

POLI 2301: Comparative Politics I - Developed Democracies Under Pressure

Fall 2022

Wednesday and Friday 11:35am-12:55pm, Studley LSC-Psychology P4260

The Dalhousie University Senate acknowledges that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People and pays respect to the Indigenous knowledges held by the Mi'kmaq People, and to the wisdom of their Elders past and present. The Mi'kmaq People signed Peace and Friendship Treaties with the Crown, and section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and Treaty rights. We are all Treaty people.

The Dalhousie University Senate also acknowledges the histories, contributions, and legacies of African Nova Scotians, who have been here for over 400 years.

Course Information

Course Instructor: Elise Sammons (she/her)

Instructor email: elise.sammons@dal.ca

Office hours: Wednesdays 2-3 pm, Office 352, 3rd Floor, Henry Hicks

Information about the course will be shared during class time and on our class Brightspace page. Students are encouraged to ask questions related to course content, exam and assignment expectations in class and time will be given regularly for this purpose. Often other students have similar questions! You can also check the syllabus and the course Brightspace page. A lot of questions have already been answered there! If you have a question that relates specifically to your assignment or your experience in the class, feel free to email me or to see me in office hours. I will try to respond to all emails within two business days or sooner. I do not normally respond to emails on the weekends.

Course Description

Democracies seem to be under increasing pressure. Inflation and the ongoing effects from the pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine are causing economic pressures to which governments are struggling to respond. Climate change is having drastic impacts and consensus on how to respond seems to be difficult to build. In the last decade, there's been a major increase in the political power and the visibility of the radical political right and there are increased concerns about democratic backsliding and a return to autocracy in some countries. There continue to be significant struggles around the world to achieve gender equality and to recognize the rights of Indigenous peoples and to address both the legacy of historical racism and its ongoing manifestations in the world today. Comparative Politics can help us to study and understand some of these trends. Comparative Politics focuses on the study of politics *within* countries and includes a vast array of potential topic areas. We study Comparative Politics in order to better understand the political systems, policy responses and political issues within countries around the world. Importantly, Comparative Politics focuses on the idea that there is much to be learned from comparing the politics of different countries. This can help us to develop and test theories about cause and effect within politics and has the potential to help us make better political decisions.

The course surveys the methods and scope of Comparative Politics. It does so through an examination of what have been the two major prototypes of democratic systems in the contemporary world: liberal democracies (industrial, capitalist nations) featuring examples of presidential systems (USA) and

parliamentary models (UK and Japan); and illiberal democracies as found in some post-communist (Russia) and emerging industrialized states (Mexico). After a general overview of the nature of these classifications, countries from each will be studied in depth. Concepts and theories which are useful for comparing political life in various countries will be discussed. In each case, contemporary trends which put democratic practices under pressure or threaten their continuity altogether will be introduced. It is paired with POLI 2302 on Developing States to provide the core undergraduate requirement in Comparative Politics.

Description of Class Format

This class will be a combination of lecture and class discussion. Class participation in the form of answering polls, small group discussion, and larger group discussion will take place within the lectures.

Minimal Technical Requirements

To complete this course, you will need to be able to access Brightspace to submit your assignments and complete the course quizzes. It is recommended that you bring a laptop and/or a smart phone to class as we will sometimes use polling software in class that you can access online.

Course Prerequisites and Exclusions

Prerequisites: 1000-level Political Science course or King's FYP recommended.

Exclusions: POLI 2300X/Y

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

The objectives of this course are to introduce students to the subfield of Comparative Politics and some of its concepts, theories and methods; to develop students' knowledge of political systems, political cultures, and political institutions from countries other than Canada; to introduce students to some of the current political issues facing developed democracies; and to develop students' critical thinking skills.

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Define key concepts in comparative politics
2. Explain basic theories and methodologies common to comparative politics
3. Describe different political systems, institutions, and cultures
4. Apply the concepts and theories learned in class to analyze contemporary political issues facing developed democracies today

Required Text

Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics, 2nd Edition by Patrick H. O'Neil, Karl Fields, and Don Share. W. W. Norton & Company Inc.

This book is available in the university bookstore. You can purchase a physical copy or a digital copy. Note that this textbook will also be used next semester in Political Science 2302, Comparative Politics II: Developing States.

Other readings for the course will be available online (through the library or freely available on the internet) and will be linked through the course Brightspace page.

Class Schedule and Assigned Readings

I expect you to complete the required readings *before* each class. What you learn from the readings will complement what we discuss during class time. It's okay if you have questions or if you find some aspects of the readings confusing – you can ask questions and seek clarifications during class time.

Unit 1 Key concepts, theories and methods in Comparative Politics

Unit 1 is all about introducing Comparative Politics. What is it? What kinds of topics are studied and how? What sorts of methods and approaches do we use in comparative politics? What are some central concepts? This section of the course will provide you with a foundation for the later sections of the course where we turn our attention to studying cases and focus in on some timely topics in Comparative Politics.

Wednesday, September 7: What is Comparative Politics?

Introduction to the topic and the course. No readings.

Friday, September 9: Doing Comparative Research in Political Science

Introduction to methods in comparative politics, some key concepts and ideas.

Readings:

- O'Neil, Fields & Share, Chapter 1

Wednesday, September 14: The State

An overview of the state, the development of the modern state, and an introduction to comparing state power.

Readings:

- O'Neil, Fields & Share, Chapter 2

Friday, September 16: Nations & Society

Overview of ethnic identity, national identity, and citizenship.

Readings:

- O'Neil, Fields & Share, Chapter 3 (pages 54-68)

Wednesday, September 21: Nations & Society (Continued)

An overview of political attitudes, political ideology and political culture.

Readings:

- O'Neil, Fields & Share, Chapter 3 (pages 68-87)

Friday, September 23: Political Economy

An overview of the components of political economy and different political economic-systems.

Readings:

- O'Neil, Fields & Share, Chapter 4 (pages 88-108)

Wednesday, September 28: Political Economy (Continued)

A discussion about measuring and comparing political economic systems.

Readings:

- O'Neil, Fields & Share, Chapter 4 (pages 109-122)

Friday, September 30

No class. *National Day for Truth and Reconciliation*

Wednesday, October 5: Reflect & Review Class

We will review some central concepts, talk about the midterm, and have time for questions. No readings.

Friday, October 7: Midterm

Unit 2 Case Studies

Unit 2 is focused on country case studies on the United Kingdom, the United States, Japan, Mexico, and Russia. For some classes, I will assign a recently published news article for you to read before class about some kind of political issue that is currently unfolding in the country we are studying. This will form part of our lecture and discussion for that class. During this unit, we also learn more concepts to help us better understand these particular cases by learning more about democratic regimes, advanced democracies, illiberal democracies, and post-communism.

Wednesday, October 12: Democratic Regimes

To prepare for our study of cases, we review some key concepts for understanding democratic regimes and some key theories for how democracies develop.

Readings:

- O'Neil, Fields & Share Chapter 6 (full chapter) and Chapter 7 (only pages 193-196)

Friday, October 14: United Kingdom

Overview of the political system and key political institutions of the United Kingdom. We will also consider one or more current political issues in the United Kingdom through a discussion of the assigned news article(s).

Readings:

- United Kingdom in O'Neil, Fields & Share (pages 218-249)
- 1 or 2 news articles which will be posted on Brightspace at least 1 week before class

Wednesday, October 19: United States

Overview of the political system and key political institutions of the United States. We will also consider one or more current political issues in the United States through a discussion of the assigned news article(s).

Readings:

- United States in O'Neil, Fields & Share (pages 250-275)
- 1 or 2 news articles which will be posted on Brightspace at least 1 week before class

Friday, October 21: Japan

Overview of political system and key political institutions of Japan. We will also consider one or more current political issues in Japan through a discussion of the assigned news article(s).

Readings:

- Japan in O'Neil, Fields & Share (pages 330-359)
- 1 or 2 news articles which will be posted on Brightspace at least 1 week before class

Wednesday, October 26: Illiberal Democracy?

This class we will discuss the concept of illiberal democracy and consider whether some democracies might best be described using this term.

In this class, we will also discuss the first major assignment, including some tips for identifying and evaluating sources.

Readings:

- Marc F. Plattner, "Illiberal Democracy and the Struggle on the Right"
Plattner, M. F. (2019). Illiberal democracy and the struggle on the right. *Journal of Democracy* 30 (1), 5-19. <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/illiberal-democracy-and-the-struggle-on-the-right/>

Friday, October 28: Mexico

Overview of political system and key political institutions of Mexico. We will also consider one or more current political issues in Mexico through a discussion of the assigned news article(s).

Readings:

- Mexico in O'Neil, Fields & Share (pages 570-599)
- 1 or 2 news articles which will be posted on Brightspace at least 1 week before class

Wednesday, November 2: Post-Communism

This class we will discuss the political systems of post-communist states.

Readings:

- O'Neil, Fields & Share Chapter 9

Friday, November 4: Russia

Overview of political system and key political institutions of Russia. We will also consider Russia's democratic transition and recent movement back toward autocracy through a discussion of the assigned article.

Readings:

- Russia in O'Neil, Fields & Share (pages 426-449)
- Michael McFaul, "Russia's Road to Autocracy"
McFaul, M. (2021). Russia's road to autocracy. *Journal of Democracy* 32 (4), 11-26.
<https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/russias-road-to-autocracy/>

****Assignment 1 Due****

Wednesday, November 9 & Friday, November 11

No Class. *Reading Week*

Unit 3 Select Topics in Comparative Politics

In Unit 3, we shift our attention to focusing on some timely topics in Comparative Politics. In this unit, we apply the knowledge we've gained about how to study comparative politics, the methods and approaches that help us answer questions and analyze political issues, as well as some of the knowledge we've learned about particular cases to consider some important questions about politics in today's world.

Wednesday, November 16: Globalization

In this class, we'll talk about what globalization is and how it might be changing our political, economic and social systems and norms, as well as some of the challenges it seems to be posing to democracy.

In this class, we will also talk about your second major assignment. I will share more details and share some advice for how to approach the assignment.

Readings:

- O'Neil, Fields & Share Chapter 11

Friday, November 18: Climate Change and Environmental Politics

In this class, we'll consider how different countries have tried to respond to the climate change crisis and talk about some of the political challenges to addressing climate change.

Readings:

- Larry Hughes & Moniek de Jong, "Emissions Targets in the EU and Canada: Hughes, L., & de Jong, M. (2017). Emissions targets in the EU and Canada. Policy Options. <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/january-2017/emissions-targets-in-the-eu-and-canada/>
- Spend some time exploring this website <https://www2.compareyourcountry.org/climate-policies#> which provides comparative data on different countries' responses to climate change. You do not need to spend a lot of time on the website or try to read everything, just take a look at a few pages or a few data points so that you have some familiarity with the website before we discuss it in class.

Wednesday, November 23: Indigenous Self-Determination

In this class, we will discuss the ongoing impacts of colonialism and how they continue to shape the politics of many countries. We'll specifically look at the concept of Indigenous self-determination and look at how settler-colonial states try to reckon with their histories (and presents) of colonial violence.

Readings:

- Jeff Corntassel & Cindy Holder, "Who's Sorry Now? Government Apologies, Truth Commissions, and Indigenous Self-Determination in Australia, Canada, Guatemala, and Peru" Corntassel, J., & Holder, C. (2008). Who's Sorry Now? Government Apologies, Truth Commissions, and Indigenous Self-Determination in Australia, Canada, Guatemala, and Peru. Human Rights Review 9 (4), 465-489. https://dal.novanet.ca/permalink/01NOVA_DAL/ev10a8/cdi_proquest_miscellaneous_59850923

Friday, November 25: Time to work on your Assignment & Drop in Session

We won't have a formal class today, but I will be in our usual classroom and available to answer questions and give advice about your comparative paper assignment. You are welcome to come by to ask questions or to come for all or some of class time to work on your assignment. No readings.

Wednesday, November 30: Gender and Politics

Women and gender diverse persons continue to be underrepresented in political institutions and also in the study of politics. In this class, we consider the importance of bringing a gender lens to the study of comparative politics and to various political issues.

Readings:

- Louise Chappell, "Comparative Gender and Institutions: Directions for Research" Chappell, L. (2010). Comparative gender and institutions: Directions for research. Perspectives on Politics 8 (1), 183-189. https://dal.novanet.ca/permalink/01NOVA_DAL/ev10a8/cdi_proquest_miscellaneous_753829365
- Spend some time exploring this website <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2021/compare-countries/index/map> which provides comparative data on gender equality in European countries. You do not need to spend a lot of time on the website or try to read everything, just take a look at a few pages or a few data points so that you have some familiarity with the website before we discuss it in class.

****Assignment 2 Due****

Friday, December 2: Populism & Nationalism

Populism is increasingly having an impact on the politics of democracies. In this class, we discuss how we can study populism comparatively and about the importance of understanding this political trend. Readings:

- Vedi R. Hadiz & Angelos Chrysosgelos, "Populism in World Politics: A Comparative Cross-Regional Perspective"
Hadiz, V. R., & Chrysosgelos, A. (2017). Populism in world politics: A comparative cross-regional perspective. *International Political Science Review* 38 (4), 399-411. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.1177/0192512117693908>

Wednesday, December 7: Reflect & Review Class

Reviewing core course concepts and preparing for the final exam. No readings.

Course Assessments

Online Quizzes (throughout the term – on Brightspace)	15%
Midterm (October 7)	20%
Assignment 1 (Case Study, Due November 4)	15%
Assignment 2 (Comparative Paper, Due November 30)	20%
Final Exam (Date TBA)	30%

Online Quizzes

Each week, there will be a short online quiz that must be completed by Friday at 4:00 pm. The quiz will be based on the readings for that week. The questions will usually be multiple choice and/or true and false, but may occasionally include one or two short answer questions. The quizzes will be completed within Brightspace. There is a quiz every Friday except October 7th (the midterm) and November 11th (reading week), for a total of 11 quizzes. I will use your 10 best quizzes in the calculation of your grade.

Midterm Exam

The midterm exam will be in class on October 7th. More information about the format will be shared in class prior to the exam.

Assignment 1: Case Study Paper or Presentation Video

Assignment 1 is due on November 4th at 11:59 pm Atlantic time. You will submit the assignment on Brightspace. All students will do a case study of a country from a list provided by the instructor, but you have the choice of whether you prefer to demonstrate what you've learned about the case in the format of a paper or a presentation video. Papers are to be 1200-1300 words in length (not including references). Presentation videos should be about 10 minutes in length. For the presentation video, you will develop slides and then record yourself speaking. You do not need to include video of yourself. You must include references at the end of the presentation slides. More details about the assignment and the requirements will be discussed in class and additional details will be posted on Brightspace.

Assignment 2: Comparative Paper

Assignment 2 is due on November 30th at 11:59 pm Atlantic time. You will submit the assignment on Brightspace. In this paper, you will choose to compare at least two countries in your examination of a political issue. I will share a list of potential topics as well as a list of countries that can be studied for the assignment. However, if you have an interest that is not reflected in this list, I am also open to you choosing another topic if you speak with me about it in advance. This paper should be 1400-1500

words in length (not including references). More details about the assignment and the requirements will be discussed in class and additional details will be posted on Brightspace.

Final Exam

The date for the final exam is TBA. Once the date is set, I will post the date on Brightspace. The final exam will cover material taught throughout the semester. More details on the format of the exam will be shared in class prior to the exam.

Course Policies

All assignments will be submitted online through Brightspace.

Students must normally complete all assignments to pass the course.

Ouriginal is used in this course when you submit your assignments on Brightspace. The course instructor may use Dalhousie's approved originality checking software and Google to check the originality of any work submitted for credit, in accordance with the [Student Submission of Assignments and Use of Originality Checking Software Policy](#). Students are free, without penalty of grade, to choose an alternative method of attesting to the authenticity of their work, and must inform the instructor no later than the last day to add/drop classes of their intent to choose an alternate method.

Late assignments are deducted 5% late per day, but all students have up to 3 grace days to use throughout the term. It's important to submit work on time and to learn to manage your time, but I also understand that life happens, that's what the grace days are all about. The grace days cannot be used for the online quizzes, or the midterm or final – only for the case study assignment and the comparative paper assignment. You do not have to let me know in advance or ask permission to use the grace days. You have 3 grace days for the full semester, so, as examples, you could use 2 for the first paper and 1 for the second paper, or save all 3 for the second paper. It's up to you. Any days beyond those three days will incur the 5% late per day deduction. If you are sick or have exceptional circumstances, you should complete the student declaration of absence form and/or contact me via email.

The Student Declaration of Absence Form is available for this course and replaces sick notes for absences of three days or fewer that result in missed or late academic requirements. You can submit the Student Declaration of Absence Form for this course through Brightspace. To submit the form through Brightspace, click "Academic Support" in the top navigation, and then click "Student Self-Declaration of Absence". A list of your courses that accept the Student Self-Declaration of Absence Form, including POLI 2301 will be available on this page. Please contact me if you have any questions.

University Statements

Academic Integrity

At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all of our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility and respect. As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in all of the work you do. The University provides policies and procedures that every member of the university community is required to follow to ensure academic integrity.

Accessibility

The Student Accessibility Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for matters related to student accessibility and accommodation. If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course (online or in-person) that result in barriers to your inclusion please contact the Student Accessibility Centre.

Your classrooms may contain accessible furniture and equipment. It is important that these items remain in place, undisturbed, so that students who require their use will be able to fully participate.

Conduct in the Classroom – Culture of Respect

Substantial and constructive dialogue on challenging issues is an important part of academic inquiry and exchange. It requires willingness to listen and tolerance of opposing points of view.

Consideration of individual differences and alternative viewpoints is required of all class members, towards each other, towards instructors, and towards guest speakers. While expressions of differing perspectives are welcome and encouraged, the words and language used should remain within acceptable bounds of civility and respect.

Diversity and Inclusion – Culture of Respect

Every person at Dalhousie has a right to be respected and safe. We believe inclusiveness is fundamental to education. We stand for equality. Dalhousie is strengthened in our diversity. We are a respectful and inclusive community. We are committed to being a place where everyone feels welcome and supported, which is why our Strategic Direction prioritizes fostering a culture of diversity and inclusiveness (Strategic Priority 5.2).

Code of Student Conduct

Everyone at Dalhousie is expected to treat others with dignity and respect. The Code of Student Conduct allows Dalhousie to take disciplinary action if students don't follow this community expectation. When appropriate, violations of the code can be resolved in a reasonable and informal manner—perhaps through a restorative justice process. If an informal resolution can't be reached, or would be inappropriate, procedures exist for formal dispute resolution.

Fair Dealing policy

The Dalhousie University Fair Dealing Policy provides guidance for the limited use of copyright protected material without the risk of infringement and without having to seek the permission of copyright owners. It is intended to provide a balance between the rights of creators and the rights of users at Dalhousie.

Student Use of Course Materials

These course materials are designed for use as part of the Course Code at Dalhousie University and are the property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third party copyrighted materials (such as books, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian Copyright law. Copying this course material for distribution (e.g., uploading to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a violation of Copyright law.

University Policies, Guidelines and Resources for Support

Dalhousie courses are governed by the academic rules and regulations set forth in the [Academic Calendar](#) and the [Senate](#).

Important student information, services and resources are available as follows:

University Policies and Programs

- [Important Dates in the Academic Year](#) (including add/drop dates)
- [Classroom Recording Protocol](#)
- [Dalhousie Grading Practices Policy](#)
- [Grade Appeal Process](#)
- [Sexualized Violence Policy](#)
- [Scent-Free Program](#)

Learning and Support Resources

- Academic Support - Advising [Halifax, Truro](#)
- [Student Health & Wellness Centre](#)
- [On Track](#) (helps you transition into university, and supports you through your first year at Dalhousie and beyond)
- [Indigenous Student Centre](#). See also: [Indigenous Connection](#).
- Elders-in-Residence: The [Elders in Residence program](#) provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel and support. Visit the office in the [Indigenous Student Centre](#) or contact the program at elders@dal.ca or 902-494-6803.
- [Black Student Advising Centre](#)
- [International Centre](#)
- [South House Sexual and Gender Resource Centre](#)
- [LGBTQ2SIA+ Collaborative](#)
- [Dalhousie Libraries](#)
- [Copyright Office](#)
- [Dalhousie Student Advocacy Service \(DSAS\)](#)
- [Dalhousie Ombudsperson](#)
- [Human Rights & Equity Services](#)
- [Writing Centre](#)
- [Study Skills/Tutoring](#)

Student Health and Wellness

Taking care of your health is important. As a Dalhousie student, you have access to a wide range of resources to support your health and wellbeing. Students looking to access physical or mental health & wellness services at Dalhousie can go to the Student Health & Wellness Centre in the LeMarchant Building. The team includes: registered nurses, doctors, counsellors and a social worker. Visit dal.ca/studenthealth to learn more and book an appointment today.

Students also have access to a variety of online mental health resources, including telephone/texting counselling and workshops/training programs. Learn more and access these resources at dal.ca/mentalhealth.