Project - Report Dropbox (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2327033/assignments/16008164)</p>	due by 11:59pm
Wed Aug 7, 2024		