

Introduction to

# Comparative Government

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**Office:** NCOR 332

**Office Hours:** MWRF 3:00-4:00

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**Course Number:** PSCI 220S

**Class Location:** UH 210

**Meeting Time:** MWF 9:10-10:00

**Website:** Moodle (<http://umonline.umt.edu>)

**CRN (Add/Drop):** 71474

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Comparative government, or comparative politics, is the comparison of politics — who gets what, when, and how — across different states. The purpose of the course is to develop your ability to describe and explain political behavior through meaningful comparison. The course focuses on political development, regimes, participation and representation, policymaking, and political economy. As we examine these issues, we will see how comparing these issues across states helps provide answers to major questions in political science including why individuals, groups, and governments behave in certain ways, who really governs, and why certain political behaviors are seen in certain places at certain times.

## COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENTS

| After completing this course's learning objectives, students will have enhanced knowledge and skills to: |  | This will be assessed by:    |
|--|--|------------------------------|
| 1  | Describe the nature, structure, and development of key individual and group political behaviors and regimes.         | Exams<br>Written Assignments |
| 2  | Use different theoretical approaches to explain political behavior at the individual, group, & organizational level. | Exams<br>Written Assignments |
| 3  | Evaluate how well conclusions and generalizations about political behavior are justified based on available data.    | Exams<br>Written Assignments |

## REQUIRED MATERIALS

There is one required textbook for this course available for purchase at the bookstore:

O'Neil, Patrick H. 2015. Essentials of Comparative Politics. Fifth edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

All additional materials will be available on Moodle.

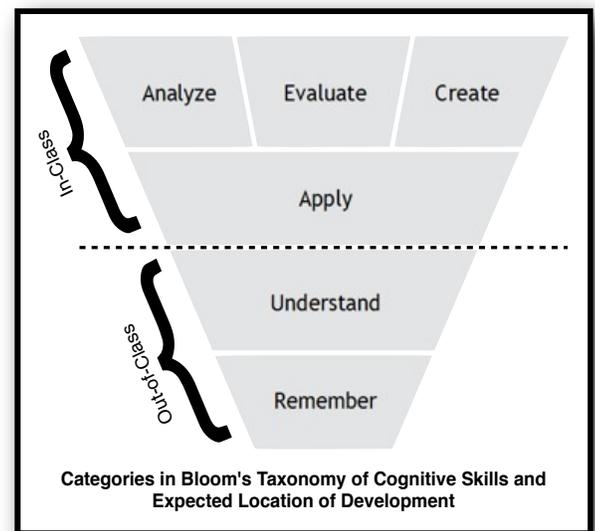
## COURSE PHILOSOPHY, PEDAGOGY, AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning is more than memorizing facts and answering questions on a test. It is the process of enhancing your ability to use information to understand of how things work and how to make them better. This course will enhance your ability to:

- Ask the right questions and frame good problems,
- Acquire information and evaluate sources of information,
- Critically investigate and solve problems,
- Make choices among different alternatives,
- Explain concepts to others both orally and in writing and,
- Generalize to new situations.

### Pedagogy

The structure of this course is influenced by a taxonomy of cognitive skills developed by Benjamin Bloom. He identified six steps to the learning process students must complete to master a subject and organized them into a pyramid (see figure below) to show how more complex skills developed on a foundation of simpler ones. In this course, we will focus on remembering and understanding concepts outside of class, while in-class time will be focused on applying concepts.



### Learning Objectives

Bloom translated his taxonomy into discrete and measurable actions called learning objectives, which are statements that start with an action (verb) associated with the intended skill and end with an object describing the knowledge that must be acquired or constructed. Learning objectives for each course topic are the basis for all instruction and assessment.

### Student Responsibilities

This learning philosophy and pedagogy imposes upon students the responsibility to:

1. Review the learning objectives for each topic.
2. Complete all assigned readings and exercises before class.
3. Ask the professor for assistance if they difficulty with specific learning objectives.
4. Attend class regularly, but only when they are fully prepared to participate.
5. Complete all course assignments by their deadlines (Late work is not accepted).
6. Review all feedback from the instructor, including feedback posted online.
7. Ask for clarification if instructions or feedback are not fully understood.
8. Finish the class (University policy on incompletes will be strictly enforced).
9. Inform the instructor beforehand if they cannot fulfill these responsibilities.

## CLASS POLICIES

### Academic Misconduct

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code, which is available for review online at: [http://www.umd.edu/vpsa/policies/student\\_conduct.php](http://www.umd.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php).

### Students With Disabilities

If you have a disability and feel you need accommodations in this course please present me with a letter from Disability Services for Students (DSS), Lommasson Center 154 (243-2243), indicating the existence of a disability and the suggested accommodations.

## GRADING AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS



The grading system used in this course is distinguished from a traditional point-based grading system by the following principles:

1. **Pass/fail grading:** For most assignments, students earn either full credit or no credit depending on whether they meet specifications defined for each assignment.
2. **Tokens and Power-ups:** Students start with a single token they can exchange for different "power-ups" like resubmitting unsatisfactory work, buying out an exam, or additional experience points. More tokens can be earned via "side-quests."
3. **Quests for Knowledge:** Students select their own path to knowledge from a series of assignments bundled together in "Quests" to earn experience points.
4. **Leveling-up:** As students earn experience points (x.p.) from successful quests, they will level-up to a different letter grade for the course.

### Quests For Knowledge

The following are the quests for knowledge available at the start of the semester:

*Quest 1 (Celebrations of Knowledge):* This quest consists of three independent short-answer tests of basic recall and understanding of course material. Students that receive a 70% or higher on an exam receive full credit. Each exam is worth up to 100 x.p. (300 x.p. total)

*Quest 2 (Close-Reading):* In this quest, students select three articles published in comparative politics from a list provided by the instructor. Students complete a "close reading" of each article and write a 2-page report on the article (100 x.p.).

*Quest 3 (Comparative Analysis Paper):* In this quest, students complete a series of tasks to produce a six-page paper comparing different countries with respect to a significant economic, social, or political issue. Can't be combined with Quest 4 (200 x.p.).

*Quest 4 (Constitutional Engineering Paper):* In this quest, students complete a series of tasks to produce a six-page report analyzing the democratization in a country of their choice and recommending constitutional reforms to promote democratization given its economic, social, & political context. Can't be combined with Quest 3 (200 x.p.).

*Side-Quest 1 (Ye Olde Library Assignment):* Students passing a short library research assignment will receive an additional token to exchange for power-ups.

### Leveling Up

Your final grade is based on how much may experience points (x.p.) you earn. Each additional 100 experience points will result in leveling up on level. Levels will be translated to grades by the simple formula that Level 0-1 = F, Level 2 = D, Level 3 = C, Level 4 = B, and Level 5 = A.

### COURSE SCHEDULE

I reserve the right to make changes to this course schedule. Changes will be posted to Moodle and distributed via email.

| Date | Topic  | Assignment                        |
|------|--|-----------------------------------|
| 8/31 | Introduction; Distribution of Syllabus                   |                                   |
| 9/2  | What is Comparative Politics?                            | O'Neil, Ch. 1                     |
| 9/4  | The Modern State: Definitions and Origins                | O'Neil, Ch. 2                     |
| 9/7  | <b>No Class — Labor Day</b>                              |                                   |
| 9/9  | Case Studies in State Formation; Failed States           | Selected Readings on Moodle       |
| 9/11 | The Modern State: Regime Types and Ideology              | O'Neil, Ch. 3, pgs. 69-80         |
| 9/14 | States and Identity: Nationalism                         | O'Neil, Ch. 3, pgs. 57-69; 80-83. |
| 9/16 | States and Identity: Ethnicity, Religion and Race        |                                   |
| 9/18 | Nationalism Exercise*                                    | Bring Handout to Class (M)        |
| 9/21 | States and the Market: Key Concepts and Debates          | O'Neil, Ch. 4                     |
| 9/23 | States and the Market: Economic Models                   | Selected Readings on Moodle       |
| 9/25 | Democratic Institutions: What is Democracy?*             | O'Neil, Ch. 5, pgs. 127-131       |
| 9/28 | Democratization and Regime Change                        | O'Neil, Ch. 5, pgs. 131-136       |
| 9/30 | <b>Celebration of Knowledge #1</b>                       |                                   |
| 10/2 | Democratic Institutions: Executive-Legislative Relations | O'Neil, Ch. 5, pgs. 136-146       |
| 10/5 | Democratic Institutions: Elections                       | O'Neil, Ch. 5, pgs. 146-159       |

| Date  | Topic  | Assignment                             |
|-------|--|--|
| 10/7  | Democrastan Exercise*  | Bring Handout to Class (M)             |
| 10/9  | Democratic Institutions: Political Parties & Party Systems   | Selected Readings on Moodle            |
| 10/12 | German Election Simulation*                                  | Bring Handout to Class (M)             |
| 10/15 | New Democracies Exercise*                                    | Selected Readings on Moodle            |
| 10/17 | Democratic Institutions: Civil Society and Case Studies      | Selected Readings on Moodle            |
| 10/19 | Film: <a href="#">After Democracy</a>                        |  |
| 10/21 | Authoritarian Institutions: Governing                        | O'Neil, Ch. 6                          |
| 10/23 | Authoritarian Institutions: Participation and Representation | Selected Readings on Moodle            |
| 10/26 | Political Violence: Revolutions and Terrorism                | O'Neil, Ch. 7                          |
| 10/28 | Advanced Democracies: Freedom, Equality, and Identity        | O'Neil, Ch. 8                          |
| 10/30 | <b>Celebration of Knowledge #2</b>                           |  |
| 11/2  | Advanced Democracies: European Integration                   | <a href="#">"Europe in 12 Lessons"</a> |
| 11/4  | Issues in Comparative Politics #1: The Euro                  | CQGP, "Future of the Euro" (M)         |
| 11/6  | Postcommunist States: Communism and its aftermath            | O'Neil, Ch. 9                          |
| 11/9  | Issues in Comparative Politics #2: Communism Today           | CQGP, "Communism Today" (M)            |
| 11/11 | <b>No Class —Veteran's Day</b>                               |  |
| 11/13 | Newly Industrializing and Less-Developed States              | O'Neil, Ch. 10                         |
| 11/16 | Issues in Comparative Politics #3: The Rise of Africa        | Readings on Moodle (M)                 |
| 11/18 | Globalization and Economic Sovereignty                       | O'Neil, Ch. 11                         |
| 11/20 | Politics of Diversity: Religion                              | Readings on Moodle (M)                 |
| 11/23 | <b>No Class — Montana Model United Nations Conference</b>    |  |
| 11/30 | Politics of Diversity: Gender or Gay Rights                  | Readings on Moodle (M)                 |
| 12/2  | Public Policy: Welfare                                       | Readings on Moodle (M)                 |
| 12/4  | Public Policy: Health Care                                   |  |
| 12/7  | Issues in Comparative Politics #6: Social Welfare            |  |
| 12/9  | Public Policy: Environment                                   | Readings on Moodle (M)                 |
| 12/11 | <b>Celebration of Knowledge #3</b>                           |  |

# COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT QUESTS OF KNOWLEDGE MAP

| Week            | Quest 1: Exams<br>(300 x.p. total) | Quest 2: Close Reading<br>(100 x.p.) | Quest 3: Comparative<br>Analysis Paper (200 x.p.) | <i>OR</i> Quest 4: Constitutional<br>Engineering (200 x.p.) | Side Quests (4 tokens)   |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------|
| 1               |                                    |                                      |   |   | Free Token               |
| 2               |                                    |                                      |   |   |                          |
| 3               |                                    |                                      | 9/18: Topic/Case Selection                        |   |                          |
| 4               |                                    |                                      |   |   | 9/25: Library Research   |
| 5               | 9/30: Exam (100 x.p)               |                                      |   |   |                          |
| 6               |                                    |                                      | 10/9: Hypothesis/Identification of Barriers       |   |                          |
| 7               |                                    | 10/16: Close Reading #1              |   |   |                          |
| 8               |                                    |                                      |   |   | 10/23: Wikipedia Article |
| 9               | 10/30: Exam (100 x.p)              |                                      |   |   |                          |
| 10              |                                    |                                      | 11/6: Annotated Bibliography                      |   |                          |
| 11              |                                    | 11/13: Close Reading #2              |   |   |                          |
| 12              |                                    |                                      |   |   |                          |
| 13              |                                    |                                      |   |   | 11/27: Policy Letter     |
| 14              |                                    | 12/6: Close Reading #3               | 12/4: Final Paper Due                             |   |                          |
| 15              | 12/11: Exam (100 x.p)              |                                      |   |   |                          |
| <b>Subtotal</b> | / 300                              | / 100                                | /200  | /200  | / 4                      |
| <b>Grade</b>    | 0-100 (F)                          | 200 (D)                              | 300 (C)   | 400 (B)   | 500 (A)                  |