

PS 241 ONL SU19

Comparative Politics in Developing Nations

Syllabus

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Course Outline

Course Description

This course provides an overview of the politics and economics of the developing world and aims to familiarize students with theories about why countries have different levels of economic development and different political systems and the consequences of such variation. We draw on examples from a variety of developing and middle-income countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America. The course uses the comparative method: we consider hypotheses about why particular countries and governments look and act the way they do and then use empirical evidence to evaluate the hypotheses. One of the main goals of the course is to familiarize students with the social science research process in preparation for taking upper-level political science classes and as a way of developing critical thinking abilities for assessing the truth claims that we encounter on a day-to-day basis.

Course Objectives

The course has three central objectives. The **first** objective is to make students familiar with important theoretical approaches to the study of the developing world. To this end, the first part of the class will examine key conceptual and theoretical contributions to the study of economic and political development in the developing world. The **second** objective is to deepen students' critical thinking skills by familiarizing them with the social scientific research method. The **third** objective is to introduce students to some of the challenges and pressing issues confronting developing countries.

By the end of this course, you will be better able to:

- Make conceptual distinctions across different types of countries with regard to their economic and political institutions.
- Think about causal relationships where explanatory variables are linked to outcome variables.
- Understand social science research methods, including correlational analysis, qualitative comparison, field experiments, and behavioral games.
- Understand the graphical presentation of data.

Course Structure

This is a **3-credit-hour** course. The course is 8 weeks long and consists of 8 content modules. Please be aware that this course is accelerated in nature; 16 weeks' worth of content will be covered in an 8-week time span. You should dedicate approximately **10 hours per week** to working on the course itself, but actual time commitments will vary depending on your input, needs, and personal study habits. You are **required to log on to the course website a minimum of 3 days per week**, but as discussions develop, you will probably need to do so more frequently. For additional information about student commitment, please see the [Course Policies](#) page.

Required Reading Materials

There are no textbooks for this class. All of the assigned readings come from journals or books and are available through the course website.

Course Activities and Assignments

This course requires the completion of various activities and assignments as outlined below. Note that **all assignments must be completed by 11:55 pm US Central Time (CT) on their due date**. If you are taking this class from a different time zone, please be mindful of the time difference and make the appropriate conversions.

Please consult the [Course Policies](#) page for information on assignment policies, including late-submission penalties and academic integrity requirements. Please also consult the [Rubrics and Grading](#) page for information on how assignments will be evaluated and how your final grade will be computed.

Weekly Activities

Each week of the course consists of **five** components:

(1) A Weekly Overview: Each week will begin with the weekly overview, which will explain what the week is about, what learning goals you are expected to achieve, how long the week will take, and in what activities you will participate. Each week is designed with the same structure and activities unless otherwise specified. The week activities are explained in greater detail below. You can find the due dates of specific assignments on each week's Overview page.

(2) Readings and Lessons: Each week will contain a list of lessons (recorded lectures) and assigned readings. In some cases, optional or supplemental readings may be listed for further study. Lessons cover major topics from the readings but do **not** necessarily include all important information from the readings.

(3) A Reading Quiz: For each week's readings, there will be a quiz for you to complete after you have done the readings. Each week's Reading Quiz is due on **Wednesday at 11:55 pm CT**. These questions are meant both to test your comprehension of the material and to draw your attention to salient points from the readings that will be covered in the lectures. You are allowed **two attempts** on the quiz, and **your final quiz grade will be the average of the two**. If you are not scoring satisfactorily on these quizzes, you may wish to consult with the instructor about strategies for approaching the readings. You may want to take notes on the questions that you found most challenging from the reading quiz in order to help you study for the weekly quiz.

(4) A Class Discussion: Many of the ideas that are covered in this class are contested ideas. Rather than having certain answers to questions involving development, we usually are in the realm of discussing trade-offs and trying to contextualize decisions. Weekly discussion board posts give you the opportunity to review and discuss the assigned articles and lecture materials and to develop your own opinions on the themes around which the course is organized. You are expected to write your initial post on the weekly discussion board by **Friday at 11:55 pm CT**. Subsequently, you will write two response posts by **Sunday at 11:55 pm CT**.

(5) A Weekly Quiz: At the conclusion of each week, there will be a quiz that draws on the lectures and the reading assignments. Each week's Weekly Quiz is due on **Sunday at 11:55 pm CT**. You are allowed **one attempt** on the quiz. Before taking this quiz, you should review your notes on the lecture videos and on the readings. Success in these weekly quizzes will require studying and asking for clarification on concepts that you find difficult.

Data Analysis Assignment

In addition to the five weekly activities described above, you will complete a Data Analysis Assignment that will ask you to compare countries using concepts learned in the class and by looking at relevant data for those countries. More information about this assignment is available in the [Data Analysis Assignment Overview](#) in the Data Analysis Assignment tab. This assignment will be **due at the end of Week 5, on Sunday at 11:55 pm CT.**

Course Policies

Academic Calendar

This University of Illinois course is **8 weeks** long. A course week is defined as the period between Monday, 12:00 am, and Sunday, 11:55 pm, **US Central Time (CT)**. For more information, see the University's Academic Calendar.

Student Commitment and Participation

By registering for this online course, you commit to self-motivated study, participation in online course activities, and timely submission of all assignments. Furthermore, you commit to accessing the course website and checking email at least **3 days per week**, as well as to devoting at least **10 hours weekly** to preparing for each module and completing the required assignments and readings.

Assignment Policies

All assignments, including discussion posts and quizzes, are always due by **11:55 pm US Central Time (CT)** on the dates specified in the weekly overviews (unless otherwise noted by the instructor). If you are taking this class from a different time zone, please be mindful of the time difference and make the appropriate conversions.

Unless permission from the instructor is obtained **before the assignment's due date has passed**, assignments will lose **10 percentage points** for every calendar day that they are late. Assignments submitted more than **4 days late** will not receive a grade.

If you wish to be excused from participation in class discussions or from submitting projects on time because of medical reasons or personal emergencies, you must address the issue with the course instructor. Because of this course's fast pace and the potential effect that such excusals may have on your ability to complete it successfully, such accommodation will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Examples of academic dishonesty include the following:

- Cheating
- Fabrication
- Facilitating infractions of academic integrity
- Plagiarism
- Bribes, favors, and threats
- Academic interference
- Examination by proxy
- Grade tampering
- Non-original works

Should an incident arise in which a student is thought to have violated academic integrity, the student will be processed under the disciplinary policy set forth in the Illinois Academic Integrity Policy. If you do not understand relevant definitions of academic infractions, contact the instructor for an explanation within the first week of class.

Copyright

Student Content

Participants in University of Illinois courses retain copyright of all assignments and posts they complete; however, all materials may be used for educational purposes within the given course. In group projects, only the portion of the work completed by a particular individual is copyrighted by that individual. The University of Illinois may request that students' materials be shared with future courses, but such sharing will only be done with the students' consent. The information that students submit during a course may, however, be used for the purposes of administrative data collection and research. No personal information is retained without the students' consent.

Non-Student Content

Everything on this site and within University of Illinois courses is copyrighted. The copyrights of all non-student work are owned by the University of Illinois Board of Trustees, except in approved cases where the original creator retains copyright of the material. Copyrights to external links are owned by or are the responsibility of those external sites. Students are free to view and print material from this site so long as: (i) the material is used for informational purposes only; (ii) the material is used for noncommercial purposes only; and (iii) copies of any material include the respective copyright notice. These materials may not be mirrored or reproduced on non-University of Illinois websites without the express written permission of the University of Illinois Board of Trustees. To request permission, please contact the academic unit for the program.

Student Behavior

Students are expected to behave in accordance with the penal and civil statutes of all applicable local, state, and federal governments, with the rules and regulations of the Board of Regents, and with University regulations and administrative rules. For more information about the student code and handbook, see SOURCE.

In any social interaction, certain rules of etiquette are expected and contribute to more enjoyable and productive communication. The following are tips for interacting online via email or discussion board messages, adapted from guidelines originally compiled by Chuq Von Rospach and Gene Spafford:

- Remember that the person receiving your message is someone like you, deserving and appreciating courtesy and respect.
- Be brief; succinct, thoughtful messages have the greatest effect.
- Your messages reflect on you personally; take time to make sure that you are proud of their form and content.
- Use descriptive subject headings in your emails.
- Think about your audience and the relevance of your messages.
- Be careful when you use humor and sarcasm; absent the voice inflections and body language that aid face-to-face communication, Internet messages are easy to misinterpret.
- When making follow-up comments, summarize the parts of the message to which you are responding.
- Avoid repeating what has already been said; needless repetition is ineffective communication.
- Cite appropriate references whenever using someone else's ideas, thoughts, or words.

Accessibility and Accommodations

To obtain disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students should contact both the instructor and the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible. You can contact DRES at 1207 S. Oak Street, Champaign, (217) 333-1970, or via email at disability@illinois.edu.

To insure that disability-related concerns are properly addressed from the beginning, students with disabilities who require assistance to participate in this class are asked to **contact the instructor within the first 5 days of class**.

Additional Important Information

In addition to the information found in this syllabus, the following page contain essential information about this course: [CITL Course Policies page](#).

Communications

Your daily contact should be via the **discussion forums** (i.e., [Announcements Forum](#), [Course Q&A](#), and [Social Forum](#)) in our learning management system Learn@Illinois Moodle Service, and via **email**.

Announcements

The [Announcements Forum](#) serves as a way for your instructor and University of Illinois administrators to make announcements within our virtual learning environment. Announcements posted here will also be sent to your Illinois email address, so be sure to check your email or the [Announcements Forum](#) at least once a day to see whether any new announcements have been made.

To make sure you have your announcement notifications turned on, click on the bell icon next to your name (top right corner) and check your notification preferences. More information about forum subscriptions is on [ATLAS' Help page](#).

Course Questions

Questions pertaining to the course should be posted in the [Course Q&A](#). You can get to this forum from the course home page. Posting questions there allows everyone to benefit from the answers. If you have a question, someone else is probably wondering the same thing. Anyone submitting general questions via email will be directed to resubmit the question to the [Course Q&A](#). Also, participants should not hesitate to **answer questions posed by peers** if they know the answers and the instructor has not yet responded. This not only expedites the process, but also encourages peer interaction and support.

Personal Questions

Questions of a personal nature should be sent to the instructor's email address (listed on the [Instructor Information](#) page). When sending email, please **use your official university account**(@illinois.edu) and **begin the subject line with [PS 241 ONL SU18]**.

Alternatively, course participants can also use the **internal email tool inside Learn@Illinois** to communicate privately with the instructor, group members, and each other. Make sure your email address is current and activated within your Learn@Illinois Profile so that messages sent to you from within Learn@Illinois are automatically forwarded to your regular email address as well. You may find this information on how to update your profile in Learn@Illinois helpful in setting this up.

Emergencies

If you have an emergency that will keep you from participating in the course, please notify your instructor as soon as possible by using the instructor's email address (listed on the [Instructor Information](#) page). Provide callback information in your email (if necessary). You should also notify your program director of any emergencies.

Instructor Responses

Questions posted to the [Course Q&A](#) forum will generally be answered within **48 hours**. If possible, students are encouraged to answer questions posted by other students to the [Course Q&A](#) forum, rather than waiting for the instructor's response.

The instructor will respond to email messages (whether direct or via the Learn@Illinois internal email tool) **48 hours** of receiving them, unless the instructor notifies you ahead of time of an inability to do so. When sending email, please remember to **use your official university account** (@illinois.edu) and to **begin the subject line with [PS 241 ONL SU18]**.

The instructor may not respond to general course questions sent to him or her that should be posted in the [Course Q&A](#). Please don't be offended if you are asked to forward your question to this location.

With regard to the **weekly discussion forums**, the role of the instructor is to help facilitate discussion by providing probing questions, asking for clarification, and helping solve conflicts, as necessary. The instructor will not respond to every post; you are encouraged to share your thoughts, experiences, and ideas with each other as well. The instructor will grade your three posts on the weekly discussion forums (one initial posts and two response posts) within **three business days** of the Sunday deadline.

Blackboard Collaborate

Blackboard Collaborate is a tool that allows multiple people to join together simultaneously via a computer to text chat, audio chat, video chat, collaborate on a digital whiteboard, and even share your computer's desktop with one another. The Instructor's [Virtual Office](#) and the Student Lounge (when available) make use of Collaborate.

Another way to communicate with the instructor is to make use of the virtual office hours. The instructor will be available on the dates and during the times listed on the [Virtual Office](#) page under Syllabus for office hours, via Blackboard Collaborate. You will be prompted to provide your name in order to enter the Student Lounge. Study Lounge Participants may also want an alternative way to meet synchronously with each other for studying together, group projects, problem solving, and so on. Students may enter the Study Lounge virtual Blackboard Collaborate classroom.

Rubrics and Grading

You can access your scores by clicking the Grades link from the left column of the course home page.

Grading for Reading Quizzes

Each week, you will take a **Reading Quiz** where you will apply what you learn in the required readings and materials (**not** in the video lectures). Reading quizzes are due each **Wednesday at 11:55 pm CT**.

Each Reading Quiz is composed of a number of **multiple-choice questions**, ranging from about 17 to 30. Each week's quiz is always worth a total of **15 points**, regardless of how many questions it has.

Reading quizzes are **not timed**, and you are always allowed **two attempts**. Your final quiz grade will be the **average score of your two attempts**. If you are not scoring satisfactorily on these quizzes, you may

wish to consult with the instructor about strategies for approaching the readings. You may want to take notes on the questions that you found most challenging from the reading quiz in order to help you study for the weekly quiz.

Grading for Initial Discussion Posts

"Initial post" is defined as the post where the participant is directly answering the instructor's discussion question. Your initial posts must be a **minimum of 250 words**. Initial posts are due each **Friday at 11:55 pm CT**.

Your initial post will be awarded up to **10 points** if it satisfies the following requirements.

Criteria	Description
Addresses Question	Post is mostly related to the discussion question posed by the instructor, even if small portions are off-topic.
Critical Thinking	Post shows clear evidence of critical thinking. This may take the form of application, analysis, or synthesis of materials learned during the week. It can also take the form of introducing new but very relevant ideas that help others understand the topic.
Supports Discussion	Post spurs further conversations.
Accuracy and Basis in Fact	Post is well supported; it contains explicit references to lectures, readings, or outside sources used as the basis for the post (e.g. "As was mentioned on page 7 of the textbook..." or "Given what the instructor said in Lecture 1.2..."). Assertions of facts are accurate and clear. Opinions are not presented as though they were facts.
Professionalism	Post is civil and respectful. Post could be described by all of the following: well organized, well written, easy to understand, and/or follows the relevant rules of spelling and grammar of either British or American English.

Grading for Two Response Discussion Posts

"Response post" is defined as the post where the participant is responding to another participant's post. Your two response posts must be a **minimum of 100 words each**. Response posts are due each **Sunday at 11:55 pm CT**.

Your two response posts will be awarded up to **2.5 points each** if they satisfy the following requirements.

Criteria	Description
Continues Discussion	Post quotes or otherwise makes clear what part of the previous person's post is being addressed. Post responds to what was written in the previous person's post.
Critical Thinking	Post shows clear evidence of critical thinking. This may take the form of application, analysis, or synthesis of materials learned during the week in the post. It can also take the form of introducing new but very relevant ideas in the post that help others understand the topic.
Professionalism	Post is civil and respectful. Post could be described by all of the following: well organized, well written, easy to understand, and/or follows the relevant rules of spelling and grammar of either British or American English.

Grading for Weekly Quizzes

Each week, you will take a **Weekly Quiz** where you will apply what you learn both in the video lectures and in the required readings and materials. Weekly quizzes are due each **Sunday at 11:55 pm CT**.

Each Weekly Quiz is composed of **25 multiple-choice questions**, and it is worth a total of **25 points**.

Unlike reading quizzes, weekly quizzes are **timed**: you have **one hour** to complete them. You also get only **one attempt** at each Weekly Quiz, so be sure to have enough uninterrupted time to complete one before starting it. Before taking this quiz, you should review your notes on the lecture videos and on the readings. Success in these weekly quizzes will require studying and asking for clarification on concepts that you find difficult.

Grading for Data Analysis Assignment

You will complete a Data Analysis Assignment once over the course of the class, **due at the end of Week 5, on Sunday at 11:55 pm CT**. This assignment consists in answering **25 multiple-choice questions** to be answered on the basis of a data set, for a maximum of **60 points**.

The Data Analysis Assignment Quiz is **not timed**, however you are **not allowed to go back to previous questions if you answer or skip any question**. This is because questions at times reveal the answers to the previous questions. Be sure not to skip questions and to only move on to the next question when you are done with the previous one.

For the same reason, you are only allowed **one attempt** at this assignment.

Grading Distribution

Assignment	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	TOT
Reading Quiz	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	120
Discussion: Initial Post	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	80
Discussion: Two Response Posts	2.5 x 2	2.5 x 2	2.5 x 2	2.5 x 2	40				
Weekly Quiz	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	200
Data Analysis Assignment	-	-	-	-	60	-	-	-	60
TOT	55	55	55	55	115	55	55	55	500

Grading Scale

Grade	Points	Percent
A+	485–500	97%
A	465–484	93%
A–	450–464	90%
B+	435–449	87%

B	415–434	83%
B–	400–414	80%
C+	385–399	77%
C	365–384	73%
C–	350–364	70%
D+	335–349	67%
D	315–334	63%
D–	300–314	60%
F	Below 300	Below 60%

Tech Requirements

Getting Help

If you need help:

- Only contact your instructor directly if you have a personal question.
- For all other questions about course content, activities, deadlines, technical problems, etc., please check the **Course Q&A** forum to see if someone else has already asked your same question and received a response.
- If your question isn't there yet, post your question to the **Course Q&A** forum. Feel free to help your peers out if you know the answer!
- If you have technical problems, please fill out the **Learn@Illinois support form**.
- If you have questions about Blackboard Collaborate (the web conferencing tool for your synchronous session, **virtual office** or study lounge), please consult Blackboard Collaborate Support site for more information. You could also get assistance by calling the 24-hour phone support number.

Technology Requirements for This Course

Please review the general **hardware and software requirements** established for all online courses. Additionally, you can view the **video playback guidelines** for help with video content.

Please review the following tutorials to better equip you to use the educational technologies required in your course.

Learn@Illinois (Moodle)

Learn@Illinois Moodle Service is the Learning Management System (LMS) in which your course is housed. It is where your course syllabus is kept, where readings and other content can be found, and where you submit your assignments and participate in discussions.

- **General Learn@Illinois help.**
- **How to update your profile in Learn@Illinois.**

Software Plug-Ins

Some elements of this course may require certain freely downloadable plug-ins in order to function properly. Please visit this link to ensure you have the latest version of these plug-ins installed:

- **Flash Player.**

Blackboard Collaborate

Blackboard Collaborate is a Web conferencing tool that allows multiple people to meet synchronously to text chat, voice chat, and even video chat with one another.

- Learn more about **Blackboard Collaborate Ultra** and **test your system's compatibility**. You may also wish to view the **Participant Orientation** (from Blackboard's website).