



蘇州大學
Soochow University

POL 409 Approaches to Comparative Politics

Summer 2024

Course Credits: 4

Contact Hours: 56 hours

Instructor: Rida Sindhu

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COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is an advanced course in comparative politics that explores various theoretical frameworks and methodologies used to analyze political systems. Through a critical examination of contending approaches, students will gain a deep understanding of the complexities of political phenomena, including state formation, political institutions, political culture, and public policy. Through case studies and readings, students will engage in comparative analysis, develop analytical skills, and critically evaluate the strengths and limitations of different theoretical perspectives.

Upon Completion of this Course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the major theoretical approaches in comparative politics;
2. Evaluate frameworks used to understand political systems across different historical contexts and geographic regions;
3. Enhance research and writing skills through independent research projects and case studies;
4. Examine the historical context within which contemporary political phenomena have developed;
5. Apply theoretical concepts and methodological approaches to analyze contemporary political issues.

PREREQUISITES

POL 275 International Politics and Society I



GRADING

Grades will be determined by accumulating points, with 100 points being the maximum, as follows:

ITEM	POINTS
Participation	10 Points
4 Case Studies	20 Points
2 Research Projects	20 Points
Midterm	20 Points
Research Paper	10 Points
Final Exam	20 Points
Total	100 Points

Late submissions will be graded at the end of the course. Grades will be assigned according to the following rule:

$A \geq 90 > B \geq 80 > C \geq 70 > D \geq 60 > F$.

We reserve the right to make adjustments to the overall grading policy.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Texts:

Daniele Caramani, *Comparative Politics*, 6th Edition, 2023.

Recommended (Optional) Texts or Other Materials:

Comparative Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings, J.Tyler Dickovick and Jonathan Eastwood, 2023.

COURSE TOPICS

MODULE	TASKS
Module 1	<p>Topics:</p> <p>Topic 1: Theories and Methods: The Relevance of Comparative Politics</p> <p>Topic 2: Approaches in Comparative Politic</p> <p>Topic 3: Comparative Research Methods</p> <p>Topic 4: The Historical Context</p> <p>Topic 5: The Nation-State and Multicultural Citizenship</p>



	<p>Assessments: Case Study 1</p>
Module 2	<p>Topics: Topic 6: Democracies Topic 7: Authoritarian Regimes Topic 8: Structures and Institutions: Legislatures Topic 9: Governments and Cabinets Topic 10: Constitutions, Rights, and Judicial Power</p> <p>Assessments: Case Study 2 Research Project 1</p>
Module 3	<p>Topics: Topic 11: Democratic Innovations Topic 12: Elections and Representation Topic 13: Multilevel Governance Topic 14: Actors and Processes Topic 15: Political Parties</p> <p>Assessments: Case Study 3 Midterm</p>
Module 4	<p>Topics: Topic 16: Party Systems Topic 17: Interest Groups Topic 18: Social Movements Topic 19: Political Culture Topic 20: Political Communication</p> <p>Assessments: Case Study 4 Research Project 2</p>
Module 5	<p>Topics: Topic 21: Public Policies: Policy Making Topic 22: The Welfare State Topic 23: The Impact of Public Policies Topic 24: Beyond the Nation-State: Globalization and the Nation-State Topic 25: Promoting and Protecting Democracy</p> <p>Assessments: Research Paper Final Exam</p>

ATTENDANCE

1) Class attendance is required. Missing classes without permission will lead to



decrease in overall grade.

Missing less than two classes: no penalty.

Missing more than two classes: 7% will be taken off from the overall grade.

If the instructor reports a student's frequent missing of class to the Soochow University Academic Administration Office, the student might get a written warning and might be prohibited from attending final exam.

2) Participants in this course are expected to arrive in class promptly and adequately prepared. The primary objective of this course is to critically engage with the readings and the subject matter. Therefore, course participants are expected to have completed the reading prior to class and prepare thoughtful reflections/commentaries to share with fellow colleagues.

LEARNING REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Late assignments are not acceptable and are subjected to grade deductions.
- 2) Assignments submitted in the wrong format will be counted as not submitted.
- 3) Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.
- 4) Make-up for midterm and final exams only with valid excuses, as defined by the University.
- 5) In order to earn a Certificate of Completion, participants must thoughtfully complete all assignments by stated deadlines and earn an average quiz score of 50% or greater.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

The use of electronic devices in class is distracting, both for the user and for the rest of the class. Only non-programmable calculators can be used in the tests and exam. Any attempts to use cell phones and other electronic communication devices will be seemed as cheating. Laptops are discouraged, unless you use them for activities DIRECTLY related to the course (eg., note taking, reading course documents).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Soochow University highly values the academic integrity and aims to promote the



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academic fairness, honesty and responsibility. Any academic dishonesty behaviors and any attempts to cheats and plagiarism will be reported to the university administration office. A written warning and the relevant penalties will be imposed. The record might be shown on the official university transcript.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

Soochow University is committed to maintaining a barrier-free environment so that students with disabilities can fully access programs, courses, services, and activities at Soochow University. Students with disabilities who require accommodations for access to and/or participation in this course are welcome.

Note:

Please contact the University Administrative Office immediately if you have a learning disability, a medical issue, or any other type of problem that prevents professors from seeing you have learned the course material.