

POL 1100 D: Comparative Politics – Fall 2020

Meeting Time: Mon/Wed. 2:00 pm – 3:15 pm

Zoom Link

<https://merrimack.zoom.us/j/91847963893>

Classroom: Cushing 218

Instructor: Dr. Kirstie Lynn Dobbs

Office: Cushing Hall 17b

Office Hours: Virtual from 11:30 to 12:30 Tues/Thurs; 12:30 to 1:30 pm Mon/Wed ; also by appointment

Email: dobbsk@merrimack.edu

Course Description

Have you ever wondered why democracies exist in some countries, but authoritarian regimes persist in others? Or have you ever questioned why in the modern age of global human rights, a ruthless dictator can still brutally oppress his people without any outside intervention? Perhaps you have yearned for a deeper understanding of how your generation might be positioned to make a positive difference across the world. In this course, we will grapple with these types of questions as you are introduced to broad debates in comparative politics while gaining an understanding of how comparativists use various theories and methodologies to understand political phenomena.

The pedagogical method applied to this class is a mixture of a lecture-based and active model of teaching. Students are expected to take notes during lectures and are also expected to be actively engaged in classroom activities and discussions. A “flipped” model of teaching will also be utilized in this course, where students are expected to have done the reading / learned the textbook material prior to coming to class. This will allow us to spend more time applying the concepts in active-learning sessions rather than lecturing on basic terminology. Attendance will be taken at the start of each class. If a student is more than 15 min late without notice, they will be counted as tardy. Be on time!

Readings

Orvis, Stephen and Carol Ann Drogus. 2021. *Introducing Comparative Politics: Concepts and Cases in Context*, fifth edition. Canada: CQ Press.

In addition to this book there will be supplemental readings that will be available on the course's blackboard course page. Readings should be completed *before* coming to class to enhance and facilitate lectures and class discussion. You should anticipate approximately 60 - 100 pages of reading per week.

Email Correspondence

I am very flexible and more than happy to accommodate students based on their needs. Students may email me at any time during any day of the week to ask for extensions or other accommodations. However, please give me at least 24 hours to respond. I typically do not answer emails on the weekends. If you email me Friday night after 5:00 pm, please do not expect

a response till Monday morning. If you email me after 5:00 pm during the week, please do not expect an email till the following day. I am not your mother, your doctor, or a police woman, so I am sure nothing you have to contact me about constitutes an emergency :)

Class Structure

Our class consists of a mix of students who will be coming to campus to meet “on the ground” Mondays and Wednesdays and students who will be joining us remote. Regardless of whether you are attending class in person or remote, you will have been expected to have completed all of the discussion materials (reading and Movie Club material). Online students will be able to participate in our course discussion, and will be able to directly engage with course materials/powerpoints. Online students are also expected to complete the asynchronous work.

Participation and Engagement

This course includes synchronous and asynchronous instruction, and students have the choice to attend class synchronously (in person or online) or watch the recorded instructions at a later time. Students are encouraged to attend synchronously as much as possible (in person or online). However, if you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 or other illness, or have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19, please attend virtually. Should you anticipate that you will not be able to attend synchronous sessions (in person or online) on a regular basis, please speak to your instructor.

Missing Class

Things are weird right now. You might have to miss class for a variety of reasons. Luckily for you, all of the class materials are available online. If you cannot attend class when we focus on discussion, you will need to complete the discussion questions under the “conversations” tab in the discussion materials section of the module. If you cannot attend class (either in person or virtually) you will also be able to access the recorded class via blackboard. If you miss class, you are expected to complete ALL asynchronous assignments in the module by SUNDAY at midnight of that module week. Accommodations can be made, but you need to alert me before the assigned due date that you need an extension!

Credit Justification Statement

In this hybrid course, students will be expected to do the following amount of work:

- Classroom hours: 1.5 per week
- Reading per week: 4-5 hours per week (on average)
- Prep work for class-based discussion: 2-3 per week (on average)
- Data analysis and writing: 2-3 per week (on average)
- Video exercises and critical thinking tasks: 1-2 per week (on average)
- Exam preparation: 1 hour per week (on average)
- Total: 11.5-15.5 hours per week

Access to Blackboard

All course materials will be uploaded to Blackboard. This includes class lectures (videos), rubrics, and assignment sheets. Grades will also be posted on this site. To access Blackboard, go to <https://blackboard.merrimack.edu/ultra/institution-page> and use your Merrimack login credentials to access the course site.

Learning Outcomes

The main goal of this course is to help students feel more **empowered** regarding their ability to understand and be active in global politics. After completing the course each student should:

- Have a solid understanding of democracy and authoritarianism and different types of political institutions
- Understand global patterns in political behavior
- Think critically about power and how the distribution of power shapes politics
- Think analytically about democratization
- Articulate different theories and concepts associated with comparative politics and apply them to different case studies
- Have a more grounded understanding of the major political / social issues and how they are connected in countries across the world
- Be better prepared to think critically about the health of contemporary democracies across the world

Grading

Final Exam 22%

Semester Quizzes 12%

Country Profile Report 20%

Movie Club Activity 12%

Discussion Points 14%

Multimedia Exercises 10%

Data Explorations 10%

Grading Scale

A 93-100

A- 90-92

B+ 87-89

B 83-86

B- 80-82

C+ 77-79

C 73-76

C- 70-72

D+ 67-69

D 63-66

D- 60-62

F 59 and below

Assignments

Final Exam (22%)

Multiple Choice, 50 questions, open book, open note, online

Semester Quizzes (12%)

You will take 13 quizzes throughout the semester. These quizzes are available on Blackboard within each course module. You are expected to take this quiz by midnight the Sunday prior to the class officially lecturing on that module. For example, you will be expected to take quiz 2 Sunday August 30th at midnight before we start diving into module 2 materials the week of August 31st.

Country Profile Project (20 points / 20%)

For this project, you are to imagine you are working as a research consultant for the National Democratic Institute (NDI). Your professor (c'est moi) is your supervisor, and at the end of the semester, you will present to me your analysis of the current economic, social, and political context of your country. You will also give recommendations on how NDI might work with the state to strengthen democracy in this country.

Throughout the semester, you will be given mini check-points to help guide you through this project. For example, for week two, you will be given some questions to answer whether or not your state is strong in terms of having a clearly defined territory, their ability to enforce external and internal sovereignty, and their level of legitimacy. You will need to turn in your answers to these guiding questions on Blackboard. There will be five checkpoints throughout the semester. At the end of the semester, you will combine this information into a formal report that you will upload via Blackboard. One report per group. Then you will present this information to the class during the last week.

You can divide up the group work as you see fit, but you will be evaluating your peers based on their contributions to the project (see rubric).

Movie Club Activity (12 points / 12 %)

You will watch various different movies throughout the semester. These movies are intended for a non-academic non-political science audience. You will need to respond to guiding and critical thinking essay questions during and after you watch the movie on Blackboard. You will complete these questions on Blackboard **prior to attending class**. We will devote a portion of class time to discussing these movies together. Sometimes they go along with the Orvis and Drogus book chapters, sometimes they do not. The objective of this activity is to engage with contemporary political issues/events in an accessible way and to develop your ability to think analytically and critically about these topics. The documentaries we will be watching are listed below.

- *Human Flow*, Amazon Prime
- *The Square*, Netflix

Discussion Points (14 points / 14%)

Each week, you will be awarded a discussion point for responding to discussion questions in class. If you cannot attend class when we focus on discussion, please respond to the discussion questions via blackboard on the "Discussion Materials" tab located in each module. Use the "conversations" icon to submit your answers.

Multimedia Exercises (10 points / 10%)

You will complete the multimedia exercises asynchronously located in the weekly course modules by SUNDAY of that week. Each exercise has either one or two of the following: short news clips, a podcast, a song, or a visual art that you will watch/listen/read prior to answering a series of multiple-choice, fill in the blank, or short essay questions.

Data Explorations (10 points / 10 %)

You will complete the data explorations located in the weekly course modules in class. If you cannot attend class, please complete the exercise by SUNDAY of that week. Each data exploration activity provides a link to either a data report, or a data set and will require you to analyze the data prior to answering a series of multiple-choice questions, fill in the blank, or short essay questions.

Suggested News Outlets

- *The Washington Post*
- *The New York Times*
- *The Economist*
- CNN
- NPR Politics Podcast; NPR's Up First
- BBC Global News Podcast

Due Dates and Late Policy:

All assignments must be turned in on their due date through Blackboard. Students must be present for exams and the group presentations. Only unforeseen emergencies with valid documentation will permit students to remake exams and their group presentation. Any assignments that are turned in late will receive a 5 percent deduction for each day (24 hours) that the assignment is tardy.

Assignments that are five days late will no longer be accepted, and you will receive a zero on the assignment.

Please anticipate all possible contingencies (computer failure, printer issues, etc.) and please contact me before or as soon as possible if an issue arises. If a student contacts me about an issue after the assignment is a due, I can no longer make accommodations for that assignment.

Missed classes/Late Assignments: The only excusable reasons for missing a class or exam or handing in an assignment late are serious illnesses and family emergencies. In either case you must both 1) notify me of your situation in a timely manner and 2) provide appropriate documentation. Assignments handed in late without documentation will be penalized by 10% for each date they are late.

Academic Accommodations from the Accessibility Services Office

Regardless of whether the course or the student is on-campus or remote, Merrimack College provides reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities through the

Accessibility Services Office. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability are invited to contact the Accessibility Services Office via the online request form found on the Accessibility Services website: www.merrimack.edu/aso, email accessibilityservices@merrimack.edu or by visiting us on the third floor of McQuade Library (subject to change if the college is remote).

Students are encouraged to contact the office as soon as possible via the website or via email at accessibilityservices@merrimack.edu to ensure adequate time to meet and create a plan. Students already registered with Accessibility Services are encouraged semesterly to request for their letters to be emailed and students are responsible to then email the letter to their instructors personally. The Accessibility Services Testing Center remains available to students whether in-person or remote. While it is understood that some students will not use all accommodations in all courses, accommodations can not be made retroactively.

Statement of Community Standards

The following statement is taken from Merrimack College's Student Handbook under Community Standards.

Before all else, the students, faculty, staff, and administration of Merrimack College form an Augustinian community that supports and challenges its members in the pursuit of truth. We declare and celebrate our common purpose, and commit ourselves:

- to serious study, generous service and courageous leadership
- to academic integrity and personal growth
- to civilized discourse in the exchange of ideas
- to friendship, diversity, and mutual respect
- to primacy of conscience and the spiritual life
- to responsibility for the common good, and
- to pride in our school and ourselves

Students have the right to express their views so long as there is neither use nor threat of force, nor interference with the rights of others to express their views (Faculty Handbook 2016, 50).

Academic Integrity Code

The following excerpt is taken from Merrimack's Faculty Handbook and addresses issues surrounding plagiarism. "Plagiarism is intellectual theft. At Merrimack, the failure to acknowledge the intellectual contributions of others is considered plagiarism. It is important to avoid even unintentional plagiarism by being familiar with accepted ways to acknowledge sources and by developing good note-taking and research habits." Violations of academic integrity also include cheating on exams, fabrication, complicity, appropriation, multiple submissions, and unsanctioned collaboration. Please refer to the following link for a detailed

review of the academic integrity code and penalty procedures.
<https://www.merrimack.edu/live/files/365-faculty-handbook>.

The academic course penalty will be determined by your instructor. A student who violates the academic integrity code in a course may receive an F for the course, or, at the discretion of the instructor, a less severe penalty. If you withdraw from any course in which you have been accused of an academic integrity violation for which the penalty is F for the course, the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs will record the grade of WF on your transcript (Faculty Handbook 2016). Further action will be taken at the college level.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week of 8/24

- Module 1 (in-class)
 - Introduction to course
 - Class lecture
 - Ch. 1 Discussion Materials

- Asynchronous Work DUE SUNDAY AUGUST 30
 - Read O&D. Ch. 1 and 2
 - Movie Club: Watch *Flow* and complete movie questions, Amazon Prime
 - Ch. 2 Quiz

Week of 8/31

- Module 2 (in-class)
 - Class lecture
 - Ch. 2. Discussion Materials
 - Ch. 2 Data Explorations

- Asynchronous Work DUE SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 6
 - Ch. 2 Multimedia Exercise
 - Country Profile Check-in 1
 - Read O&D Ch. 3
 - Ch. 3 Quiz

Week of 9/7

- Module 3 (in-class)
 - Class lecture
 - Ch. 3 Discussion Materials
 - “What Democracy Is ... and Is Not” (Scmitter & Karl)
 - Ch. 3 Data Explorations

- Asynchronous Work DUE SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 13
 - Ch. 3 Multimedia Exercise
 - Read O&D Ch. 4

- Ch. 4 Quiz

Week of 9/14

- Module 4 (in-class)
 - Class lecture
 - Ch. 4 Discussion Materials
 - Ch. 4 Data Explorations

- Asynchronous Work DUE SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 20
 - Ch. 4 Multimedia Exercise
 - Country Profile Check-in 2
 - Read O&D Ch. 5
 - Ch. 5 Quiz

Week of 9/21

- Module 5 (in-class)
 - Class lecture
 - Ch. 5 Discussion Materials
 - Ch. 5 Data Explorations

- Asynchronous Work DUE SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 27
 - Ch. 5 Multimedia Exercise
 - Read O&D Ch. 6
 - Ch. 6 Quiz

Week of 9/28

- Module 6 (in-class)
 - Class lecture
 - Ch. 6 Discussion Materials
 - Ch. 6 Data Explorations

- Asynchronous Work DUE SUNDAY OCTOBER 4
 - Ch. 6 Multimedia Exercise
 - Country Profile Check-in 3
 - Read O&D Ch. 7
 - Ch. 7 Quiz

Week of 10/5

- Module 7 (in-class)
 - Class lecture
 - Ch. 7 Discussion Materials

- Asynchronous Work DUE SUNDAY OCTOBER 11
 - Read “Adulthood Denied: Youth Dissatisfaction and the Arab Spring”
 - <http://www.bu.edu/pardee/files/2011/10/21-IIB.pdf>

- Movie Club: Watch *The Square* and complete movie questions, Netflix.

Week of 10/12

- Module 8 (in-class)
 - Class lecture
 - Continued discussion: Youth and Contentious Politics
 - Ch. 7 Data Explorations
- Asynchronous work DUE SUNDAY OCTOBER 18
 - Ch. 7 Multimedia Exercise
 - Read O&D Ch. 8
 - Quiz Ch. 8

Week of 10/19

- Module 9 (in-class)
 - Class lecture
 - Ch. 8 Discussion Materials
 - Ch. 8 Data Explorations
- Asynchronous Work DUE SUNDAY OCTOBER 25
 - Ch. 8 Multimedia Exercise
 - Read O&D Ch. 9
 - Ch. 9 Quiz

Week of 10/26

- Module 10 (in-class)
 - Class lecture
 - Ch. 9 Discussion Materials
 - “What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?”
(Geddes 1999)
 - Ch. 9 Data Exploration
- Asynchronous Work DUE SUNDAY NOVEMBER 1
 - Ch. 9 Multimedia Exercise
 - Country Profile Check-In 4
 - Read O&D Ch. 10
 - Ch. 10 Quiz

Week of 11/2

- Module 11 (in-class)
 - Class lecture
 - Ch. 10 Discussion Materials
 - Ch. 10 Data Explorations
- Asynchronous Work DUE SUNDAY NOVEMBER 8

- Ch. 10 Multimedia Exercise
- Read O&D Ch. 11
- Ch. 11 Quiz

Week of 11/9

- Module 12
 - Class lecture
 - Ch. 11 Discussion Materials
 - Ch. 11 Data Explorations

- Asynchronous Work DUE SUNDAY NOVEMBER 15
 - Ch. 11 Multimedia Exercise
 - Read O&D Ch. 12
 - Ch. 12 Quiz

Week of 11/16

- Module 13 (in-class)
 - Class lecture
 - Ch. 12 Discussion Materials

- Asynchronous work DUE SUNDAY NOVEMBER 22
 - Country Profile Check-In 5

Week of 11/23

- Country Profile Presentations
- Class discussion
 - If you are not attending class in person, you will need to attend via zoom

Week of 11/30: Finals Week

Final exam will be open after the end of our final session together. The final exam will close at TBD