

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Course Number and Section:

POLISCI

2245E 550

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Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

POL2245E will introduce students to the study of comparative politics, one of the main subfields of political science. Key theoretical frameworks, concepts, and debates within comparative politics will be examined. Numerous in-depth country case studies – including the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Russia, China, India, Iran, Mexico, Brazil, South Africa, Nigeria, and the Democratic Republic of Congo – will be used to illustrate the material. Students will begin the course with an overview of the state and nation to provide a foundation from which to begin comparing different political systems and policies throughout the Global North and Global South. In considering various established democratic countries, emerging democracies, ‘backsliding’ democracies, quasi-communist states, postcommunist societies, and authoritarian regimes, students will become familiar with the comparative method. Sub-themes such as political economy, political violence, and globalization will be further used as tools of comparison.

In the current age of ‘fake news’, disinformation, and misinformation, there will be a strong emphasis throughout the course on students acquiring information literacy skills, and particularly the ability to discern reputable news sources. There will be an equally strong emphasis on students consulting such reputable news sources on a daily basis (moving away from acquiring news through ‘soundbites’ via social media platforms) and understanding current developments around the world through comparative politics frameworks.

Learning Outcomes:

- Critical analysis and writing skills via conducting original research with secondary sources
- Time management and organization skills via meeting assignment deadlines
- Public speaking skills via creating and delivering a short presentation, as well as contributing to class discussions
- Have a strong grasp of the concepts and theories of comparative politics and will also be able to critically analyze the differences and similarities between political regimes and policies around the world

Textbooks and Course Materials:

- Textbook: Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics, Third Edition, by Patrick H. O’Neil, Karl Fields, & Don Share, 2020. The textbook is available from the UWO bookstore

and / or to purchase as an online resource (https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=HC&term=W2025&courses%5B0%5D=550_HC/POL2245E).

- News source: All students are required to purchase a (digital) subscription to the New York Times (NYT).
- Supplementary readings and podcasts: The required readings for certain weeks include academic articles and / or podcasts. The articles are all accessible via the UWO library, and the podcast links are provided below.

Methods Of Evaluation:

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Participation	April 2026	25
Quiz	November 2025	15
Final exam	April 2026	25
Research essay	April 2026	35

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.

Wednesday, August 13, 2025