

GO 103: Introduction to Comparative and International Politics

Instructor: Sumita Pahwa

Class hours: Lecture: Mon, Wed. 11:15 a.m. – 12:10 p.m.
Discussion: Fri 11:15 a.m. – 12:10 p.m.

Classroom: Ladd 307.

Office: Ladd 304.

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1 – 3 p.m.

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Course description:

This course introduces students to the basic concepts and tools that political scientists use to understand contemporary politics and addresses the main questions treated by two of the subfields of political science – comparative politics and international relations. In the first half of the course, we will study different approaches to the exercise of power, kinds of political institutions and modes of political organization, the formation of states and nations, theories of how economic development shapes politics, the evolution of democratic and non-democratic political regimes, and the role of culture and identity in the modern political process. The second half introduces students to the dominant theories of international relations, addressing the questions: on what basis do nation states relate to each other, and what makes them cooperate or enter into conflict? We will explore the insights offered by approaches that emphasize different key drivers of international relations, such as hard power, economic interest, identity and norms.

Class format:

There will be two lectures on Monday and Wednesday, which will introduce students to the week's topics and critically assess the contribution of each reading. You will be required to read about 60-70 pages in depth each week, so plan at least 5 hours per week for class reading.

Readings are required and must be completed before class; you will be expected to discuss and answer questions about them. We will cover the readings for each week in the order they are listed – so the first one or two readings are generally covered on Monday, the remaining readings on Wednesday, and we will discuss questions related to the readings on Friday. Be sure you have finished all the readings for the week by Wednesday because you may have a reading quiz that day.

Each week's class is framed by an overarching question and the different readings offer different ways of answering it. I will also post up a list of discussion questions for each week on Blackboard, which you should look over and be prepared to discuss on Fridays. These questions will also help you prepare for tests and may help you focus your reading as well, so you should look at them as soon as you start reading.

Some articles, films and documentaries are assigned for discussion section to show you how some of the theoretical debates we are studying actually work on the ground in different countries – you will NOT be tested on these readings and films for your quizzes or exams.

You are strongly encouraged to raise your own questions on the readings and the week's topics, and stop me during lecture to ask questions – this is the best way to learn!

Required readings:

This class does not use a single textbook and therefore you will not find a book on order at the bookstore for it. Instead we will use a sampling of articles and book chapters drawn directly from both classic and contemporary research in comparative and international politics, using lectures and discussion questions to draw the readings together.

The only text that you may wish to purchase is the *Hodges Harbrace Handbook* (17th edition), which is available at the book store and also at the library, and is the Government Department's grammatical reference for all written assignments. If you are planning to major in Government, this is a good investment.

All readings are on reserve at the Scribner library, with most available as e-reserves for you to download and print out. (<http://www2.skidmore.edu/library/reserves/login.cfm>) You will need to enter your Skidmore ID name and password to enter the "reserves hub" and then scroll down to see the reserves for your various classes. Select GO103 for the course and all the readings will show up below (just scroll down). Click on the "e" in the green circle next to the article or chapter title to open up articles and book chapters that are on electronic reserve. If a reading is not on e-reserve, scroll down and you will find it under "books" – these are readings that are too long to be placed on e-reserve. Write down the call number and go up to the main circulation desk at the library to request the book. These reserve books can only be taken out for three hours at a time, so be sure to give yourself plenty of time before class to do the reserve reading as you may have to wait for the relevant book to be returned by the person before you. Or you can just photocopy the reading and do it at your leisure.

Please familiarize yourselves with the e-reserve system right away, and ask the reserves librarian for assistance if needed.

Assignments, Grading and Your Responsibilities:

Reading quizzes: There will be four quizzes, unannounced, on Wednesdays, covering very simple questions related to the readings assigned for the Monday and Wednesday of that week. They will take no more than ten minutes and you should find the questions very easy to answer if you have done the reading. Your three best grades for the quizzes will be taken to count for 15% of your final grade. There will be no make-ups for missed quizzes.

News analysis response paper: Each week I will post up articles from the news that relate to the week's topic (or you may select and submit your own from a list of recommended newspapers and magazines) on Blackboard. If you wish to write a response paper for the week, analyze one or two of these articles with the help of the week's discussion questions and write a 2-3 page paper in which you critically analyze the article and discuss how the week's readings might shed light on the questions it discusses. Be sure to print out the article and attach it to your paper. I encourage you to write this paper early in the semester as it is a good exercise in training yourself to read critically. Papers should be handed in at the beginning of class on Friday for the week that the reading will be covered in the course. This counts for 10% of your grade; an *exceptional* paper covering more than one article with a truly rigorous application of the theories discussed in class may receive extra credit.

Classroom participation: This counts for 15% of your grade and is based on both your attendance and your ability to discuss and engage the ideas in the week's readings. You will get a good grade for being a "good citizen" of the class – attending regularly, being engaged in the reading, participating and supporting a productive and courteous classroom environment.

Mid-term exam: 30% of your grade.

Final exam: 30% of your grade.

Please note that exams are not cumulative, so the midterm will cover only the first half of the course, while the final will cover the second half.

Attendance and Office Hours:

Attendance at lectures and discussion sections is required and it is your responsibility to make up missed work. If you cannot attend a class, you are responsible for making up the material. Please be sure to do the reading and get lecture notes from your colleagues first, go over and prepare to answer the discussion questions, and then schedule a meeting with me during regular office hours if you still have questions. If you have a documented, serious illness that requires you to miss class for more than one or two sessions, and if tests are held during those sessions, you may request a make-up test.

If you have questions or concerns about the readings or anything else about the course, you can drop by to office hours on Mondays from 1 – 3 p.m., or email me in advance to schedule an appointment at other times (likely to be difficult so your best bet is to come to office hours). For the week before midterms and finals, office hours meetings will be by appointment only, to accommodate everyone. I encourage you to stop by early in the semester and chat with me, go over any concerns and see if you are on track with readings and concepts!

A note on emailing the instructor: Please try to limit emails to questions that truly cannot wait till the next class or till office hours, such as: difficulties with reserve readings that cannot be resolved by contacting the reserves librarian, illness, errors in the syllabus that might cause confusion about the reading due for the next day, important questions on an assignment, and so on. I generally respond to emails between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. If you have a question or concern that requires some time to go over, please come to office hours.

Writing standards and guidelines:

Please take a copy of the Government department's booklet on written assignments from me at the end of the first day of class, if you do not already have a copy, and follow the guidelines in it.

Please review and be prepared to abide by the Government Department guidelines for civility and comportment in the classroom.

Cell phone use, texting or messaging during class are disruptive for your learning and the learning of others as well as for the instructor, and you will be marked absent for the day if you use electronic devices without prior permission.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Jan 24: *Introduction to comparative politics*

What are we comparing in comparative politics? What are the common processes and forms of political organization, and why and how do differences evolve across time and place? How have people organized societies and power over the centuries?

Jan 26: *The building blocks of political analysis*

If power is the key building block of politics, where does it come from? What are the different ways in which power works? We will discuss institutions, norms, legitimacy and authority and what they tell us about how power can be exercised. We will also consider why we focus on formal institutions of government in modern political analysis, and how these institutions shape and are shaped by broader power relations in society.

Readings:

Donald Kurtz Political Anthropology Ch 2 Political Power, pp 21-26, 29-38.

Jan 28: Discussion:

Who has power over you and why? Why do abstract entities like states and cultures have so much power over us? How would you design an ideal system of government, and what role do “raw” power and values play in determining this system?

Jan 31 – Feb 4: What are nation-states and why are they the main units of politics in the modern world?

In this week’s readings, we will study the origins of the modern nation-state and consider why national loyalties transformed politics in the modern era. We will also consider the ways in which the territorial state has evolved in the West and how it functions in, and transforms, later-developing societies.

Readings:

David Held et al., Global Transformations Ch 1 “The Territorial State and Global Politics” pp. 32-49

Anthony Smith and John Hutchinson, Eds. Nationalism. Extracts (Anderson, Connor, Gellner, Giddens, Hobsbawm, Weber)

Christopher Clapham “The Third World State” in Third World Politics.

Discussion: Would it be possible to live in the modern world in something other than a nation-state? Consider how economics, education, ideologies and citizenship would be different if we still lived in pre-national times (in colonies, local communities, feudal orders, etc).

Feb 7 – 11: How does economics shape politics? Do democracy and capitalism always go together?

The idea that economic interests drive politics goes back to Aristotle and was taken further by Marx, who argued that political power simply reflected relations of production. Modern social scientists have argued that democracy only emerges in countries that have “modern” capitalist economies and strong middle classes. How can we understand the ways in which economics shapes politics today?

Readings:

Seymour Martin Lipset “Some Social Requisites of Democracy” *APSR* 53 (1) 1959

“Beyond Wisteria Lane” OR “The Other Moore’s Law,” *Economist*, February 12, 2009 (Will be posted on Blackboard)

Patricia Cohen, “An Unexpected Odd Couple: Free Markets and Freedom,” *New York Times*, June 14, 2007. <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/14/world/14democracy.html?ref=world>

Discussion: Read/watch either ONE of the following and consider where you stand on the question of whether development needs to come before democracy or not.

Jose Maria Maravall, “The Myth of the Authoritarian Advantage,” *Journal of Democracy* 5 (4) October 1994 pp 17-31.

Doha Debates: “This House Would Prefer Money to Free Elections,” <http://www.thedohadebates.com/debates/player.asp?d=86>

Feb 14 - 18: *What is democracy, how did it come about, and why does it work differently at different times and places?*

Democracy is arguably a “universal value,” and the product of liberal political thought, but it has also been the result of very specific historical developments in the places where it has taken root. What are the different historical paths by which countries have arrived at democracy, and how does this make a difference in how democracy actually works?

Readings:

Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy* Ch 3 “Historical sequences”

Karl and Schmitter, “What Democracy is and Is Not,” *Journal of Democracy* 1991.

Fareed Zakaria “The Rise of Illiberal Democracy” *Foreign Affairs* November 1997.

Amartya Sen, “Democracy as a Universal Value” *Journal of Democracy* 10 (3) 1999.

Discussion: Read the two following articles and consider whose argument you agree with more. Ashutosh Varshney, “Why Democracy Survives,” *Journal of Democracy* 9 (3) 1998 (Explores why India is democratic against all odds, as a poor and ethnically divided country) Lydia Polgreen, “High Price for India’s Information Law,” *New York Times*, January 22, 2011. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/23/world/asia/23india.html?ref=world&pagewanted=all> (Shows how wealthy and powerful political elites can trump democratic rights)

Feb 21-25: *Why do people organize politically and vote as they do?*

Why do we have political parties and what function do they serve? Do the rules of the electoral game benefit some kinds of interests more than others? If you had to design an electoral system that gave the most representation to the maximum number of people, how would you do it? Could you run a government with it?

Readings:

Lipset and Rokkan, “Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments: An Introduction” in *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*.

Arend Lijphart “Constitutional choices for new democracies” *Journal of Democracy* 2 (1) 1991.

Richard Gunther and Larry Diamond, “Species of Political Parties: A New Typology,” *Party Politics*, 9 (2) 2003. (optional – skim, we will go over the main argument in class)

Discussion: Read the following article and think about what kind of electoral system you would recommend for Afghanistan based on what you have learned.

Barnett Rubin, “Crafting a Constitution for Afghanistan,” *Journal of Democracy* 15 (3) 2004.

http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v015/15.3rubin.html

Feb 28 – Mar 4: *What is an authoritarian state, and why do such states persist in modern times?*

Monarchies and good old-fashioned dictatorships may be rare these days but a surprising number of today’s states, despite the modern trappings of bureaucracies and legislatures and constitutions, are still not democratic. How do these states survive and function? Are they destined to become more democratic as they get richer and more developed?

Readings:

Linz and Stepan, “Modern Nondemocratic Regimes” in *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* pp 38-54.

Michael Ross “Does Oil Hinder Democracy?” *World Politics* 53 (April 2001).

Eva Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East," *Comparative Politics* 36 (2) Jan 2004.

Discussion: Just a few weeks ago, a seemingly entrenched dictator in Tunisia was overthrown. What does this tell us about how durable authoritarianism really is in the Middle East?
Economist January 11, 2011, "Tunisia: Ali Baba Gone, But What About the Forty Thieves?"
<http://www.economist.com/node/17959620>

Mar 7 - 11: *Why do religion, identity and culture still matter in modern politics?*

Religion was supposed to go away, and identity and culture become less important as people became more 'rational' in pursuing their political and economic interests. Yet, surprisingly, culture, identity and religion have stayed important in modern political systems. Why is this so, and what does it mean for democratic politics?

Readings:

Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civic Politics in the New States" in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, pp. 255-278.

Susanne and Lloyd Rudolph, "Modern Hate: How Ancient Animosity Get Invented," *New Republic*, March 22, 1993.

Mark Juergensmeyer, "Is Religion the Problem?"
<http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/4n92c45q#page-1>

Discussion: Watch the following short documentary on Sri Lankan Buddhist monks involved in politics and think about why religion still plays a role in Sri Lankan politics.
Al Jazeera English, "The Monks of War." <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyAn0vw70G8>

March 12 – 20: Spring Break.

MARCH 21: MIDTERM EXAM IN CLASS

Mar 21 – 25: *Introduction to International Relations and the Perspective of Realism*

International relations is concerned mainly with explaining peace and conflict. The dominant theories of IR understand the "state system" and international order in different ways depending on their view of what motivates states and how they defend their power and security and achieve their interests in the international arena. We will start with classic 'realist' theorists of IR and consider their assumption that raw power and military force ultimately govern relations in the international arena because of the absence of meaningful international laws or government.

Readings:

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* Chs 13-15 (Download text at Project Gutenberg or go here: <http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/hobbes/leviathan-c.html#CHAPTERXIII>)

John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* Ch 2 "Anarchy and the Struggle for Power"

Waltz, *Man, the State and War* Chs 1 and 6

Keohane, *Neorealism and its Critics* Ch 1. "Realism, Neorealism and the Study of World Politics" (pp. 7-25)

Discussion: Read the following article and consider whether you agree with the author's argument that the Israel-Palestine conflict confirms Realist assumptions.

Ethan Bronner, "Painful Mideast Truth: Force Trumps Diplomacy," *New York Times* Oct 19, 2009.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/20/world/middleeast/20mideast.html?scp=1&sq=israel%20palestine%20force%20violence&st=cse>

Mar 28 – Apr 1: *Perspectives on International Relations: 'Liberalism'*

The first major challenge to the realist view of IR came in the form of 'liberal' theory, which argued that states behaved differently in the international arena when they were democratic and economically liberal. We will analyze the arguments made by liberal theorists for why states that are more interested in trade will be less likely to wage war and why democratic states rarely fight other democracies, and consider whether this undermines the realist argument.

Readings:

Bruce Russett *Grasping the Democratic Peace* Ch 2 "Why Democratic Peace?"

Michael Doyle *Ways of War and Peace* Ch 7 "Commercial Pacifism: Smith and Schumpeter"

Discussion: Is trade likely to make China democratic and peaceful? Will trade alone make China more likely to cooperate with other countries, or is democracy necessary? (articles to be posted on BB)

Apr 4 - 6: *Perspectives on International Relations: 'Constructivism'*

Traditional realist and liberal perspectives on IR were challenged in the 1990s by a new approach called constructivism that argued that states' identities and the ways in which they related to each other mattered more than their domestic interests or political systems in shaping how they would behave in the international arena. We will explore constructivist thought and consider how it helps explain why the world is not actually as violent as traditional theorists might predict.

Readings:

Alexander Wendt "Anarchy is What States Make of It" *International Organization* 46 (2) 1992

Discussion: Read articles on Turkey's relations with Israel (posted on BB) and consider whether Turkey has changed its definition of its own interests as a result of its increasingly Islamic identity.

Apr 8: *Cooperation and interdependence*

What makes states cooperate in the contemporary international arena? Why do we have so many international institutions and rules despite international anarchy, and why do states obey these rules? Is increased trade making us more peaceful today, and does it follow or challenge the assumptions of realists and liberals? Can we achieve cooperation around other shared interests like the environment?

Readings:

Robert Keohane, "International institutions: Can interdependence work?" *Foreign Policy* Spring 1998: 110.

Robert Keohane *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* Ch 4 "Cooperation and regimes"

Apr 11: *Discussion:*

We will read news articles on the Copenhagen climate change conference and consider what is likely to make states cooperate on climate change.

Apr 13 and Apr 15: *Globalization*

'Globalization' is shifting states, nations, loyalties and identities radically – or is it? What is new about the current phase of globalization that distinguishes it from earlier historical forms of interconnectedness? We will consider what globalization means for the world today, particularly what it means for the centrality of the nation-state in the international system.

Readings:

Stephen Krasner, "Think Again: Sovereignty," *Foreign Policy* Jan-Feb 2001.

Keohane and Nye, "Globalization: What's New? What's Not? And So What?" *Foreign Policy*, Spring 2000.

Ferguson and Mansbach, "The Past as Prelude to the Future: Identities and Loyalties in Global Politics" in Lapid and Kratchowil, eds. *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory*.

Discussion: What "polities" do you owe your loyalty to? Has globalization made your government less important to and responsible for you? Do you owe your well-being to your government any more or to the impersonal forces of the global marketplace? Do you think your identity today as a citizen of your own country or as a global citizen is more relevant?

Apr 18-22: *Civil war and ethnic conflict*

While most theories of war and peace deal with conventional conflict between states, the most thorny and persistent conflicts in the world today are within states, often spilling over and inviting intervention from other states. Why are civil wars so hard to resolve? Can they be "won"?

Readings:

Chaim Kaufmann, "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars," *International Security* 20 (4) 1996

James Fearon, "Iraq's Civil War," *Foreign Affairs* March-April 2007

Gary Bass, "What Really Causes Civil War?" *New York Times* August 13, 2006.

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/13/magazine/13wwln_idealab.html

Discussion: Watch either ONE of the two following short documentaries on Sudan's civil war and consider whether you agree that partition is the best outcome for North and South Sudan.

Al Jazeera English, "Sudan: Sliding Back into Civil War,"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhEgUxcv6Q>

PBS Frontline, "Sudan: The Quick and the Terrible,"

http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/watch/player.html?pkg=401_sudan&seg=1&mod=0

Apr 25-29: *Has terrorism changed our basic assumptions about conflict?*

What do we mean by "terrorism"? Why is it on the increase in today's world? Can we understand it in terms of rational, even realist calculations or is it driven by something else? How does it change the calculations states must make in defending their security?

Robert Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism" *APSR* 97 (3) August 2003, pp. 1-14 (leave out appendix)

Mark Juergensmeyer, "Terror in the Name of God," *Current History* November 2001 pp. 357-361.

Grenville Wyford, "The Wrong War," *Foreign Affairs*, July-Aug 2002.
Graham Fuller, "A World Without Islam," *Foreign Policy*, Jan-Feb 2008.

Discussion: Do you think that religious terrorism is something we can make sense of with the theories of IR we have studied thus far, or is it something radically new?

May 2: Wrap-up session and reconsideration of the concept of power. Review sheet for final exam to be handed out.

Final examination: Thursday May 12 from 6 – 9 p.m. in Ladd 307.