

Syllabus:

SYLLABUS: POL/LAS 204 – Comparative Politics in the Age of Globalization¹

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¹ Part of this syllabus was adopted from Dr. Paul Schuler's syllabus POL 204.

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Section 1: About This Course

1.1 Course Title and Number

POL/LAS 204 – Comparative Politics in the Age of Globalization

1.2 Welcome Statement

Hello and welcome! My name is Yongfeng Tang, and I'm excited to be your instructor for *Comparative Politics in the Age of Globalization*. This course is a journey into how different political systems work—and why they matter. I look forward to learning with you, supporting your growth, and helping you discover your own voice as a thinker and global citizen. Let's have a great semester together!

1.3 Instructor Information/ Office Hours

Yongfeng Tang
PhD Candidate
Social Sciences Building 120
ytang08@arizona.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday 10-11 am

1.4 Teaching Philosophy

In this course, my teaching philosophy continues to evolve with each student I meet. It is grounded in a commitment to support, challenge, and inspire you as you explore the complexities of political systems around the world. My goal is to help you build on your strengths, confront difficult questions with confidence, and discover your unique voice as a critical thinker and engaged global citizen.

1.5 Description of Course

This course will explore the field of comparative politics, which involves the analysis and comparison of the causes and consequences of different political systems across the world. The course will start by exploring how political scientists use the scientific method to understand political phenomena.

Next, we will introduce different theories that explain the emergence of modern states.

Then, we will apply these tools to explain the emergence of democracy and autocracy, the causes and consequences of different electoral systems, and finally, the economic and political effects of different institutional designs.

After completing the course, the students will know the basics of different government institutions and have a basic understanding of the consequences of these different institutional forms. In doing so, we will also explore several cases (i.e., countries) in depth from all regions of the world.

Section 2: Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes

2.1 Course Objectives²

This course will introduce students to the field of comparative politics, which involves the study of governments outside the US. We will learn how to research and theorize about political systems across the world. In doing so, we will examine political institutions that are common to all forms of government and understand distinctions between different types of political systems.

We will also gain familiarity with the diversity of political organizations and institutions across the world, including democracies and dictatorships.

In analyzing these systems, we will learn how to use quantitative measures of political systems to examine both the causes and effects of different political institutions.

The course will also explore how political scientists present evidence and make claims about how political structures or institutions work and why things happen the way they do.

This course will provide students with opportunities to improve their presentation and writing skills through different forms of assignments throughout this semester.

2.2 Expected Learning Outcomes

At the end of the semester:

In this course, students will learn how comparative political scientists study politics by examining different approaches and methods. They will critically evaluate arguments about democracy and autocracy and understand the causes and consequences of these systems.

Students will study the political systems of several countries, with a focus on one non-U.S. country for a research paper. They will develop expertise in that case by exploring its political history and outcomes.

Students will also build skills in working with data—interpreting graphs, analyzing tables, and using quantitative evidence to support their arguments.

Finally, students will learn how to ask strong research questions, identify independent and dependent variables, and engage in the peer review process to better understand how political science research is developed and evaluated.

Section 3: Course Format and Logistics-related Issues

3.1 Course Format and Teaching Methods

The course will be in-person and lecture-based (delivered on Mondays and Wednesdays), but it will also emphasize *active student participation*. In addition to five discussion posts submitted through D2L, students will regularly engage in small group activities, case-based discussions,

² This section differs from the next section (expected learning outcomes), which emphasizes how learning will take place in this course. Thanks to Professor Gemein's suggestion.

and interactive polling during class. A major component of the course is a semester-long research assignment designed to simulate the real-world research process of political scientists, encouraging you to ask critical questions, analyze evidence, and present your findings in both written and oral formats.

3.2 Locations and Times

Monday and Wednesday 10:30-11:45 am at Communication building #212

3.3 Required Textbook

Clark, William Roberts, Matt Golder, and Sona Nadenichek Golder (CGG). *Principles of Comparative Politics: Third Edition*. 2018.

Section 4: Grading Policy/Extra Credit/Class Behavior Policies

4.1 Grading Policy

University policy regarding grades and grading systems is available at:
[here](#)

Grade Distribution for this Course:

- A: Excellent
- B: Good
- C: Satisfactory
- D: Poor
- E: Failure

Requests for incompletes (I) and withdrawal (W) must be made in accordance with university policies, which are available at [Incompletes](#) and [Withdrawal](#), respectively.

4.2 Honors Credit

Students wishing to contract this course for Honors Credit should email me to set up an appointment to discuss the terms of the contract and to sign the Honors Course Contract Request Form. The form is available at: [here](#).

4.3 Late Work Policy

Timely submission of assignments is important, but I understand that life can be unpredictable. If you anticipate needing extra time due to illness, personal challenges, or unforeseen circumstances, please reach out to me as soon as possible. Extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis. While documentation is appreciated, it is not always required. My goal is to support your learning while maintaining fairness for all students.

4.4 Attendance Policy

The UA's policy concerning Class Attendance and Administrative Drops is available at: [here](#)

The UA policy regarding absences on and accommodation of religious holidays is available at: [here](#).

Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean designee) will be honored. See: [here](#)

Participating in the course and attending lectures and other course events are vital to the learning process. As such, attendance is required at all lectures and discussion section meetings. If you need to miss class due to illness, a personal emergency, or other important reasons, please let me know as soon as you're able. While documentation (e.g., from a healthcare provider or other professional) can be helpful, it is not always required. I trust students to make responsible decisions and will work with you to help you stay on track with the course material.

4.5 Classroom Behavior

To foster a positive learning environment, students may not text, chat, make phone calls, play games, read the newspaper, or surf the web during lectures and discussions. Students are asked to refrain from disruptive conversations with people sitting around them during lectures. Students observed engaging in disruptive activity will be asked to cease this behavior. Students who continue to disrupt the class will be asked to leave the lecture or discussion and may be reported to the Dean of Students.

The Arizona Board of Regents' Student Code of Conduct, ABOR Policy 5-308, prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the University community, including to oneself. See: [here](#).

4.6 AI Policies for this Course

In this course, any and all uses of generative artificial intelligence (AI)/large language model tools such as ChatGPT, Dall-e, Google Bard, Microsoft Bing, etc., will be considered a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity, specifically the prohibition against submitting work that is not your own. This applies to all assessments in the course, including case studies, written assignments, discussions, quizzes, exams, and problem sets. This course policy is driven by the learning goals and desired learning outcomes for the course described at the beginning of this syllabus.

The following actions are **prohibited**:

- ☐ entering all or any part of an assignment statement or test questions as part of a prompt to a large language model AI tool;
- ☐ incorporating any part of an AI-written response in an assignment;
- ☐ using AI to summarize or contextualize reading assignments or source materials;
- ☐ and submitting your own work for this class to a large language model AI tool for iteration or improvement.

For more guidance and resources on how to use Generative Artificial Intelligence can be found at the UA Library [here](#).

4.7 Accessibility and Accommodations

It is the University's goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. You are also welcome to contact Disability Resources (520-621-3268) to establish reasonable accommodations. For additional information on Disability Resources and reasonable accommodations, please visit the [DRC website](#).

If you have reasonable accommodations, please plan to meet with me by appointment or during office hours to discuss accommodations and how my course requirements and activities may impact your ability to fully participate.

Please be aware that the accessible table and chairs in this room should remain available for students who find that standard classroom seating is not usable.

4.8 Student Code of Academic Integrity

Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work/exercises must be the product of independent effort unless otherwise instructed. Students are expected to adhere to the UA Code of Academic Integrity as described in the UA General Catalog. See: [Code of Academic Integrity](#) and [Academic Integrity policy](#).

The University Libraries have some excellent tips for avoiding plagiarism available at: [Plagiarism](#).

Selling class notes and/or other course materials to other students or to a third party for resale is not permitted without the instructor's express written consent. Violations of this and other course rules are subject to the Code of Academic Integrity and may result in course sanctions. Additionally, students who use D2L or UA email to sell or buy these copyrighted materials are subject to Code of Conduct Violations for misuse of student email addresses. This conduct may also constitute copyright infringement.

4.9 Confidentiality of Student Records

The FERPA policy is available at: [FERPA policy](#)

4.10 Subject to Change Statement

Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

4.11 Additional Resources for Students

UA Non-discrimination and Anti-harassment policies are available at: [Nondiscrimination policy](#)

UA Academic policies and procedures are available at:

[Academic Policies](#)

Student Assistance and Advocacy information is available at:

[Student Assistance](#)

Section 5 : Assignments Related Issues

5.1 Assignment Format

- ☐ 15% Discussion Posts: For some weeks, there will be a quiz where the student will be asked to summarize the argument of one of the readings (there are *five* discussion posts in total; each counts as 3% of the final grade).
- ☐ 25% Mid-Term (*closed exam*)³
- ☐ 25% Final Exam (*closed exam*)⁴
- ☐ 35%: Research Paper (details can be found below).

5.2 Research Paper Project:

5.2.1 Research Paper Assignment

This course includes a **scaffolded research project** that unfolds over the duration of the semester. Rather than being completed all at once, the project is broken into manageable stages—each designed to build your skills step by step. From forming a research question and reviewing the literature to collecting evidence and presenting your findings, each component will help prepare you for the final paper. This structure not only supports your learning but also mirrors the process real political scientists go through when conducting research.

Each student selects a research topic related to comparative politics. Suggested themes include:

- A. A country's level of corruption
- B. A country's level of democracy
- C. A country's level of redistribution (i.e., welfare provisions, etc.)
- D. A country's level of economic development and growth
- E. A country's level of human rights protections

³ This will take place at the regular class time in the classroom where we have lecture.

⁴ This will take place in the classroom where we have lecture, and the time is different from the class time (1 pm on May 14th).

- F. A country's number of parties exists in the legislature
- G. Or other topics that are approved by the instructor.

5.2.2 Submit a one-paragraph proposal

The proposal should include the following:

A research question.

A brief hypothesis or argument.

A justification for the topic's relevance.

This assignment is due on **Wednesday, midnight (11:59 pm) of the Third week** of this semester. It counts as 10% of the Research Paper Project or 3.5 % of the final grades.

5.2.3 Annotated Bibliography Assignment

Compile an annotated bibliography with at least 5 scholarly sources. Each entry should include:

A summary of the source.

Its relevance to your research question.

How does it inform your analysis?

This assignment is due on **Wednesday, midnight (11:59 pm) of the Fifth week** of this semester. It counts as 10% of the Research Paper Project or 3.5% of the final grades.

5.2.4 Draft Paper Assignment

Each student brings a draft of their paper (minimum 5 pages) to class (in the **second session of the Ninth Week** of this semester). The draft paper is due before the second session of the Eighth week of this semester. It counts as 10 % of the Research Paper Project and 3.5% of the final grades.

5.2.5 Peer-review Project

During the 9th week's first session:

Peers provide feedback based on a rubric focusing on (one student peer-reviewing another student's paper plus presentation) (The peer-review feedback is due **before the Tenth week's first session**):

- A. Clarity of the research question and argument.
- B. Use of evidence.
- C. Strength of the comparative analysis.
- D. Writing and organization.

The peer-review feedback counts as 15 % of the Research Paper Project and 5.25 % of the final grades.

5.2.6 Final Research Paper Project⁵

Submit a 10–12 page paper that includes:

- A. Introduction: A clear research question and its significance.
- B. Literature Review: Discuss existing research relevant to the question.
- C. Theoretical Framework: Identify key variables and their expected relationship.
- D. Evidence: Students should include quantitative evidence to support their arguments/hypotheses.
- E. Analysis: Evaluate findings in light of the theoretical framework.
- F. Conclusion: Summarize the findings and discuss their implications for comparative politics.

The students are required to use the quantitative method (i.e., Tables, Graphs, Regressions, etc.) to support their argument. This assignment is due on the **First session of the Fifteenth Week**. It counts as 55% of the Research Paper Project and 19.25 % of the final grades.

Section 6: Course Schedule

6.1 Course Schedule

- ☐ Jan 16 – Introduction and What is Comparative Politics? Read: CGG Ch 1
- ☐ Jan 21 - How to Study Politics Scientifically Read: CGG CH 2
- ☐ Jan 23 – Questions and Cases in Comparative Politics
- ☐ Jan 28– Introduction to Political Science Datasets
- ☐ Jan 30 – States, governments and the origins of states Read: CGG Ch 4
Discussion post 1 is due in D2L.
The proposal assignment is due on Jan 31.
- ☐ Feb 4 – States, governments and the origins of states Read: CGG Ch 4

⁵ A rubric for evaluating the final research paper project can be found at the Appendix of this syllabus.

- Feb 6 – Democracy and Autocracy
Read: CGG Ch 5
- Feb 11 – Democracy and Autocracy
Read: CGG Ch 5
- Feb 13 – Determinants of Democracy and Dictatorship
Read: CGG Ch 6
Discussion post 2 is due in D2L.
The annotated bibliography assignment is due on Feb 14.
- Feb 18 – Determinants of Democracy and Dictatorship
Read: CGG Ch 7
- Feb 20 – Democratic Transitions
Read: CGG Ch 8
- Feb 25 – Democratic Transitions
Read: CGG Ch 8
- Feb 25 – Democratic Transitions
Read: CGG Ch 8
Discussion post 3 is due in D2L.
- Feb 27 – Democracy or Dictatorship, does it make a difference?
Read: CGG Ch 9
- Mar 4 Exam Review
- Mar 6 – **Midterm Exam**
- March 10-14 Spring Break
- March 18 – Democracy or Dictatorship, does it make a difference? [China vs. India]
Read: CGG Ch 9
- March 20 – Varieties of Autocracy
Read: CGG Ch 10
Discussion post 4 is due in D2L.
The draft paper assignment is due on March 20.
- March 25 – Varieties of Autocracy
CGG Ch 10
The peer review assignment is due on March 25.
- March 27 – Democracies – Presidential vs. Parliamentary
Read: CGG Ch 12
- April 1 – Democracies – Presidential vs. Parliamentary
Read: CGG Ch 12
- April 3 – Democracies – Elections and Electoral Systems
Read: CGG Ch 13

Discussion post 5 is due in D2L.

- ☐
- ☐ April 8 – Democracies – Elections and Electoral Systems Read: CGG Ch 13
- ☐ April 10 – Democracies – Elections and Electoral Systems Read: CGG Ch 13
- ☐ April 15– Social Cleavages and Party Systems Read: CGG Ch 14
- ☐ April 17 – Social Cleavages and Party Systems Read: CGG Ch 14
- ☐ April 22 – Social Cleavages and Party Systems Read: CGG Ch 14
- ☐ April 24 – Consequences of Democratic Institutions Read: CGG Ch 16
- ☐ April 29 – Consequences of Democratic Institutions Read: CGG Ch 16
The final paper assignment is due on April 29.
- ☐ May 1 – Consequences of Democratic Institutions Read: CGG Ch 16
- ☐ May 6 – Exam Review
- ☐ May 14 (1 pm) – Final Exam

Appendix: A rubric for evaluating the final research paper project

Category	Excellent (A)	Good (B)	Adequate (C)	Needs Improvement (D/F)	Points
Research Question & Thesis (15 pts)	Clear, focused question and thesis; demonstrates insight and originality.	Mostly clear and relevant; thesis is present but could be sharper.	Question or thesis is vague or somewhat unfocused.	Lacks a clear research question or thesis.	<u>15</u>
Use of Comparative Politics Concepts (15 pts)	Effectively integrates key course concepts (e.g., regime types, institutions, variables).	Includes relevant concepts with minor gaps or misapplications.	Mentions key concepts but with limited explanation.	Little or incorrect use of comparative politics concepts.	<u>15</u>
Country Case Selection & Justification (10 pts)	Country/countries selected are appropriate and well-justified in relation to research question.	Choice is appropriate but justification is limited.	Country choice is somewhat justified but lacks depth.	Country/case not well explained or inappropriate.	<u>10</u>

Evidence & Analysis (20 pts)	Strong use of evidence (data, examples, scholarly sources); insightful analysis.	Good use of evidence with solid analysis.	Some evidence used, but analysis is underdeveloped.	Limited or irrelevant evidence; weak or absent analysis.	<u> </u> /20
Structure & Organization (10 pts)	Clear, logical structure with smooth transitions and flow.	Well-organized with minor lapses in clarity.	Some organization, but ideas jump or lack clarity.	Poor structure; difficult to follow.	<u> </u> /10
Use of Scholarly Sources (10 pts)	At least 8 scholarly sources used appropriately and cited correctly.	5-6 scholarly sources used; minor citation issues.	Fewer than 4 scholarly sources; citation style inconsistencies.	Few or no scholarly sources; incorrect or missing citations.	<u> </u> /10
Writing Quality (10 pts)	Writing is clear, engaging, and error-free.	Generally well-written; minor grammar/style issues.	Some writing issues affect clarity.	Frequent writing errors; hard to read.	<u> </u> /10
Conclusion & Implications (5 pts)	Conclusion effectively summarizes findings and offers broader implications.	Adequate summary with some broader relevance.	Weak conclusion or lacks broader context.	No meaningful conclusion.	<u> </u> /5

Originality & Critical Thinking (5 pts)	Demonstrates originality and critical engagement throughout.	Some critical thinking and original insight.	Limited originality or analysis.	Lacks critical engagement; overly descriptive.	____/5
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