

**PLSC 211**  
**Introduction to Comparative Government**

**Eastern Michigan University**  
**Department of Political Science**

Winter 2016  
Online

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Office Hours: MW, 12:30-2:00 p.m., 3:30-4:30 p.m., or by appointment

**Course Prerequisites:** None

**Course Description:**

Why do some governments allow for competitive elections and open political processes while others do not? How does freedom relate to equality? How are power and income divided throughout the world? What are states, markets, and societies? How can we explain and respond to political violence? How can we distinguish between political regimes and political-economic systems? Motivated by these questions, this course introduces you to the study of comparative politics, which compares countries in terms of their domestic politics, or struggle for power over collective decisions. The course is divided into four parts. Part 1 provides an introduction to the study of comparative politics and deals with states and globalization. Part 2 focuses on nations and society, political economy, and political violence. Part 3 differentiates between democratic regimes and nondemocratic regimes. Part 4 examines developed democracies, communism and postcommunism, and developing countries.

**Course Objectives:**

Upon completion of the course, you will be able to:

- Appreciate a variety of methods, concepts, approaches, and debates central to the study of comparative politics.
- Explain and apply such concepts as state, globalization, nation, society, political economy, and political violence.
- Differentiate between democratic regimes and nondemocratic regimes.
- Understand diverse political systems (developed democratic, communist and postcommunist, developing).

In addition to these objectives, the course will also pursue a set of General Education Global Awareness outcomes. By taking the course, you will be able to:

- Explore specific global issues influencing diverse nations and/or cultures, along with their interrelations within the global community.
- Explore your own culture and cultural practices and how these relate to the cultures and cultural practices of others in the global community.
- Explore the social and historical dynamics that create and influence nations, governments, global alliances, and global conflicts.
- Explore the causes and consequences of social, cultural, and racial intolerance in the world.
- Analyze and synthesize information from diverse sources to make informed decisions regarding global issues.

### Course Structure:

This course is delivered through Canvas and combines readings and PowerPoint presentations with six essays and four tests in a self-paced learning environment. Given that the course is delivered online and self-paced, the following are some helpful tips:

- Make sure to work at your own speed – do not fall behind.
- Save and print hardcopies of your work – save your work in other forms of media.
- Maintain a safe and reliable Internet connection – be prepared for interruption in service.
- Maintain an emich email account for EMU – all course correspondence will be sent only to your emich account.

### Required Textbook:

In pursuit of the course objectives, the following textbook is required:

- Patrick O’Neil, *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-393-93897-5.

**Please make sure you purchase the correct edition of the required textbook.** The required textbook is available at bookstores around EMU. You may also purchase it online through the following link:

<http://books.wwnorton.com/books/webad.aspx?id=4294986789>

### Daily News Sources:

I encourage you to read world news sections relevant to comparative politics. Here are some suggestions:

- BBC: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>
- CNN: <http://www.cnn.com/>
- Global Edition of the New York Times: <http://global.nytimes.com/>

### Course Assignments:

In order to assess your progress throughout the course, there will be six essays and four tests. **Please do all assignments. There will be no extra credit.**

- **Essays (60 points):** Your ability to apply the course material will be demonstrated through six essays in response to questions related to the readings. All essays will be posted through Canvas.
  - Essay 1 (10 points): Available Wednesday, January 6 – Wednesday, January 20
  - Essay 2 (10 points): Available Thursday, January 21 – Wednesday, February 3
  - Essay 3 (10 points): Available Thursday, February 4 – Wednesday, February 17
  - Essay 4 (10 points): Available Thursday, February 18 – Wednesday, March 9
  - Essay 5 (10 points): Available Thursday, March 10 – Wednesday, March 23
  - Essay 6 (10 points): Available Thursday, March 24 – Tuesday, April 19
- **Tests (40 points):** Your familiarity with the course material will be demonstrated through four tests that will cover material from respectively Parts 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the course in a multiple-choice format. All tests will be posted through Canvas.
  - Test 1 (10 points): Available for any 60 minutes, Wednesday, January 20
  - Test 2 (10 points): Available for any 60 minutes, Wednesday, February 17
  - Test 3 (10 points): Available for any 60 minutes, Wednesday, March 23
  - Test 4 (10 points): Available for any 60 minutes, Tuesday, April 19

### Grading Scale:

Through the six essays and four tests, you can obtain a possible total number of 100 points, which are divided as follows:

- Essays: 60 points
- Tests: 40 points

Your course grade will be determined by your actual total number of points based on the following scale:

- 95-100 A
- 90-94 A-
- 87-89 B+
- 83-86 B
- 80-82 B-
- 77-79 C+
- 73-76 C
- 70-72 C-
- 67-69 D+
- 63-66 D
- 60-62 D-
- 0-59 F

**Course Outline:**

**Part 1: Introduction to the Study of Comparative Politics, States, and Globalization**

<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Readings:</b>
1. Introduction to the Study of Comparative Politics	O’Neil (Chapter 1, pp. 2-29)
2. States	O’Neil (Chapter 2, pp. 30-61)
3. Globalization	O’Neil (Chapter 11, pp. 342-371)

**Essay 1: Available Wednesday, January 6 – Wednesday, January 20**

**Test 1: Available Wednesday, January 20 (any 60 minutes)**

**Part 2: Nations and Society, Political Economy, and Political Violence**

<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Readings:</b>
4. Nations and Society	O’Neil (Chapter 3, pp. 62-97)
5. Political Economy	O’Neil (Chapter 4, pp. 98-135)
6. Political Violence	O’Neil (Chapter 7, pp. 206-237)

**Essay 2: Available Thursday, January 21 – Wednesday, February 3**

**Essay 3: Available Thursday, February 4 – Wednesday, February 17**

**Test 2: Available Wednesday, February 17 (any 60 minutes)**

**Part 3: Democratic Regimes versus Nondemocratic Regimes**

<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Readings:</b>
7. Democratic Regimes	O’Neil (Chapter 5, pp. 136-173)
8. Nondemocratic Regimes	O’Neil (Chapter 6, pp. 174-205)

**Essay 4: Available Thursday, February 18 – Wednesday, March 9**

**Essay 5: Available Thursday, March 10 – Wednesday, March 23**

**Test 3: Available Wednesday, March 23 (any 60 minutes)**

**Part 4: Developed Democracies, Communism and Postcommunism, Developing Countries**

<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Readings:</b>
9. Developed Democracies	O’Neil (Chapter 8, pp. 238-269)
10. Communism and Postcommunism	O’Neil (Chapter 9, pp. 270-307)
11. Developing Countries	O’Neil (Chapter 10, pp. 308-341)

**Essay 6: Available Thursday, March 24 – Tuesday, April 19**

**Test 4: Available Tuesday, April 19 (any 60 minutes)**

**Course Policy:**

- There will be respect for accepted civil, ethical, and personal codes of conduct in all online communication. Any violation of such respect for proper etiquette or any slanderous behavior may lead to sanctions up to removal from the course.
- Although Canvas enables me to review all shared course communication and edit or remove it if necessary, the University and I cannot and will not take responsibility for any personal messages that students send each other directly through online email.
- Any violation of academic dishonesty (including plagiarism and cheating) will not be tolerated and is prohibited by the EMU Code of Student Conduct. Academic dishonesty evident in any assignment will result in a score of zero for the assignment. Students charged with academic dishonesty may be pursued to the fullest extent of sanctions allowed.
- Late essays and make-up tests will be allowed only in the case of documented medical emergencies.
- Incomplete grades will be given only for documented medical emergencies, and must be negotiated before final grades are due.
- Violations of the EMU Code of Student Conduct or the University's Safe Working and Learning Environment may result in sanctions up to removal from the course or expulsion from the university.

**Course Resources:**

- If you have questions or comments about class contents, please feel free to email me through Canvas; please keep your questions and comments brief, precise, and to the point so you may obtain a response as quickly and effectively as possible.
- If you have questions concerning EMU's Bruce T. Halle Library (<http://www.emich.edu/halle/>) and its resources, please contact a librarian, by phone at 734-487-0020, or visit the on-line library services at <http://www.emich.edu/halle/askalibrarian.html>.
- For Canvas support, click on "Help" in the top right corner for Live Chat, Support phone number, etc.
- For issues related to registration and enrollment, please contact EMU's Office of Records and Registration by phone at 734-487-4111.
- International students need to make sure that they meet the requirements of their visas to study in the United States.
- Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities will be available upon documentation provided by EMU's Disability Resource Center. For institutional support for students with disabilities, please contact EMU's Disability Resource Center (<http://www.emich.edu/disabilities/>) by phone at 734-487-2470.
- For support related to multicultural issues, please contact EMU's Center for Multicultural Affairs ( <http://www.emich.edu/cma/>) by phone at 734-487-2377.
- For academic advising, please contact EMU's University Advising & Career Development Center ( <http://www.emich.edu/aac/>) by phone at 734-487-0400.
- For advising in political science, please contact the main office of EMU's Political Science Department by phone at 734-487-3113.