

AGU Department of Political Science and International Relations

POLS 455 COMPARATIVE POLITICAL SYSTEMS

INSTRUCTOR RECORD

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Office Phone	
Office Hours	Wednesdays by appointment

COURSE RECORD

Code	POLS
Name	Comparative Political Systems
Hour per week	3 (3+0)
Credit	3
ECTS	5
Level/Year	Undergraduate
Semester	Spring 2026
Type	Compulsory
Classroom	Tuesday 09:00-09:45 @FOD01 Thursday 11:00-12:45 @FOD11
Prerequisites	None
Special Conditions	You should have access to CANVAS and MTeams
Webpage	For this course, I will be using the CANVAS Course Website. You will access the course syllabus, materials, links to related websites, assignments, and articles through CANVAS. You are responsible for checking Canvas regularly. Information about exams and assignment grades will also be available at this site.
Content	This course introduces students to the range and scope of comparative politics and the various ways and means in which comparative research is conducted. The goal of this course is to introduce students with main paradigms in studying comparative politics and enable them to use them in the analysis of contemporary societies. The state and society relations occupy a central position in trying to explore the nature of politics in the countries of West, Asia, the Middle East. The knowledge acquired in this course will allow students to understand, explain, and analyze POLS issues in a comparative way. The main aim of the course is to learn the main theories that analyze the changing nature of state and society relations in the developed and the developing world.
Objectives	At the end of the term, the students will O1: Learn central concepts, themes and discussions central for Comparative Politics. O2: Become familiar with various classical and contemporary intellectual traditions explaining the relations between the social, political, economic and international spheres. O3: Develop skills to utilize major concepts, themes and debates of Comparative Politics in analyzing current political and social events surrounding them. O4: Develop skills of systematic engagement and writing of weekly synopsis related to course material.
Learning Outcomes	At the end of the course, students will: LO 1: Learn historical developments that lead to the emergence and then development of Comparative Politics as a discipline; LO 2: Understand and critically examine the depth of interactions between domestic and international spheres; LO 3: Establish a foundation for future courses within the field of Political Science; LO 4: Learn a range of ideas, concepts, and theories in Comparative Politics;

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LO 5: Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of comparative way of thinking about contemporary world politics.

ETHICAL RULES AND COURSE POLICY

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| Course Policies | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The language of communication is English during instruction hours.• Lecture notes and slides will be kept private. I want to encourage students to be active listeners, meaning students should take notes and ask questions if there is anything that they do not understand.• The course readings will be weekly uploaded on Canvas. The students are expected to read and think about the assigned material before the sessions. |
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| Attendance Policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Class attendance is mandatory. At least 70% attendance is required. Failing to have at least 70% attendance will result in NA.• Participation to the class discussions is a requirement. Please beware that participation does not mean simply being present in the classroom or “attendance” although it requires your presence in the classroom. By participation, we refer to active and thoughtful engagement with the course material. |
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For a detailed description of AGU attendance policy, please refer to the website at <https://goo.gl/HbPM2y> section 25.

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| Email Policy | When contacting the instructor, please use AGU email. Please do not use other means, such as Canvas, to reach me. Any announcements or warnings will be sent to your AGU e-mail. Therefore, it is your responsibility to read his/her AGU e-mails regularly. |
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AGU webmail can be accessed through <https://mail.agu.edu.tr>

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| Cheating & Plagiarism | The University regards cheating and plagiarism and other instances of academic malpractice with the utmost seriousness. You are responsible for knowing the University policies on cheating and plagiarism. Not giving credit to a person for their intellectual work and passing it off as your own is stealing. |
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Plagiarism is defined as presenting someone else’s work as your own. Work means any intellectual output, and typically includes text (including lecture notes and handouts) data, images, sound or performance, or any combination of these. The significance of plagiarism is that assessments are only of any use if the work you submit is your own: to present the work of others is dishonest. You may use information that you gather from journals, books, the internet, websites, lectures or other teaching sessions, contact with others, etc., but it must always be properly attributed, and all sources used must be referenced (including lecture notes and handouts). Failure to attribute material which is not your own will be regarded as plagiarism, for which the University imposes strict penalties. All cases of plagiarism and cheating in coursework are reported to the University.

For a detailed description of AGU policies, please refer to the website at <https://goo.gl/FjLhzH>

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| AI Policy | AI can be used for certain tasks but their use must align with academic integrity and ethical considerations. Below are key guidelines for responsibly incorporating AI into your studies. AI can assist with research, brainstorming, summarization, and editing but should not replace critical thinking or original work. AI-generated content may contain biases, inaccuracies, or outdated information. It is your responsibility to verify facts from credible sources. |
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Acceptable Uses:

- Generating ideas and outlines for essays and projects.
- Clarifying concepts and summarizing complex topics.
- Proofreading and improving writing structure.

Unacceptable Uses:

- Submitting AI-generated content as your own work (plagiarism).
- Using AI for assignments, including group work, debate activity and in-class activities.
- Relying on AI-generated citations without checking their validity.
- Automating exam answers or assessments.

Your use of AI tools must be appropriately documented and cited to stay within AGU's policies on academic honesty. Submitting AI-generated work without identifying it as such will violate AGU's Academic Integrity Policy. If uncertain about AI usage in coursework, consult your professor or university policies. A lack of compliance with course expectations regarding AI usage may negatively impact assignments or course grades.

ASSESSMENT

Evaluation Criteria	Weight (%)	Dates
Final Exam	37%	TBA
Midterm	30%	April 9
In-Class Activities	33%	Weekly

ASSESSMENT POLICY

Midterm and Final Exam	The questions in both mid-term and final examinations aim to test student's comprehension of concepts and issues that are discussed during the lectures and required readings. In the exams, students are expected to provide the core concepts and engage in a structured argumentation. Therefore, students are expected to give a thoughtful consideration the required readings.
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The exams will consist of short answers and essay-type questions. The final exam will include the topics covered since the beginning of the semester.

You must take the mid-term and/or final exam unless you have a proper excuse (i.e., medical condition). Failing to take final exam without an official document (i.e. health report) will result in NA.

For the AGU Make-up policy, please refer to the website <https://goo.gl/HbPM2y> section 26.

In-Class Activities	Students are expected to participate into in-class activities throughout the semester. The in-class activities will be based on opinion pieces (op-eds) related to the week's theme and discussions in small groups. The instructor will select the relevant activity according to the week's theme.
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For op-eds, students are expected to critically engage with the material and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments.

For small group discussions, students are expected to summarize the main points of the weekly theme, critically assess its strengths and weaknesses and make

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connections between concepts/theories/perspectives and real events in world affairs.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

W	Date	Topic
1	Feb 17-19	Introduction
2	Feb 24-26	The Emergence of Comparative Politics Caramani, Daniel (2020) 'Introduction to Comparative Politics' in Comparative Politics, ed. by Daniel Caramani, pp. 1-18. Kenneth Newton and Jan W. Van Deth (2010) 'Introduction' in Foundations of Comparative Politics Democracies of the Modern World, pp. 1-10.
3	Mar 3-5	The Evolution of Comparative Politics Peters B. Guy (2020) 'Approaches in Comparative Politics' in Comparative Politics, ed. by Daniel Caramani, pp. 35-49. O'Neil, Patrick H. (2010) 'Introduction', in Essentials of Comparative Politics, pp. 1-20. Kamrava, M. 2008. Understanding Comparative Politics: A Framework for Analysis. Routledge, London, pp. 7-42.
4	Mar 10-12	The Development of the Modern State Poggi, G. (2020) Chapter 4: 'The Nation-State', in Comparative Politics, ed. by Daniel Caramani, pp. 69-85. Hague, R., Harrop, M. McCormick, J. (2019) Chapter 4: 'The State', in Comparative Government and Politics. An Introduction, MacMillan International, pp. 52-69. Nelson, B. R. (2006) Chapter 2: 'State Formations', in The Making of the Modern State, pp. 7-15.
5	Mar 17-19	Spring Break
6	Mar 24-26	Modernization Theory Lipset, S. M. (1959) 'Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy,' American Political Science Review, 53 (Mar.), pp. 69-105. Tipps, Dean C. 1973. "Modernization Theory and the Comparative Study of Societies: A Critical Perspective", Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol. 15, No. 2 (March), pp. 199-226 https://thediomat.com/2015/02/modernization-theory-and-uncritical-histories-a-review-of-south-koreas-rise/
7	Marc 31-Apr 2	Theories of Underdevelopment

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- Leys, C. 1996. The Rise & Fall of Development Theory, Indiana UP, pp.45-63.
 Güllalp, H. 1998. "The Eurocentrism of Dependency Theory and the Question of Authenticity", Third World Quarterly 19(5): 951-961.
 Smith, Tony (2018) 'The Dependency Approach', in New Directions in Comparative Politics, Howard J. Wiarda (edited by), pp. 110-145.

8	Apr 9	Mid-term	No class on April 7
9	Apr 14-16	New Institutionalism	Almond, G. A. (1988) 'The Return to the State', The American Political Science Review, vol. 82, No. 3, pp. 853-874. Skocpol, Theda, 1985. "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research," in. P. Evans, D. Rueschemeyer and T. Skocpol, eds., Bringing the State Back In (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press): 3-37. Mann, M. 1984. "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results", Archives europeenes de Sociologie, 25: 2.
10	Apr 21-23	Marxist Theories of State	Carnoy, Martin. (1984). Structuralism and the State: Althusser and Poulantzas. In The State and Political Theory (pp. 97-108). NJ: Princeton University Press. Carnoy, M. (1984). Gramsci and the State. In The State and Political Theory (pp. 65-88). Princeton University Press. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7zvcd1.7 Althusser, L. (1971). Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses. In L. Althusser (Ed.), Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays. New York: Monthly Review Press.
11	Apr 28-30	The Origins of Capitalist Development	Mooers, C. 1991. The Making of Bourgeois Europe, London: Verso, pp.45-97. Anderson, P. 1974. "Absolutist State in the West", in Lineages of the Absolutist State, London: Verso, pp. 15-42. Wood, E.M. 2002, The Origin of Capitalism, pp.11-70.
12	May 5-7	Path of Development in the Middle East	Bromley, S. 1994. Rethinking Middle East Politics, Polity Press, pp. 119-155 Turner, B. 1994. Orientalism, Postmodernism & Globalism, London: Routledge, pp.20-35. İnalçık, H. 1992. "Comments on 'Sultanism': Max Weber's Typification of the Ottoman Polity", Princeton Papers in Near Eastern Studies, pp. 49-72.
13	May 12-14	Path of Development in Post-Soviet Space	Robinson, Neil. (2008). State, regime and Russian political development. Publication date 01-01-2008 Published in Limerick Papers in Politics and Public Administration;2008, No. 3 Zhao, Y., & Wu, J. (2020). Understanding China's Developmental Path: Towards Socialist Rejuvenation? Javnost - The Public, 27(2), 97-111. Leong Liew (2005) China's Engagement with Neo-liberalism: Path Dependency, Geography and Party Self-Reinvention, The Journal of Development Studies, 41:2, 331-352, DOI: 10.1080/0022038042000309278

14 May 19-21 Path of Development in East Asia

Zhao, Y., & Wu, J. (2020). Understanding China's Developmental Path: Towards Socialist Rejuvenation? *Javnost - The Public*, 27(2), 97–111.

Leong Liew (2005) China's Engagement with Neo-liberalism: Path Dependency, Geography and Party Self-Reinvention, *The Journal of Development Studies*, 41:2, 331-352, DOI: 10.1080/0022038042000309278

15 May 26-28 National Holiday

16 June 2-4 Final Review