Aims and objectives:

Comparative Politics is the study of political institutions, political actors and political dynamics worldwide. It addresses a wide range of policy-relevant issues: what are the key features of democracies and autocracies, and how can regimes in Nigeria, Iran and Russia be classified? What is the appropriate balance of powers between the president and the Congress in Brazil and Mexico? What are the prospects for building stable states and democratic governance in Iraq and Afghanistan? How could human rights be strengthened through constitutional reforms in Russia? Is traditional political activism eroding in the US, UK and Germany? How do government structures shape the delivery of economic and welfare policies in India and China?

The course covers these questions and many others by utilizing the methods and techniques of comparative politics. You will learn about politics worldwide, as well as enriching and deepening your understanding of Canada. The course analyses 1) the nature of comparative politics, 2) processes of state formation and classification of regimes types, 3) processes of governance performance, 4) structure of political institutions, and 5) the role of political actors. It reviews the leading research literature to understand the theoretical concepts and empirical literature on each topic and then compares case studies to apply these ideas to particular nations.

The course will provide invaluable skills and knowledge for anyone seeking to develop familiarity with the major issues in comparative politics and the practical skills in analysing countries around the globe. In the age of globalization, cross-national insights into politics are invaluable for a wide-range of potential careers, whether working for international agencies, multilateral organizations, non-profit NGOs, international corporations, or national governments.

Required Readings:

The reading material for this class consists of the following book to be purchased from the bookstore.


Students are responsible for the material in the assigned readings. These readings will form the basis of class discussion.
Assignments and Grading (see end of the syllabus for Assignment Details):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Value</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term exam</td>
<td>February 9th</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation– case study</td>
<td>February 2, 16, March 8, 17, 29</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discussion</td>
<td>March 15</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Paper #1</td>
<td>March 15</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Paper #2 OR Final exam</td>
<td>April 5</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Throughout</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Class policies:

- Students are expected to attend every class session, do all the readings before class, and come prepared to discuss them.

- Late response papers will be deducted 5% per late day, including weekend. That is: if you submit it on Friday, you will be deducted 3x5%=15%.

- Laptops/tablets are allowed in class for note-taking purposes ONLY, not for checking emails, Facebook or surfing the web. The only cellphones allowed in class are those that have been turned off. Please respect your fellow colleagues and your instructor enough to give them your full attention. There is nothing worse than presenting in front of 20 people who are all laughing at their friends’ Facebook updates or are busy emailing their significant other.

- When contacting the instructor, please state your full name and needless to say, be civil! I aim to be as responsive as possible to email from students. However, please do not expect an answer to your questions any sooner than 48hrs after it is sent. For more substantive questions that require long answers, come and see me during office hours, I would be more than happy to chat with you then.

- Finally, cheating, in addition to being unfortunate in any class, is especially unfortunate in a class where the main goal is to read, think, and discuss your ideas. It is simply not acceptable. Cheating on assignments includes (but is not limited to) allowing another student to copy from your own work and presenting someone else’s work as your own. Information about procedures and penalties for academic dishonesty is outlined in the University Calendar and is available through the Department of Political Science.
Class outline 2016:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Due date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>January 7 (R)</td>
<td>Roadmap of the class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jan 12 (T)</td>
<td>What is comparative politics?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jan 14 (R)</td>
<td>Comparative methods</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>PART I: INTRO</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jan 19 (T)</td>
<td>What is the state?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jan 21 (R)</td>
<td>What is a nation?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jan 26 (T)</td>
<td>Political regime: varieties of democracy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Jan 28 (R)</td>
<td>Political regime: varieties of autocracies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Feb 2 (T)</td>
<td><strong>Case study discussion</strong>: Nigeria, Iran and Russia</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>PART II: THE NATION–STATE AND POLITICAL REGIME</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Feb 4(R)</td>
<td>Political economy and the welfare state</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Feb 9(T)</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td><strong>Mid-term</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Feb 11 (R)</td>
<td><strong>PART III: POLITICAL ECONOMY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Feb 16 (T)</td>
<td><strong>Case study discussion</strong>: India and China</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Feb 18 (R)</td>
<td>*** NO CLASS***</td>
<td>*** NO CLASS– READING WEEK***</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*** NO CLASS– READING WEEK***</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Mar 1 (T)</td>
<td>Constitutions: federation and unitary political systems</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Mar 3 (R)</td>
<td>Executives: presidential vs parliamentary</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Mar 8 (T)</td>
<td><strong>Case study discussion</strong>: UK, US</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Mar 10 (R)</td>
<td>Legislatures and electoral systems: district vs PR system</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>PART IV: POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Mar 15 (T)</td>
<td>Political Parties and Party System</td>
<td><strong>Response Paper #1 Due</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Mar 17 (R)</td>
<td><strong>Case study discussion</strong>: France, Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Mar 22 (T)</td>
<td>Interest groups and social movements</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Mar 24 (R)</td>
<td>Revolution and Contentious Politics</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Mar 29 (T)</td>
<td><strong>Case study discussion</strong>: Mexico, Brazil and Japan</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
PART VI: CONCLUSION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>23</th>
<th>Mar 31 (R)</th>
<th>Comparative Politics vs International Relations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>April 5 (T)</td>
<td>What have we learned? Response Paper #2 Due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Detailed course outline and reading schedule:

WEEK 1:
Thursday Jan 7: Introduction

PART I: INTRODUCTION
WEEK 2:
Tuesday Jan 12: What is comparative politics?
Textbook chapter 1

Thursday Jan 14: Comparative Methods
Textbook chapter 1

PART II THE NATION–STATE AND POLITICAL REGIME
WEEK 3:
Tuesday Jan 19: What is a state?
Textbook chapter 3

Thursday Jan 21: What is a nation?
Textbook chapter 13

WEEK 4:
Tuesday Jan 26: Political regime: varieties of democracies
Textbook chapter 6

Thursday Jan 28: Political regime: varieties of autocracies
Textbook chapter 7

WEEK 5:
Tuesday Feb 2: Case study discussion: Nigeria, Iran, Russia

PART III POLITICAL ECONOMY
Thursday Feb 4: Political economy and the welfare state
Textbook chapter 4

WEEK 6:
Tuesday Feb 9: Mid-term

Thursday Feb 11: Development
WEEK 7:
Tuesday Feb 16: Case study discussion: India and China

Thursday Feb 18: ***NO CLASS***

PART IV: POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS
WEEK 9:
Tuesday Mar 1st: Constitutions: federation vs unitary political system
Textbook chapter 8

Thursday Mar 3rd: Executives: presidential vs parliamentary rule
Textbook chapter 10

WEEK 10:
Tuesday Mar 8: Case study discussion: UK, US

Thursday Mar 10th: Legislatures and electoral systems: district vs PR system
Textbook chapter 9

PART V: POLITICAL ACTORS AND DYNAMICS
WEEK 11:
Tuesday Mar 15th: Political Parties and Party system
Textbook chapter 11

Thursday Mar 17th: Case study discussion: France, Germany

WEEK 12:
Tuesday Mar 22nd: Interest groups and social movements
Textbook chapters 11/12

Thursday Mar 24th: Revolution and Contentious Politics
Textbook chapter 12

WEEK 13:
Tuesday Mar 29th: Case study discussion: Mexico, Brazil and Japan

PART VI:
Thursday Mar 31st: Comparative Politics vs International Relations
Textbook chapter 16

WEEK 14:
Tuesday April 5: What have we learnt?
Assignment Details:

This course is an introductory class. The focus is on learning to read and think critically, and on developing communication skills (both written and oral). You will be assessed primarily on your ability and effort to do those three things.

Mid-term exam (20%)

The mid-term will take place during class on **Tuesday February 9**th will only cover the material presented in Part I & II. It will consist of multiple choice questions, short answer questions and one essay question. On **Tuesday February 2nd**, I will provide you with three possible essay questions to prepare—one of them will be in the exam – and ten possible short answers—3 of them will be in the exam.

Case study presentation (20%):

In the spirit of the importance of communication, each student will be expected to give a team presentation over the course of the semester. Projection equipment will be made available for presenters. This presentation will provide an excellent opportunity to practice your presentation skills and become familiar with technologies used to present academic work.

You will join a small workgroup (2–4 students, depending on class size) which will make a collective 15min power-point presentation (or equivalent) to the class followed by a 15min Q&A. The starting point for your reading preparation should be the relevant national sections in the textbook. The presentation should explain the institutional structure, key actors and contemporary issues facing a country (see list of country covered in the textbook).

The aim of such presentation is to apply the major conceptual frameworks, comparative methods and general lessons from the class to specific cases. Besides, these presentations will give us the opportunity to learn some details about cases.

Each workgroup will meet with me a week or so before the presentation to discuss.

You will be assessed based on both the content and delivery of the presentation. Creative, outside the box ways of presenting the content will also be looked at favorably. The following guide will be used:

- **Organization (/10pts)**
  1. Did the student(s) explain the institutional structure, key actors and contemporary issues facing a country?
  2. Is the presentation well-organized?
  3. Does the presentation close with a clear summary and set of implications?
  4. Does the student provide a list of discussion questions (approximately 5–6) to the group?

- **Presentation Style (/2.5pts)**
  5. Is the language clear, active and formal? Does the presentation flow well?
  6. Is the pacing too fast or too slow? Is the delivery strong? Are important points emphasized, or is the talk delivered in a monotone? Are time restrictions adhered to?
  7. Is eye contact made with people in the audience? Does the body language enhance the message being conveyed?
  8. Is the presentation delivered in a creative way?
• Two-pages single space fact sheets (/5pts):
  1. Is the hand out clear, comprehensive and well-organized

• Questions period (/2.5pts):
  2. Does the student respond well to questions from the audience? Does he/she participate actively to the questions period?

Response paper #1 (25%)

Everyone needs to write the first response paper due in hard copy in class on Tuesday March 15th (email submission MAY be considered under special circumstances, at the instructor’s discretion). I will provide a list of four possible topics on Thursday March 3rd, based on the material covered in Part 3 and 4 of the course. You only need to pick one topic.

The paper topic will identify an important claim from our readings, and ask you to critically assess it in the light of our readings and discussions. You are expected to cite the reading material assigned during the course, and illustrate your answer by drawing from at least two case studies presented by your colleagues (so hold on to the facts sheets provided by your colleagues at the end of their presentations!!!). Citing additional (relevant) material is welcomed, but is not necessary. Late response papers will be deducted 5% per late day, including weekend. That is: if you submit it on Friday, you will be deducted 3x5%=15%. Papers must be between 5–6 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font.

Papers will be graded based on the following guide:

  1. Is there a clear argument?
  2. Is the thesis supported by empirical evidence from at least two case studies? Does the student show his/her familiarity with the material reviewed?
  3. Has the student shown capacity to synthesize complex ideas?
  4. Has the student shown effectiveness in taking a clear and critical position on issues?
  5. Is the paper clear, concise and well-organized?

Final Exam OR Response Paper #2 (25%)

You will have the option of either A) writing a final exam in the exam period OR B) writing another response paper also due April 5th. You will need to tell the instructor by March 1st which option you want to take.

Option A) the final exam will be 120min long and will cover Parts III, IV, and V. Like the mid-term, it will consist of multiple choice, short answers and one long essay. The possible essay topics/short answers will be given during the last day of class, on April 5th.

Option B) the instructions for the response paper #2 are similar to those mentioned above. Papers must be between 5–6 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font. Students are expected to draw from the material and readings covered in class, as well as from at least two case studies presented by your colleagues (so hold on to the facts sheets provided by your colleagues at the end of their presentations!!!). Citing additional (relevant) material is welcomed, but is not necessary. On March 29th, I will provide two choices of topics based on the material covered in Part 5 of the course.
Participation (10%)

Your participation in discussions throughout the course will be assessed through a participation grade of 10%. The focus is on quality, not quantity, but you will be expected to have done the prep for each class, and act as an active participant throughout the course.