

**Stony Brook University**  
**POL 103: Introduction to Comparative Politics**  
**Spring 2022**

**Instructor:** Robert Vidigal

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**Days & Times:** Tuesday/Thursday 1:15-2:35

**Office Hours:** Tuesday/Thursday 12:15-1:00 and by appointment.

## **Course Description**

This course introduces the study of comparative politics, one of the four major subfields of political science. The broad goal of this course is to help students understand and grapple with some of the major political questions of our day.

Why did the nation state come to be? What is democracy, and why are some states democratic and others are not? Why do revolutions happen? The goal is for students to be able to intelligently reflect and converse on these topics and to be prepared for the political world that awaits them after college.

## **Course Website**

Blackboard will allow students to access course materials. The Blackboard system is available from any computer with access to the Internet at the following website, <http://blackboard.stonybrook.edu>. Logging into Blackboard requires a NET ID and a Password. Use this page to obtain additional readings, electronic copies of assignments, and other course handouts and resources.

## **How We Will Communicate**

Course-related questions or for personal/private issues, my preferred method of contact is via email listed at the top of this syllabus. If you use Blackboard's Email Tool, it will automatically include your full name, course name, and section when you send me an email. Your Stony Brook University email must be used for all University related communications. You must have an active Stony Brook University email account. Please plan on checking your SBU email account regularly for course related messages.

## **Course Requirements**

Each learning module and week will cover different topics. Each learning unit and week consists of the following components: lectures, reading summaries, and lab assignments.

You are expected to read the assigned material weekly.  
Each week has one learning module **with deadlines on Monday midnight.**

Grades will be based on weekly reading summaries, lab assignments, and two exams. Please note that late submissions of weekly reading summaries, lab assignments or current affairs write-up, exams will receive penalties unless it is discussed with the instructor ahead of the deadline. A current affairs write-up is available as extra points.

<b>Grading:</b>	<b>% of Final Grade</b>
Lab Assignments	30%
Midterm Exam	30%
Final Exam	30%
Current affairs Write up	10%

**Grading Scale:** Barring any unforeseen changes, the grading scale for the course is as follows:

A 93.50 to 100.00	B- 79.50 to 83.49	D+ 66.50 to 69.49
A- 89.50 to 92.49	C+ 76.50 to 79.49	D 63.50 to 66.49
B+ 86.50 to 89.49	C 73.50 to 76.49	D- 59.50 to 63.49
B 83.50 to 86.49	C- 69.50 to 73.49	F 59.49 and below

If you want to add, drop, or change the grade status of this course, you are responsible for complying with all deadlines in this regard. Such deadlines are a matter of University policy. Please visit the appropriate university website for the deadlines.

### ***Readings***

Each module, you are assigned only 1 (one) reading. Lectures are based on the readings and other additional important political concepts to the study of comparative politics.

You are required to read all the assigned readings and I strongly recommend you come up with a ONE-page summary for each reading. This eases your midterm and final exams studying.

Your reading summary can be in point form or paragraph form. Do not exceed more than two pages per summary.

*All required readings are available on Blackboard.*

### ***Lab Assignments (30%)***

On the Lab Assignments, a major news story or case study will be presented, and students will be expected to reflect on the political nature of the event using the comparative method and apply insights taught in the lecture that week.

Please complete each lab assignment and upload it onto Blackboard by 11:59pm of every deadline.

*“Learning is Social”*: The students who have a bad time in the course assignments are

the ones who don't work with each other to learn. We are a learning community, and we should help each other to learn. If you are struggling, take a breath, and try to pinpoint what you are struggling with. If you understand something and someone is struggling with it, try and help them. This does not mean to mindlessly copy your peers work.

### **Midterm (30%) and Final Exam (30%)**

There will be two exams in this class, a midterm, and a final exam. Each exam will be worth 30% of the overall grade. Exams are multiple choice.

Make-up exams will only be offered under extraordinary circumstances (i.e., a death in the family or medical emergency). Proper documentation is required. Note that simply visiting a doctor is not sufficient. There must be written documentation stating that the student was physically incapable of taking the exam.

All make-up exams must be completed within one week (7 days) of the original exam date. Failure to schedule a make-up exam within the allotted time will result in a grade of zero for the exam. The format of the make-up exam is left to the discretion of the instructor.

### **Current Affairs Write Up Guidelines (10%)**

Your current affairs write up should include the following:

1. What is your political phenomenon that you are looking at?
2. Identify at least 5 concepts that we discussed in class that you can use to explain this political phenomenon.
3. Link each of the 5 selected concepts to the political phenomenon. Explain and elaborate on how these concepts apply to the political phenomenon.
4. Discuss what kinds of journal articles you found to help you write this paper/proposal.
  - a. What is the article about?
  - b. How is it useful (or not useful) to your research?

Your case study should focus on any of the concept(s) learned in the class, and it is due to **May 6**, 11:59PM on Blackboard.

### **Extra Credit Opportunities**

Students will also be given extra credit opportunities that amounts up to 1% of the overall grade. Students have two extra credit opportunities:

- Complete syllabus quiz by **Jan 28**, 11:59pm (1%).
- Participate in a study as a research participant (1%).

### **Office Hours (Zoom also available)**

Office hours will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays (12:15PM-1:00PM) or by appointment.

## **Technical Requirements**

This course uses Blackboard for the facilitation of communications between faculty and students, submission of assignments, and posting of grades. The Blackboard course site can be accessed at <https://blackboard.stonybrook.edu>. If you are unsure of your NetID, visit this link for more information. You are responsible for having a reliable computer and Internet connection throughout the term. Students should be able to use email, a word processor, spreadsheet program and presentation software to complete this course successfully.

## **Technical Assistance**

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem with Blackboard you can submit a help request ticket: <https://it.stonybrook.edu/services/itsm>  
Tech Support Station phone: (631) 632-9800 (e.g., client support, WIFI, software and hardware issues).

## **Subject to Change Notice**

All material, assignments, and due dates are subject to change (with prior notice of course). It is your responsibility to review the course site regularly to stay up to date on any potential changes.

## **Student Accessibility Support Services (SASC)**

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Student Accessibility Support Center, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, Room 128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation are confidential.

Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and Student Accessibility Support Center. For procedures and information go to the following website:

<https://ehs.stonybrook.edu/programs/fire-safety/emergency-evacuation/evacuation-guide-people-physical-disabilities>

## **Academic Integrity Statement**

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instance of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at <http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/>

## **Critical Incident Statement**

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of University Community Standards any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the

HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. Further information about most academic matters can be found in the Undergraduate Bulletin, the Undergraduate Class Schedule, and the Faculty-Employee Handbook.

## Tentative Course Outline

The instructor reserves the right to make reasonable changes to the syllabus and class/reading schedule during the semester. Please refer to Blackboard for the most updated version of the syllabus.

### COURSE SCHEDULE

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Module 0: Jan 25 – Jan 27</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Syllabus and Class Overview</b></p> <p><u>Read syllabus and complete syllabus quiz by <b>Jan 28, 11:59pm</b></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Read How to Read a Journal Article.</li> <li>– Read and summarize Chapter Intro to Comparative Politics.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Lecture: Introduction to Comparative Politics.</li> <li>• Lab Assignment 0: none.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Module 1: Feb 1 – Feb 3</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Development of the Modern State</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Read and summarize Newton and Van Deth (2016).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Lecture: Development of the Modern State.</li> <li>• Lab Assignment 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lab Assignment 1 is due on Feb 4, 11:59PM</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Module 2: Feb 8 – Feb 10</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Democracy and Dictatorship I: Conceptualization and Measurement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Read and summarize Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland (2010).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Lecture: Democracy and Dictatorship I.</li> <li>• Lab Assignment 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lab Assignment 2 is due on Feb 11, 11:59PM</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Module 3: Feb 15 – Feb 17</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Democracy and Dictatorship II: The Economic Determinants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Assignment: – Read and summarize Ross (2001).</li> <li>• Lecture: Democracy and Dictatorship II.</li> <li>• Lab Assignment 3: – Lab Assignment 3 is due on Feb 18, 11:59PM</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Module 4: Feb 22 – Feb 24</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Democracy and Dictatorship III: The Cultural Determinants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Assignment: – Read and summarize Subramaniam (2000).</li> <li>• Lecture: Democracy and Dictatorship III.</li> <li>• Lab Assignment 4: – Lab Assignment 4 is due on Feb 25, 11:59PM</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Module 5: Mar 1 – Mar 3</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Democratic Transitions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Assignment: – Read and summarize Gandhi and Lust-Okar (2009).</li> <li>• Lecture: Democratic Transitions.</li> <li>• Lab Assignment 5: – Lab Assignment 5 is due Mar 4, 11:59PM</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Midterm <u>Mar 8 – Mar 10</u></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Optional Review on March 8th</i> <b>Midterm exam on March 10th</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Mar 15 – Mar 17</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>SPRING BREAK</i></b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Module 6: Mar 22 – Mar 24</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Democracy or Dictatorship</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Assignment: – Read and summarize Przeworski and Limongi (1993).</li> <li>• Lecture: Democracy or Dictatorship.</li> <li>• Lab Assignment 6: – Lab Assignment 6 is due Mar 25, 11:59PM</li> </ul>

<p>Module 7: <b>Mar 29 – Mar 31</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Varieties of Dictatorships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Assignment: – Read and summarize Gandhi and Przeworski (2007).</li> <li>• Lecture: Varieties of Dictatorship.</li> <li>• Lab Assignment 7: – Lab Assignment 7 is due Apr 1, 11:59PM</li> </ul>
<p>Module 8: <b>Apr 5</b></p> <p><b>NO CLASS on Apr 7 (MPSA Conference)</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Varieties of Democracies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Assignment: – Read and summarize Strom (2000).</li> <li>• Lecture: Varieties of Democracies.</li> <li>• Lab Assignment 8: – Lab Assignment 8 is due Apr 8, 11:59PM</li> </ul>
<p>Module 9: <b>Apr 12 – Apr 14</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>States and Identity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Assignment: – Read and summarize Stokes (2003).</li> <li>• Lecture: States and Identity.</li> <li>• Lab Assignment 9: – Lab Assignment 9 is due April 15, 11:59PM</li> </ul>
<p>Module 10: <b>Apr 19 – Apr 21</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Contentious Politics: Social Movements, Political Violence, and Revolution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Assignment: – Read and summarize Gillion (2012).</li> <li>• Lecture: Contentious Politics.</li> <li>• Lab Assignment 10: – Lab Assignment 10 is due April 22, 11:59PM</li> </ul>

<p><b>Module 11: Apr 26 – Apr 28</b></p>	<p><b>Political Economy of Wealth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reading Assignment: – Read and summarize Centeno and Cohen (2012).</li><li>• Lecture: Political Economy of Wealth.</li></ul>
<p><b>Module 12: May 3 – May 5</b></p>	<p><b>Selection Bias in Comparative Politics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reading Assignment: – Read and summarize Geddes (1990).</li><li>• Lecture: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics.</li></ul> <p><b>Current Affairs Write Up Submission</b> Current Affairs Write Up is due on May 6, 11:59PM</p>
<p><b>Final Exam: <u>May 10 – May 12</u></b></p>	<p><b>Final Exam May 10 – May 12</b></p>