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**JOHN CABOT UNIVERSITY**

COURSE CODE: "PL 223-1"  
 COURSE NAME: "Comparative Politics"  
 SEMESTER & YEAR: Spring 2022

**SYLLABUS**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Michael Driessen  
**EMAIL:** mdriessen@johncabot.edu  
**HOURS:** MW 8:30 AM 9:45 AM  
**TOTAL NO. OF CONTACT HOURS:** 45  
**CREDITS:** 3  
**PREREQUISITES:**  
**OFFICE HOURS:**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

As both a subject and a method of study, comparative politics examines the nature, development, structure and functioning of the political systems of a selection of countries with very different cultures, social and economic profiles, political histories and geographic characteristics. Through case studies, students will learn to use the comparativist's methods to collect and organize the information and develop general explanations.

**SUMMARY OF COURSE CONTENT:**

The course is divided into 3 sections which look at 1) Comparative Politics in Western Modernity; 2) Transitions, Revolutions and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wave Considerations; and 3) New Directions in Comparative Politics. Over 9 units, we will study 10 countries along a timeline and critically chart out how these states differ and converge in the ways in which they organize power and distribute goods to citizens. In order of appearance, they are **Great Britain, Italy, USSR, USA, Chile, the Czech Republic, Congo, Iran, China, and Egypt**. Each unit introduces one major 1) *Regime Type*; 2) *Country Example* 3) *Political Idea or Theme*. Along the way, the student will learn something about the dominant enduring topics of study of comparative politics, including liberalism, fascism, communism, democracy, democratic transitions, ethnic politics, civil war, political economies, identity politics, authoritarianisms, electoral systems, political parties and revolution.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

My pedagogical hope is that students will finish this course equipped with a foundational set of tools to critically distinguish among modern political systems that will allow them to begin to analyze the relationships between the ideas, institutions, cultures and histories which underpin these systems. They will also learn the defining political characteristics of 10 modern nation-states. The essential goal will be to help students to begin practicing a higher level of political analysis and a more nuanced appreciation of the practical ways in which humans attempt to achieve common goods in modern times. When finished with this course students should expect to substantively answer the following questions about any nation: 1) what is the regime type? 2) what does the political economy look like? 3) What does the state look like? 4) What are the institutions, policies, and ideas that describe these three attributes? 5) Are there cultural, historical and religious affinities to all the above?

**TEXTBOOK:**

Book Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN number	Library Call Number	Comments
Essentials of Comparative Politics, 6th Ed. (International Student Edition)	O'Neil	W W Norton	9780393624588		

**REQUIRED RESERVED READING:**

NONE

**RECOMMENDED RESERVED READING:**

NONE

**GRADING POLICY****-ASSESSMENT METHODS:**

Assignment	Guidelines	Weight
Mid-term Exam		20%
Final Exam		30%
Short Reflections (5 out of 6)	2-3 pages each, on any reading or set of readings within a section of the course. Reading reflections must be turned by the date specified in the course calendar.	40%
Participation	Attendance and Presence of Mind are mandatory for this class. The goal here is to advance towards the art of asking good questions. Quality, not quantity of participation is what counts, although some quantity is better than no quality. Students will be allowed 2 unexcused absences. Each unexcused absence thereafter will result in the lowering of the attendance grade by 1/3rd a letter grade. More than 12 unexcused absences may result in a failure to pass the course.	10%

**-ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:**

**A** Work of this quality directly addresses the question or problem raised and provides a coherent argument displaying an extensive knowledge of relevant information or content. This type of work demonstrates the ability to critically evaluate concepts and theory and has an element of novelty and originality. There is clear evidence of a significant amount of reading beyond that required for the course.

**B** This is a highly competent level of performance and directly addresses the question or problem raised. There is a demonstration of some ability to critically evaluate theory and concepts and relate them to practice. Discussions reflect the student's own arguments and are not simply a repetition of standard lecture and reference material. The work does not suffer from any major errors or omissions and provides evidence of reading beyond the required assignments.

**C** This is an acceptable level of performance and provides answers that are clear but limited, reflecting the information offered in the lectures and reference readings.

**D** This level of performance demonstrates that the student lacks a coherent grasp of the material. Important information is omitted and irrelevant points included. In effect, the student has barely done enough to persuade the instructor that s/he should not fail.

**F** This work fails to show any knowledge or understanding of the issues raised in the question. Most of the material in the answer is irrelevant.

**-ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:**

Attendance and Presence of Mind are mandatory for this class. The goal here is to advance towards the art of asking good questions. Quality, not quantity of participation is what counts, although some quantity is better than no quality. Students will be allowed 2 unexcused absences.

Each unexcused absence thereafter will result in the lowering of the attendance grade by 1/3<sup>rd</sup> a letter grade. More than 12 unexcused absences may result in a failure to pass the course.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

As stated in the university catalog, any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty will receive a failing grade on the work in which the dishonesty occurred. In addition, acts of academic dishonesty, irrespective of the weight of the assignment, may result in the student receiving a failing grade in the course. Instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Academic Affairs. A student who is reported twice for academic dishonesty is subject to summary dismissal from the University. In such a case, the Academic Council will then make a recommendation to the President, who will make the final decision.

**STUDENTS WITH LEARNING OR OTHER DISABILITIES**

John Cabot University does not discriminate on the basis of disability or handicap. Students with approved accommodations must inform their professors at the beginning of the term. Please see the website for the complete policy.

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 SCHEDULE
 

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**Course Calendar**

**Class** Course Introduction  
**1**

**Part I: Comparing Politics in Western Modernity**

## 1. Modern Nation-States and the Rise of Political Liberalism: England (and France)

**Class**  
**2**

O'Neil chapters 1 & 2

**Class**  
**3**

Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* : First read chapters 1 & 2 (from part I "The Problem"): "Denomination and Social Stratification" and "The Spirit of Capitalism." (pp.s 1-28 in Penguin Edition)

Then read chapter 2, "Asceticism and Capitalism," from part II (pp. 105-122 in Penguin Edition)

30 **Class**  
**4**

Fareed Zakaria, "A Brief History of Human Freedom," **Library Reserves (chapter 1)**

*Recommended:*

Fareed Zakaria, "[Capitalism, not Culture, Drives Economics](#),"

J. S. Mill, [On Liberty](#), chapters 1 & 2

**Class**  
**5**

O'Neil chapter 5

[Magna Carta](#) (skim)

France's "[Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen](#)"

2. Late Nation-State Builders and Liberalism in Crisis: Italy (and Germany)

**Class** (*Reading Reflection 1 Due*)  
**6**

Mussolini, "[The Doctrine of Fascism](#)" (1932)

[The Futurist Manifesto](#), and [paintings](#)

**Class**  
**7**

Alexander Gershenkron, "[Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective](#)," (chapter 1)

Michael Mann, "A Political Theory of Nationalism and its Excesses," chapter 4 in *Notions of Nationalism*, ed. S. Perival 1995, available as e-book on JCU Library's [worldcat](#)

3. Liberalism in Crisis part II: USSR

**Class** (*Reading Reflection 2 Due*)  
**8**

Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (skip chapter III)

**Class**  
**9**

Lenin, "[The April Theses](#)?": & "[Lessons of the Revolution](#)"

Stalin, "[The Foundations of Leninism: The Dictatorship of the Proletariat](#)," chapter IV

*Recommended:* O'Neil Chapter 9, pp.s 270-286

**Class  
10**

Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*: Part I: ch.s 1&4; part III: ch. 7; part IV: ch.s 1-2; Part VI: ch.s 2&7. [These selections correspond to pages 218-240; 253-273; 294-306 in *The Solzhenitsyn Reader: New and Essential Writings, 1947-2005* (ed.s Ericson, Jr. and Mahoney) available in the **Library Reserves**]

4. Liberal Revenge: USA

**Class (Reading Reflection 3 Due)  
11**

Francis Fukuyama, "[The End of History](#)"

**Class  
12**

Robert Putnam, "[Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital](#)," *Journal of Democracy* 6(1), 1995

Read through Putnam's [survey instrument and data](#)

*Recommended:* O'Neil Chapter 8

**Class Mid-term Exam  
13**

**Part II: After the End of History: Transitions, Revolutions and 3<sup>rd</sup> Waves**

5. 3<sup>rd</sup> Wave Transitions: Chile and the Czech Republic.

**Class  
14**

Havel, "[The Power of the Powerless](#)," sections I-X, XIV-XVI, XXI-XXII

**Class**

**15**

Samuel P. Huntington, "[Democracy's Third Wave](#)," *Journal of Democracy*, 2(2), 1991

Valerie Bunce, "[Rethinking Recent Democratization: Lessons from the Post-Communist Experience](#)," *World Politics*, 55, 2003

## 6. Identity Politics, Poverty, Civil War and Failed States: Congo

**Class****16**

O'Neil chapter 10, pp.s 304-326

Frantz Fanon, "Concerning Violence," chapter 1 from *The Wretched of the Earth*, **Library Reserves**

Leopold Senghor, "[To New York](#)"

**Class** *Reading Reflection 4 Due***17**

Giovanni Carbone (ed). "[Leaders for a New Africa: Democrats, Autocrats and Development](#)," *Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale ISPI* (2019), Read Introduction and Chapter 1 by Carbone

*Recommended:* James Fearon and David Laitin, "[Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War](#)" *American Political Science Review* (97) 1. 2003

Filip Reyntjens, "[Briefing: The Second Congo War: More than a Remake](#)," *African Affairs*, (98) 391, 1999

"[When will Kabila go?](#)" *The New York Times* (July, 2016)

**Class****18**

O'Neil chapter 10 pp.s 326-336

Jeffery Sachs, *The End of Poverty*. 2005. Read chapter 13 (on reserve in the library)

William Easterly, "[Was Development Assistance a Mistake?](#)"

*And the debate continues:*

Damisa Moboyo (2009) "[Dead Aid: Why Aid to Africa is not Working](#)"

*And*

Jeffery Sachs (2014) "[The Case for Aid](#)" *Foreign Policy*

## 7. Theocracy and the Return of Religious Politics: Country: Iran

### **Class 19** (*Reading Reflection 5 Due*)

Bernard Lewis, "[The Roots of Muslim Rage](#)," *The Atlantic*, September (1990):

Michael L. Ross, "[Does Oil Hinder Democracy?](#)" *World Politics*, 53(3), 2001

### **Class 20**

Vali Nasr, "[The Rise of 'Muslim Democracy](#),'" *Journal of Democracy* 16(2), 2005

*Recommended:*

Rached Ghannouchi, "[From Political Islam to Muslim Democracy: the Ennahda Party and the Future of Tunisia](#)," *Foreign Affairs* (2016)

Gunes Tezcur, "[Democracy Promotion, Authoritarian Resiliency, and Political Unrest in Iran](#)," *Democratization* 19(1), 2012

## 8. Competitive Authoritarianism and Authoritarian Capitalism: China

### **Class 21**

O'Neil chapter 6

Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, "[The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism](#)," *Journal of Democracy*, 12(2), 2002

*Recommended:*

Ivan Krastev, "[The Rules of Survival](#)," *The Journal of Democracy*, (April), 2009

### **Class 22**

Azar Gat, "[The Return of Authoritarian Great Powers](#)," *Foreign Affairs* (86)4, 2007

*Amnesty International*, "[Annual Report: China 2016/2017](#)"

### Part III. New Directions:

#### 9. Tahrir Square, Populist Disruptions and the Future of Comparative Politics: Egypt

##### **Class 23** *(Reading Reflection 6 Due)*

*Liberalism v. Democracy?*

Samer Shehata, "[In Egypt, Democrats v. Liberals](#)" July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013, *New York Times*

Sheri Berman, "[The Pipe Dream of Undemocratic Liberalism](#)," *Journal of Democracy* (2017)

*Recommended:*

Ivan Krastev, "[Russian Revisionism: Russia's Plan for Overturning the European Order](#)." *Foreign Affairs* (2014)

##### **Class 24** *Democratic Backsliding?*

Roberto Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk, "[The Danger of Deconsolidation](#)," *Journal of Democracy* (2016)

James Fishkin and Larry Diamond *America in One Room* experiment (2019): read [here](#) & [here](#)

*Recommended:*

O'Neil chapter 11

Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, "[This is how Democracies Die](#)," *The Guardian* (2018)

Lilliana Mason, "[I Disrespectfully Agree: The Differential effects of Partisan Sorting on Social and Issue Polarization](#)," *American Journal of Political Science* 59(1), 2015

##### **Class 25** *Identity Politics and Racial Inequality*

Francis Fukuyama, "[Against Identity Politics: The New Tribalism and the Crisis of Democracy](#)," *Foreign Affairs* (2018)

Brandon Vaidyanathan, "[Systemic Racial Bias in the Criminal Justice System is not a Myth](#)," *Public Discourse* (2020)

**Recommended:**

Jason Willick, "[Nationalists and Cosmopolitans: How Samuel Huntington Predicted our Political Moment](#)," *American Interest*

(2016)

Lawrence W. Sherman, "[Evidence-based Policing and Fatal Police Shootings: Promise, Problems, and Prospects](#)," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (2020) 647(1)

D **Class 25** *Populism, Big Data & Conclusions*

Cas Mudde, "[How Populism became the Concept that Defines our Age](#)," *The Guardian* (2018)

Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser and Steven M. Van Hauwaert, "[The Populist Citizen is a dissatisfied democrat, but a democrat nonetheless](#)," *The London School of Economics and Political Science* (2020)

Hannes Grassegger and Mikael Krogerus, "[The Data that Turned the World Around](#)," *Motherboard* (2017)

**Recommended:** James H. Fowler and Christopher T. Dawes (2008). "[Two Genes Predict Voter Turnout](#)," *The Journal of Politics* 70(3)

Tybur, J. et al(2016)[Parasite stress and pathogen avoidance relate to distinct dimensions of political ideology across 30 nations](#).*Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 113,12408

Elizabeth Preston, "[Sneezing Dogs, Dancing Bees: How Animals Vote](#)," *New York Times* (2020)

Take the Quiz! Is your brain Democratic or Republican?

**Final Exam**



