**POL 2260-PTRA (34290)**

**Introduction to Comparative Government **

**Spring 2021, Wednesday 12:50PM - 2:05PM**

**Class:** https://baruch.zoom.us/j/2988192739

**Instructor:** Sally Sharif

**Office:** https://baruch.zoom.us/j/2988192739

**Office Hours:** Wednesday 2:15PM – 4:15PM

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**Course description**

This course focuses on major themes and concepts in comparative politics. Students will examine country characteristics, such as governmental institutions, patterns of development, culture, society, and violence. Students will not only learn to think critically about the politics of the world around them, but they will develop a deep knowledge of individual countries and learn how and when general political concepts and structures are likely to transcend individual country circumstances. They will also learn how to discern which concepts and structures are not comparable across country contexts. This course should also enable students to question typical categorizations of countries, while encouraging students to explore the impact of the changing global context.

**Course learning objectives**

* Learn some of methodologies employed in comparative politics
* Compare different types of state structures and conditions and explain how those might affect the politics of countries generally and in specific case study examples.
* Engage different arguments about the impact of culture, ethnicity, ideology, and societal structures on political processes within countries, both generally and in application to specific cases.
* Identify different types of regime structures, as well as the different perspectives regarding how different regime structures obtain and maintain power.
* Apply real world events to theoretical concepts by using evidence in homework assignments and oral class participation.

**Course requirements**

The course grade will be determined by four basic elements:

***Attendance and participation*** (20%)**:** This class is taught in a synchronous/asynchronous manner. You will read the class material during the week and listen to the recorded lectures on Blackboard. On Wednesday, you will do the weekly assignment and attend the discussion session. Attending class is the initial step to learning and eventually getting a good grade. Hence, I expect all students to attend every class. Students MUST attend at least 11 of the synchronous sessions (out of 14) in order to pass. Every week, you will answer a question (on the syllabus below) and you will come to class with your answer (usually in a paragraph). Failing to comply with this will result in a fail grade.

***Weekly assignments*:** (*20%)* You will have to do the weekly assignments – under the “Tests” section of Blackboard – before class on Wednesday. You cannot do the tests after the due date. I believe in continuous assessment: not participating in class discussions and not submitting assignments will be detrimental to your final grade. On some weeks, the assignment is a series of multiple-choice questions; on other weeks, it can include answering fill-in-the-blank questions on the reading material. The assignments are meant to ensure that you read the material before every class. You must do 11 of the 14 tests to pass.

***Midterm exam*:***(30%)* The exam is open book, but no cooperation is allowed with other students.

***Final exam*:***(30%)* The exam is open book, but no cooperation is allowed with other students.

***Extra credit*:** I believe in continuous assessment and grade students based on the progress they make during the semester. There is no assignment you can do overnight to gain knowledge of the field with. Thus, there is no extra credit.

**Assigned reading and course material**

The assigned textbook will be available in the Baruch bookstore and the Norton Publishing website. It is paramount that you acquire the book/ebook as soon as possible. Readings should be completed **before** class on the day they are assigned. It is impossible to discuss all of the reading in class; assignments and class discussions will presume student mastery of all lecture and reading material. The standard college expectation of student time commitment is about 2.5 hours of study outside the classroom for every hour in it, not including assignments.

* Patrick O’Neil,*Essentials of Comparative Politics*, Sixth Edition, W.W. Norton and Company, Inc, 2018. (2015 edition is fine).
* All other articles and book chapters will be available on Blackboard.

**Online learning**

There are three platforms you should be competent in using:

***Blackboard*:** All students must obtain access to Blackboard. If you are experiencing problems with Blackboard, you should contact IT immediately and notify me. You should check Blackboard every day prior to class, in case there are announcements or class cancellations.

***Zoom:*** Please do not share Zoom link or meeting information with anyone who is not enrolled in our course. Learning remotely means many of us will be sharing our workspace with children, pets, partners, and roommates. Keep yourself muted if necessary. Students are not required to turn their cameras on during class discussions: you may participate with audio only or use the chat function. Technological issues will happen. Please be patient with everyone.

***Office hours:***

I will be holding virtual office hours in <https://baruch.zoom.us/j/2988192739>. Sign up for one-hour appointments under the “Office Hours” section of Blackboard.

**Academic honesty**

Plagiarism and cheating are not tolerated and will receive the maximum penalty permitted by Baruch College, a failing grade in the course and notification of the dean. Everything which is not your own must be cited. Use footnotes or endnotes to give credit for direct quotes, paraphrased quotes, or borrowed ideas. For detailed definitions of cheating and plagiarism you should consult the College’s Academic Honesty website (<http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/academic/academic_honesty.html>).

**Accessibility**

If you have ability constraints, please see me within the first two weeks of class to discuss any accommodations you might need for class activity, examinations, and other assignments in order to participate fully and demonstrate your abilities. If you need further assistance or information, contact the Office of Special Services for Students with Disability Services.

***Course Schedule***

This syllabus may be changed at the instructor’s discretion. Students will be informed in a timely manner of any changes. The works marked with a book symbol (🕮) are journal articles or book chapters. These take longer to read than newspaper articles, opinion pieces, or YouTube videos, marked with a world map symbol (🌎).

**Week 1 Introductions**

*3 February*

The syllabus and assignment instructions

**Topic 1: Concepts and Methodology**

**Week 2 Comparative Politics: Definitions, Methodology, and Directions**

*10 February*

🕮 O’Neil, 3-28

🌎 “How Does Covid-19 Compare to Past Crises?” Political Violence at a Glance (20 April 2020)*,* [*http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2020/04/20/how-does-covid-19-compare-to-past-crises/*](http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2020/04/20/how-does-covid-19-compare-to-past-crises/)*.*

**Week 3 Hypothesis Testing and Variables**

*17 February*

🕮Van Evera, “Hypotheses, Laws, and Theories” in *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science,* pages 7-30. [On Blackboard]

🕮Case selection techniques (2 pages) [On Blackboard]

🌎 Divided island: How Haiti and the DR became two worlds, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WvKeYuwifc> (15:51 mins)

**Topic 2: The State**

**Week 4 Definition, Origins, and State Power**

*24 February*

🕮O’Neill, 31-55

🌎 Max Fisher, “The Two-State Solution: What It Is and Why It Hasn’t Happened,” *The New York Times* (29 December 2016), <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/29/world/middleeast/israel-palestinians-two-state-solution.html>.

🌎The Israel-Palestine Conflict: A Brief, Simple History, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRYZjOuUnlU> (10:18 mins)

**Week 5 Developing States**

*3 March*

🕮O’Neill, 467-498

🌎Miguel Ángel Centeno and Andrés Lajous, “Challenges for Latin America in the 21st Century,” <https://www.bbvaopenmind.com/en/articles/challenges-for-latin-america-in-the-21-st-century/> (audio: 16 mins)

🌎How A Farm Boy Became Bolivia’s President - And Lost It All | AJ+, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z27zAA1lQFk> (9:12 mins)

**Topic 3: Regimes**

**Week 6 Democratic Regimes**

*10 March*

🕮O’Neill, 165-187

🌎President Obama: Democracy vs. Authoritarianism, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2JYi4kxLHuc&t=332s> (7:35 mins)

🌎Why Is Iran So Mad at America? | The Daily Show with Trevor Noah, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=msDJlxCoN0U> (4:27)

**Week 7 No Class: Prepare for the Midterm Exam**

*17 March*

**Week 8 Midterm Exam**

*24 March*

**Week 9 No Class: Spring Recess**

*31 March*

**Topic 4: Quantitative Analysis in Comparative Politics**

**Week 10 Regressions I**

*7 April*

🕮Paul D. Allison, “What is Multiple Regression,” in *Multiple Regression: A Primer* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge, 1999), 1-23. [On Blackboard]

🌎An Introduction to Linear Regression Analysis, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zPG4NjIkCjc> (5:17 mins)

**Week 11 Regressions II**

*14 April*

🕮Paul D. Allison, “What is Multiple Regression,” in *Multiple Regression: A Primer* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge, 1999), 25-48. [On Blackboard]

**Topic 5: Identity Politics**

**Week 12 Nations and Society**

*21 April*

🕮O’Neill, 62-85

🌎How this Border Transformed a Subcontinent | India & Pakistan, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5Ps1TZXAN8> (17:20)

🌎The Problem with Africa's Borders, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LvKONiRHgkU> (14:16)

**Week 13 Ethnicity and Culture**

*28 April*

🕮Posner, Daniel N. "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi." *The American Political Science Review* 98, no. 4 (2004): 529-45. [On Blackboard]

🌎Rwanda Do Scars Ever Fade, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vheo1mwEcv0> (20:08 mins)

**Topic 6: Violence**

**Week 14 Political Violence**

*5 May*

🕮O’Neill, 134-151

🌎When white supremacists overthrew a government, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVQomlXMeek> (12:21)

🌎Why Colombia is losing the cocaine war, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NDa_SpvbeCQ> (10:59 mins)

**Week 15 Terrorism**

*12 May*

🕮O’Neill, 152-163

🕮Gest, Justin, Tyler Reny, and Jeremy Mayer. “Roots of the Radical Right: Nostalgic Deprivation in the United States and Britain.” *Comparative Political Studies* 51, no. 13 (November 2018): 1694–1719. [On Blackboard]

🌎Bush address on military action in Afghanistan, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=osXkym5GHXI&t=53s> (6:44 mins)

🌎NYPD Probes Path of Homegrown Terrorists, <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=13744324> (Audio: 12 mins)

**Week 16 Final Exam**

*19 May*