

PLSC 211
Introduction to Comparative Government

Eastern Michigan University
Department of Political Science

Winter 2017
MW, 3:30-4:45 p.m., 419 Pray-Harrold

Dr. Volker Krause
Office: 602J Pray-Harrold
Phone: 487-0061
Email: vkrause@emich.edu
Office Hours: MW, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., 2:00-3:30 p.m., or by appointment

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 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:

Class meetings combine lectures and discussions. While lectures introduce and explain key concepts, ideas, arguments, and evidence, discussions address critical questions, problems, and issues identified during lectures. You are expected to be active participants in class discussions and contribute meaningfully to the explanation, evaluation, and application of the concepts and issues covered in the course. To this end, you are expected to read the assigned material and be well prepared for each class session.

Required Textbook:

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

- Patrick O’Neil, *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, 5th 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 Requirements:

Two in-class essay exams during the semester and a final in-class essay exam will provide you with opportunities to demonstrate critical and analytical thinking by applying the material covered in class and in the readings.

Exam 1: This in-class essay exam will be worth up to 30 points, depending on quality; it is **due on Wednesday, February 1 (3:30-4:45 p.m.)**.

Exam 2: This in-class essay exam will be worth up to 30 points, depending on quality; it is **due on Wednesday, March 8 (3:30-4:45 p.m.)**.

Final Exam: This in-class essay exam will be worth up to 30 points, depending on quality; it is **due on Monday, April 24 (3:00-4:30 p.m.)**.

Class Attendance: Since class performance is related to class attendance, I encourage you to attend class by awarding you up to 10 points for perfect class attendance.

Grading Scale:

Through the two in-class essay exams during the semester, the final in-class essay exam, and class attendance, you can obtain a possible total number of 100 points, which are divided as follows:

Exam 1: 30 points

Exam 2: 30 points

Final Exam: 30 points

Class Attendance: 10 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 Schedule:

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

Week 1: January 4

Topic: Introduction to the Study of Comparative Politics

Reading: O'Neil (Chapter 1, pp. 2-29)

Week 2: January 9 and January 11
Topic: Introduction to the Study of Comparative Politics (continued)
Reading: O'Neil (Chapter 1, pp. 2-29)

Week 3: January 18
Topic: States
Reading: O'Neil (Chapter 2, pp. 30-61)
Note: No classes on January 16 (MLK Jr. Day, Campus-Wide Celebration)!

Week 4: January 23 and January 25
Topic: States (continued)
Reading: O'Neil (Chapter 2, pp. 30-61)

Week 5: January 30 and February 1
Topic: Globalization
Reading: O'Neil (Chapter 11, pp. 342-371)

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

Week 6: February 6 and February 8
Topic: Nations and Society
Reading: O'Neil (Chapter 3, pp. 62-97)

Week 7: February 13 and February 15
Topic: Nations and Society (continued); Political Economy
Reading: O'Neil (Chapters 3 and 4, pp. 62-97 and pp. 98-135)

Week 8: February 20 and February 22
No classes (Winter Recess)!

Week 9: February 27 and March 1
Topic: Political Economy (continued)
Reading: O'Neil (Chapter 4, pp. 98-135)

Week 10: March 6 and March 8
Topic: Political Violence
Reading: O'Neil (Chapter 7, pp. 206-237)

Part 3: Democratic Regimes versus Nondemocratic Regimes

Week 11: March 13 and March 15
Topic: Democratic Regimes
Reading: O'Neil (Chapter 5, pp. 136-173)

Week 12: March 20 and March 22
Topic: Nondemocratic Regimes
Reading: O'Neil (Chapter 6, pp. 174-205)

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

Week 13: March 27 and March 29

Topic: Developed Democracies

Reading: O'Neil (Chapter 8, pp. 238-269)

Week 14: April 3 and April 5

Topic: Communism and Postcommunism

Reading: O'Neil (Chapter 9, pp. 270-307)

Week 15: April 10 and April 12

Topic: Developing Countries

Reading: O'Neil (Chapter 10, pp. 308-341)

Week 16: April 17

Topic: Developing Countries (continued)

Reading: O'Neil (Chapter 10, pp. 308-341)

Course Policy:

- Please note that the course schedule is subject to change.
- Absence from an exam will be accepted only in cases of documented medical or family emergencies.
- Incomplete grades will be given only for documented medical or family emergencies, and must be negotiated before final grades are due.
- Since I respect students' observance of religious holidays, nobody will be penalized or disadvantaged for missing class on such days.
- Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities will be available upon documentation provided by EMU's Disability Resource Center.
- International students need to make sure that they meet the requirements of their visas to study in the United States.
- I will work hard to help anyone who has to miss class due to illness, religious holidays, or unavoidable conflicts.
- I will try to offer extensive support in office hours and schedule appointments at other times for any student who is staying up-to-date but has questions. Conversely, I will give only basic guidance to a student who lets the course go for no important reason.
- I recommend that students take this class only if they are seriously committed to doing the course work.
- 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.
- 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; please keep your questions and comments brief, precise, and to the point so you may obtain a response as quickly and effectively as possible.
- Additional course-related material and information will be posted through Canvas. For Canvas support, please click on “Help” in the bottom left corner of the Canvas website (<https://canvas.emich.edu/>).
- For university policies, procedures, and services, please see the EMU Student Handbook (<https://www.emich.edu/studenthandbook/index.php>).
- For one-on-one consultation on writing, please contact EMU’s University Writing Center (<https://www.emich.edu/uwc>) by phone at 734-487-0694; the center’s consultants also work in EMU’s Academic Projects Center (<https://www.emich.edu/apc>), which offers drop-in consultation on writing, research, and technology-related issues, and which may be reached by phone at 734-487-2543.
- 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 issues related to registration and enrollment, please contact EMU’s Office of Records and Registration (<http://www.emich.edu/registrar/>) by phone at 734-487-4111.
- 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 (<http://www.emich.edu/polisci/>) by phone at 734-487-3113.