



Faculté des sciences sociales | Faculty of Social Sciences
École d'études politiques | School of Political Studies

POL4350 A – Honours Seminar in Comparative Politics

Fall Term 2023

Course Information

Class Schedule

Fridays, 2:30-5:20pm, FSS 10003 (in person)

Instructor Information

Name: Stephen Brown

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Phone number: 613-562-5800 x1896

Office hours: Mondays, 3:00-4:30pm, FSS 7052 (Sept. 11-Dec. 4)

Communication preference: Email

Before emailing a question, please *fully* read this syllabus and explore the associated resources. The answers to many questions can be found in this document and students may be referred back to the syllabus if the answer is already available. Please allow at least **two** business days for responses to inquiries before following up.

Official Course Description

Advanced synthesis and critique of the main debates and analytical approaches in the field of comparative politics.

Course Learning Outcomes

General Course Learning Outcomes

Comparative politics is the subfield of political science that focuses on political phenomena in various historical, cultural and institutional contexts, primarily at the national and subnational level (without neglecting transnational and international influences). Building on the knowledge and skills that students have acquired during their undergraduate studies, this course examines many of the main themes of comparative politics, notably concepts and issues related to the state and regimes, political economy, and various components of identity. The seminar format and emphasis on individual research

and critical analysis will help students improve their knowledge of the field of comparative politics, as well as refine their own research and analytical skills.

Specific Course Learning Outcomes

The course's specific objectives are for the student to:

1. Recognize the main issues that structure the field of comparative politics and distinguish them from those of other fields, such as international relations.
2. Identify important theoretical and methodological debates that address the different issues in the field.
3. Learn the distinction between analytical and normative approaches in the study of controversial issues such as the choice of political regime, political mobilization, the link between politics and the economy, the distribution of wealth and the importance of identity.

Required Materials

All readings listed below can be obtained via the university library or downloaded from Brightspace.

Assessment

Participation

This course is a seminar, organized around the collective analysis of readings, rather than lectures. It is therefore essential that students do all the readings before class and actively participate.

To launch the in-class discussions, a student designated in advance will briefly "introduce" (but not summarize) each reading. This will involve making a few analytical comments, critically assessing or raising questions about the reading designed to elicit discussion. These opening remarks should not last more than 2–3 minutes.

Class attendance is necessary to complete this course successfully. Students' participation is assessed every week according to the following scale: absent = 0; present but did not participate = 1; minimal participation = 1½; active participation, depending on the *quality* of comments = between 2 and 3 points. Points will be deducted for tardiness. **Students who miss more than three classes, in whole or in part, will receive "EIN" as their final mark, which is a failing grade.**

Here are a few questions to guide your critical reading of a text. They are meant to help you think about a reading before we discuss it in class. They can also help you develop your analysis for a reaction paper, but they are *not* meant to be a checklist or formula for writing a reaction paper.

- Starting point: What does the text seek to do? Does it have an explicit or implicit research question? What is it?
- Key question: What is the text's central argument? Is it clearly stated?
- Who is the text speaking to? How is the author contributing to an ongoing debate?
- Is the central argument well supported? Is the evidence adequate? Are there counterarguments or counterexamples that challenge the argument?
- Is the logic of the argument convincing? Are there gaps in the way the argument is made? Is it based on any unjustified premises? Is there a plausible alternative explanation?

- What is the text's methodological approach? How appropriate is it? Does the methodology have any significant weaknesses? Would there have been a better way to answer the research question?
- How generalizable are the findings beyond the case(s) examined in the text?
- What are the implications of the argument?
- What links can we draw between this reading and the texts we previously read, the discussions we had in class or theoretical approaches?

Reaction papers

Over the course of the semester, students must submit 3, 4, or 5 short reaction papers of about one page in length (single-spaced) on one of the assigned readings. They are to be submitted via Brightspace before the *beginning* of the class for which that reading is assigned. They should be uploaded as a Microsoft Word file (.doc, .docx or .rtf), not a PDF or any other format.

The purpose of a reaction paper is to *analyze* the reading. This could involve an analytical commentary on the reading's arguments and content, its logical implications and/or its relationship with theory or other readings, potentially highlighting key weaknesses in methodology, evidence or generalizability. **It is crucial to remember that reaction papers must not be descriptions, summaries or personal appreciations of the readings.**

A few suggestions:

- If you raise questions left unanswered by the text, try to answer them yourself. If you name elements that are missing from the text, explain why they matter and what impact they would have on the reading's argument. If they make no difference, there is not much point in raising the omission. You have only one page, so use it to make somewhat important points, not just nitpick.
- If you think the reading is brilliant and you agree with everything, try to extend the argument and apply it to other areas, potentially discussing some implications of the argument/findings for policymakers. You can also consider where the argument should be placed on the structure-agency continuum.
- Be critical, but remember to be reasonable and fair. Authors have limited time and funding to conduct their research, as well as limited space in which to write it up. Not every text can cover everything that might be interesting.
- A final recommendation: Before submitting your reaction paper, reread each paragraph and ask yourself whether the content of that paragraph is what the author is saying or what *you* are arguing. If you are just repeating the author's points, delete the paragraph. It can be a challenge, but you need to find your own voice.

Keep in mind that academic texts in the social sciences are not meant to be just factual, unlike newspaper articles and Wikipedia entries that solely provide information. You are not expected to know more than the authors about the empirical facts that they are writing about (but should not refrain from pointing out important errors if you see any). However, as an upper-level undergraduate student, **you should be able to assess the quality of the text's argumentation and make connections that go beyond the text.** If you find this exercise difficult, it is a sign that your analytical skills could use some sharpening. Consider that an important skill that you could develop over the course of the semester.

Under no circumstances will reaction papers be accepted after class starts. Students must submit a minimum of three reaction papers on three different weeks, one per part of the course. If they wish, students may hand in an additional reaction paper on one or two other weeks, in which case the three highest marks will be used in the calculation of the final grade. However, you cannot use that option to skip a reaction paper for any part of the course. **Students who do not submit a reaction paper for one of the three parts of the course will get a zero for that reaction paper, which cannot be discounted under the provision for best-three-out-of-four or best-three-out-of-five.**

No more than five reaction papers will be accepted. More than one reaction paper on a given week's readings is not permitted. A reaction paper may not be submitted for a reading that has already been discussed in class. **Students who submit fewer than two reaction papers will receive "EIN" as their final mark (failure/incomplete).**

Research proposals and term papers

Students can choose their own term paper topic, but it must fall within the realm of comparative politics, broadly defined. Topics must be approved in person by the professor by September 29. Failure to have the topic approved will result in a 5% deduction from the student's final mark. Possible topics include case studies of a comparative politics issue or phenomenon applied to one or more countries (e.g., conflict, democratization, state institutions, civil society, development strategies, the politics of identity or social movements).

A term paper proposal is due on October 20 before the beginning of class, to be uploaded to Brightspace in a Microsoft Word file, not a PDF or any other format. The proposal should consist of a summary of the paper, including an explicit statement of one or two research questions, the tentative argument(s) and the analytical framework and an outline of the structure of the paper (typed, about one page, single-spaced), as well as an annotated preliminary bibliography of at least 12 academic sources, of which a minimum of six must be academic journal articles (no page limit). The annotation refers to a one-paragraph specification of how the source will be useful specifically for your paper; it should not be a summary of the text.

Term papers are due by December 14 at 11:59pm via Brightspace, also in a Microsoft Word file, not a PDF or any other format. Their length should be about 16-18 pages (typed, double-spaced, not counting notes or the bibliography). Term papers should cite at least 18 academic sources, including at least nine journal articles. Sources not cited in a paper should not be listed in the bibliography.

Please note that this course's compulsory readings may be used as references, but they do not count towards the total number of sources, nor do book reviews, websites or articles from "predatory journals". Multiple chapters from a single book count as only one source. It may seem obvious to most students, but sources that are not cited in the paper should not be included in the bibliography and entries in the bibliography should be alphabetized by the author's last name.

Extensions will not be provided unless cleared *at least one week in advance* by the professor. Last-minute exceptions will be made only for illness or other unforeseen situations deemed serious by the Faculty of Social Sciences and supported by adequate documentation. **Each day of late submission results in a penalty of 5%. Term papers and proposals will not be accepted if more than seven calendar days late.**

Peer reviews

During the last two classes of the semester (November 24 and December 1), we will spend about 10–15 minutes collectively asking (hopefully) helpful questions and making suggestions for improving pre-designated individual students' term papers. Discussion will be based on handouts of 2–4 pages, circulated by students at least 48 hours before class. The handouts should clearly state the research question, the tentative argument, the analytical framework, the structure of the paper and any other information that will be useful for eliciting feedback. (Modalities may be adjusted at a later date, depending on course enrollment.)

Components of the final mark

Evaluation format	Weight	Date
Reaction papers (3, 4 or 5)	25%	At least one each for Sept. 15-29, Oct. 6-20 and Nov. 3-17
Term paper proposal	10%	October 20
Peer review handout	5%	November 22 or 29
Term paper	40%	December 14
Attendance and participation	20%	Throughout the semester

This marking scheme applies to all students. Please do not ask for any additional work for credit, to redo an assignment or for a mark to be “bumped up”, as such measures would be unfair to students who are not accorded a similar opportunity and, moreover, are not permitted under university regulations.

Policy on the ‘EIN’ grade for the School of Political Studies

Course failure – EIN (F): According to [regulation 10.6](#), students receive the equivalent to a failure mark when they fail to complete one or more evaluations identified as mandatory in the course syllabus approved by the academic unit.

According to the policy established by the School of Political Studies, “one or more evaluations identified as mandatory” is defined as follows: one or more examinations (mid-term, final) or any work (quizzes, tests, presentations, research paper, etc.) **worth a total of 15% or more of the final grade.**

Please note that a denied request for a deferral may therefore result in the student receiving a failing mark for the course.

In accordance with [Academic Regulation 10.3](#), any student who has concerns about a grade assigned to him or her should contact the professor in order to better understand the reasons behind the grade, and to articulate those concerns. If, despite the explanations provided and any outcome of the discussion with the professor, the student remains convinced that the grade is still not appropriate, he/she/they must resort to the official grade review process established for this purpose. For further details about

how this process works and how to initiate it, see the aforementioned Academic Regulation 10.3. It should be noted that the grading process results from the knowledge and pedagogical experience that professors, teaching assistants and correctors possess and put at the service of student learning. It is not acceptable to harass teaching assistants and professors in this regard, or to persist in trying to negotiate one's grade. In this connection, students are encouraged to consult [Policy 130, "Student Rights and Responsible Conduct"](#).

Late Assignments

All assignments are to be submitted by their due date and time. As specified above, late reaction papers will not be accepted. Late submissions of outlines and term papers will be immediately docked 5%, with an additional 5% for each subsequent day late to a maximum of 7 days, including weekends. **After 7 days, late outlines and term papers will no longer be accepted and will be given a zero (0%) grade, leading to an EIN (F) mark for the course.**

Policy on justification of late submission of assignments and take-home examinations for the School of Political Studies

The new deadline granted by the School will be equal to the number of working days included in the period of disability specified on the medical certificate.

The medical certificate (sent online by the student with the DFR form) MUST specify in accordance with academic regulation 9.5:

- the name of the student;
- the date of both the absence and the return to studies;
- the medical consultation date and the physician's signature

Determination of the new deadline

- If the date of both absence and return to studies are before the due date for the assignment: the new deadline will be calculated from the day following the original due date for the assignment or take-home exam.
- If the date of return to studies is during or after the due date for the assignment or take-home exam: the new deadline will be calculated from the day of the date of return to studies specified on the medical certificate.

Please note that in the case of a short-term absence, the new deadline established by this policy applies even if the request for a deferral has not yet been approved.

Example 1:

- Due date for an assignment: April 20, 2020.
- DFR form submitted on April 24, 2020 (as allowed by Academic Regulation 9.5).
- Disability period specified on the medical certificate: March 19 to 24, 2020 (*6 calendar days but 4 working days*).

New deadline granted: until April 27, 2020, at the same time as on the original due date (*4 working days following April 20, 2020 and assignment to be handed-in on the 5th working day following April 20, 2020*). If the assignment is handed in after the new deadline, the penalty for late submission specified in the course outline may apply.

Example 2:

- Due date for an assignment: April 20, 2020.
- DFR form submitted on April 24, 2020 (as allowed by Academic Regulation 9.5).
- Disability period specified on the medical certificate: April 20, 2020 (*1 working day*).

New deadline granted: until April 22, 2020, at the same time as on the original due date (*1 working day following April 20, 2020 and assignment to be handed-in on the 2nd working day following April 20, 2020*).

If the assignment is submitted on April 24 (*2 days after the new deadline*) or at any time after April 22, 2020, the penalty for late submission specified in the course outline may apply. **Under such circumstances, the student should not wait for the deferral to be approved before handing in the assignment.**

Missed exams and requests for deferrals

Students who are excused for missing an evaluation will be required to write a deferred evaluation, except where the professor offers a re-weighting scheme which applies to the student's case. Professors may decline to offer a deferred evaluation and instead re-weight the remaining pieces of work only if (i) the re-weighted scheme is indicated on the syllabus and (ii) it respects both the 25 percent rule ([Academic Regulation A-8](#)) and the final exam rule.

IMPORTANT:

- Students can request a maximum of one (1) deferred evaluation per course, and this evaluation must be taken as soon as possible and within six (6) months after the end of the term.
- All deferred **final** exams for courses at the Faculty of Social Sciences, except for SVS 3505, SVS 3515 and all ECO courses, will take place during the next term (please consult the [Important academic dates and deadlines webpage](#) to know the specific dates).

Exam conflicts

- Any conflict with a midterm exam schedule should be reported to the Professor at the beginning of the term. This request is especially applicable to the type 3 conflict (two in-class exams back-to-back) for students with special learning needs.
- Any conflict with a final exam schedule should be reported to the Faculty's undergraduate office as soon as the final examination schedule is released.

Course Calendar

September 8 – Course introduction

Please do not write a reaction paper on any of these readings.

Landman, Todd. "Comparative Politics and Human Rights". *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 24, no. 4 (2002), pp. 890-923. Please focus your attention on the discussion of the **comparative method**.

Hay, Colin. "Conceptualising structure and agency", *Political Analysis: A Critical Introduction* (Houndmills, UK and New York: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 93-101. Note that **only one section of the chapter is assigned**. The rest of the chapter is optional.

Hay, Colin. "King Canute and the 'Problem' of Structure and Agency: On Times, Tides and Heresthetics". *Political Studies*, vol. 57, no. 2 (2009), pp. 260-279. Please focus your attention on the **nature of the structure-agency debate**.



Part 1: States, regimes and institutions

September 15 – The state

Tilly, Charles. "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime." In Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol, eds. *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 169-191.

Mukhopadhyay, Dipali. "Disguised warlordism and combatanhood in Balkh: the persistence of informal power in the formal Afghan state". *Conflict, Security & Development*, vol. 9, no. 4 (2009), pp. 535-564.

Scott, James C. *Seeing Like a State* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 1-8 and 53-83.

September 22 – Democracy and regime transitions

Tilly, Charles. "Democracy is a Lake". In George Reid Andrews and Herrick Chapman, eds. *The Social Construction of Democracy, 1870-1990* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), pp. 365-87.

Karl, Terry Lynn and Philippe C. Schmitter. "Modes of transition in Latin America, Southern and Eastern Europe". *International Social Science Journal*, vol. 128, no. 2 (1991), pp. 267-282.

Wood, Elisabeth J. "An Insurgent Path to Democracy: Popular Mobilization, Economic Interests, and Regime Transition in El Salvador and South Africa". *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 34, no. 8 (2001), pp. 862-88.

September 29 – Civil society and authoritarianism

Term paper topic clearance deadline. Last chance to submit a reaction paper for the first part of the course.

Putnam, Robert D. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 3-16 and 163-85.

McKenna, Elizabeth. "Taxes and Tithes: The Organizational Foundations of *Bolsonarismo*". *International Sociology*, vol. 35, no. 6 (2020), pp. 610-631

Xu Xu. "To Repress or to Co-opt? Authoritarian Control in the Age of Digital Surveillance". *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 65, no. 2 (2021), pp. 309-325.

Part 2: Political economy

October 6 – The state and development

Discussion in class of expectations for term paper proposals. Please watch the relevant video in Brightspace *before* coming to class.

Sinha, Aseema. "Rethinking the Developmental State Model: Divided Leviathan and Subnational Comparisons in India". *Comparative Politics*, vol. 35, no. 4 (2003), pp. 459-76.

Looney, Kristen E. "Mobilization Campaigns and Rural Development: The East Asian Model Reconsidered". *World Politics*, vol. 73, no. 2 (2021), pp. 205-242.

Flores-Macías, Gustavo A. "Statist vs. Pro-Market: Explaining Leftist Governments' Economic Policies in Latin America". *Comparative Politics*, vol. 40, no. 4 (2010), pp. 413-433.

October 13 – The welfare state and advanced capitalism

Gough, Ian. "Welfare Regimes in Development Contexts: A Global and Regional Analysis." In Ian Gough and Geoff Wood, eds. *Insecurity and Welfare Regimes in Asia, Africa, and Latin America* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 15-48.

Rahman, K. Sabeel and Kathleen Thelen. "The Rise of the Platform Business Model and the Transformation of Twenty-First-Century Capitalism". *Politics & Society*, vol. 47, no. 2 (2019), pp. 177-204.

Béland, Daniel, Shannon Dinan, Philip Rocco and Alex Waddan. "Social policy responses to COVID-19 in Canada and the United States: Explaining policy variations between two liberal welfare state regimes". *Social Policy and Administration*, vol. 55, no. 2 (2021), pp. 280-294.

October 20 – Politics and natural resource wealth

Term paper proposals due. Last chance to submit a reaction paper for the second part of the course. Discussion in class on academic integrity. Please watch the relevant video in Brightspace *before* coming to class.

Kale, Sunila S. and Nimah Mazaheri. "Natural Resources, Development Strategies, and Lower Caste Empowerment in India's Mineral Belt: Bihar and Odisha during the 1990s". *Studies in Comparative International Development*, vol. 49, no. 3 (2014), pp. 343-369.

Jones Luong, Pauline and Erika Weinthal. "Rethinking the Resource Curse: Ownership Structure, Institutional Capacity, and Domestic Constraints". *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 9 (2006), pp. 241-263.

Brooks, Sarah M. and Marcus J. Kurtz. "Oil 'Rents' and Political Development: What Do We Really Know About the Curse of Natural Resources?". *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 55, no. 10 (2022), pp. 1698–1731.

October 27 – Reading week (no class)

Part 3: Identities

November 3 – Ethnicity, race and nation

Discussion in class of expectations for peer reviews and term papers. Please watch the relevant video in Brightspace *before* coming to class.

Brubaker, Rogers. "Ethnicity without Groups". *European Journal of Sociology*, vol. 43, no. 2 (2002), pp. 163-189.

Marx, Anthony W. "Race-Making and the Nation-State". *World Politics*, vol. 48, no. 2 (1996), pp. 180-208.
Warning: This text uses the "N-word" when quoting a 19th-century document.

Gladney, Dru. "Representing Nationality in China: Refiguring Minority/Majority Identities", *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 53, no. 1 (1994), pp. 92-123.

November 10 – Gender, sexual orientation and Indigeneity

Hasan, Zoya. "Gender, Religion and Democratic Politics in India". *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 6 (2010), pp. 939-954.

Sadgrove, Joanna, Robert M. Vanderbeck, Johan Andersson, Gill Valentine and Kevin Ward. "Morality plays and money matters: towards a situated understanding of the politics of homosexuality in Uganda". *Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 50, no. 1 (2012), pp. 103-129.

Werner, Karolina. "Who is Indigenous in Africa? The Concept of Indigeneity, its Impacts, and Progression". *Millennium*, forthcoming, 25 pages, <https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298221135666>.

November 17 – Identity and violence

Last chance to submit a reaction paper for the third part of the course. Potential early start of peer reviews.

Dumitru, Diana and Carter Johnson. “Constructing Interethnic Conflict and Cooperation: Why Some People Harmed Jews and Others Helped Them during the Holocaust in Romania”. *World Politics*, vol. 63, no. 1 (2011), pp. 1-42.

Fujii, Lee Ann. “The Power of Local Ties: Popular Participation in the Rwandan Genocide”. *Security Studies*, vol. 17, no. 3 (2008), pp. 568-597.

Cesari, Jocelyne. “Time, Power, and Religion: Comparing the Disputes over Temple Mount and the Ayodhya Sacred Sites”. *Journal of Law, Religion and State*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2021), pp. 95-123. (To be cancelled if we begin the peer reviews on this day. If so, do not write a reaction paper on this reading.)

November 24 – Peer reviews, Part 1

Handouts to be distributed by students not later than 48 hours before class.

December 1 – Peer reviews, Part 2

Handouts to be distributed by students not later than 48 hours before class.

Indigenous Affirmation

ANISHINÀBE

Ni manàdjiyànànig Màmìwininì Anishinàbeg, ogog kà nàgadawàbandadjig iyo akì eko weshkad. Ako nongom ega wikàd kì migiwewàdj.

Ni manàdjiyànànig kakina Anishinàbeg ondaje kaye ogog kakina eniyagizidjig enigokamigàg Kanadàng eji ondàpinangig endàwàdjìn Odàwàng.

Ninisdawinawànànig kenawendamòdjig kije kikenindamàwin; weshkinìgidjig kaye kejeyàdizidjig.

Nigijeweninmànànig ogog kà nìgànì sòngideyedjig; weshkad, nongom; kaye àyànikàdj.

[Listen to the audio file](#)

ENGLISH

We pay respect to the Algonquin people, who are the traditional guardians of this land. We acknowledge their longstanding relationship with this territory, which remains unceded.

We pay respect to all Indigenous people in this region, from all nations across Canada, who call Ottawa home.

We acknowledge the traditional knowledge keepers, both young and old.

And we honour their courageous leaders: past, present, and future.

Intellectual Property Rights of Course Content

If you would like clarification regarding the intellectual property right of course content, please visit the [Copyright Office webpage](#) or consult your professor.

Institutional Policies and Academic Regulations

It is very important to know the institutional policies and academic regulations associated with your academic success. This information is available on the Faculty of Social Sciences website, on the [Student Hub webpage](#) under the “Institutional policies and academic regulations” tab.

Course assignments will be analyzed using a plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity. This process implies that assignments will be included as source documents in the tool’s reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting similarities.

The use of generative artificial intelligence tools, such as ChatGPT, is highly discouraged. If students use AI for any assignment in this course, they must document that use in an appendix to the assignment. The documentation should include what tool or tools were used, what prompts were used to generate content, the entire content that was generated (with no modifications) and an explanation of how the results from the AI were incorporated into the submitted work. Failure to comply with this requirement or otherwise representing as one’s own an idea or expression of an idea that was AI-generated will be considered an academic offence in this course.

Academic Fraud Regulations

If you would like clarification regarding academic integrity and misconduct, please consult [Academic Regulation A-4](#) or consult your professor.

Academic Regulations A-1 on bilingualism at the University of Ottawa

Per [Academic Regulation A-1](#) : « Except in programs and courses for which language is a requirement, all students have the right to produce their written work and to answer examination questions in the official language of their choice, regardless of the course’s language of instruction. »