

INTA 3203A

Comparative Politics: INTA 3203a
M-W 12:30-13:45 • Fall 2026

Instructor Information

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General Course Information

Description

Greetings! I am excited to be teaching this class. Comparative Politics is both the most interesting field in social science and a method that helps us understand causation and make comparisons with inference. The comparative method is the core of comparative politics and what appeals to so many of us that make this our passion, interest, and career. It helps us develop and solve puzzles. It helps us to think critically about the role and potential of government, society, and power. Comparative politics is a very broad field that includes international comparative research on democracy, gender, inequality, economic development, elections, authoritarianism, class, the state, comparative social policy, etc. Why is Costa Rica richer and more democratic than Honduras? Why are some countries parliamentary democracies with prime ministers while other democracies have presidents and senates? Does it matter? Why is 40% of the Argentine legislature made up of women politicians compared to only 8% in Brazil? Why did revolution spread across North Africa and the Middle East in recent years? How did Robert Mugabe get re-elected so often in Zimbabwe? What are the causes and effects of binomial voting districts? Why are populists so en vogue in 2020? Why do some governments do much better than others in dealing with Covid-19?

This class introduces the method and concepts and some cases of comparative politics. After mastering the method and concepts through a lecture and readings, we will take a deeper look at democracy and the current demise of full, liberal democracy around the globe. Then, pairs of students will develop comparative analysis with the comparative method and present to the class in the form of a TedX Talk.

Core Impacts:

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcomes:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social or geographic relationships develop, persist or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion

Course Learning Outcomes

- *Students will be able to apply research skills to address problems in the field of international affairs.*
- *Students will gain a working knowledge of the comparative method, inference, variables, and will use scientific methodology to make claims about causation and inference.*
- *Student will demonstrate the role of institutions and electoral rules in political outcomes.*
- *Students will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts and theories of comparative politics.*
- *Students will demonstrate an advanced understanding of populism, authoritarianism, fascism, and democracy.*
- *Students will demonstrate the skill and ability connect linkages between an historical novel and concepts and theories of comparative politics.*

Required Course Materials

Dino Bozonelos, Julia Wendt, Charlotte Lee, Jessica Scarffe, Masahiro Moae, Josh Franco, Bryan Martin, Stefan Veldhuis, *Introduction to Comparative Politics*. This is a free textbook in FILES in CANVAS.

Comparative politics articles weekly in *The Economist* (free at Georgia Tech online)

Grading Policy

Component	Weight
TedX Talk	20%
Discussion Questions	10%
Midterm	30%
Final	40%

Grade Scale: A > 90; B > 80; C > 70; D > 60

Assignments

TedX Talk **20**
Discussion questions **10**

Midterm	30
Final	40

Description of Graded Components

The exams are in class and closed book and notes. There will be discussion questions for every class. 7 will be randomly collected at the beginning of class and 5 will count 2 points each for final grade. TedX talk will be a critical part of the class. Students in pairs (or 3s or 4s) will develop a comparative politics analysis using MSSD or MDSD and will select two cases for analysis. Students will meet with professor before October 15 to finalize topics and cases. Each team will write a 10-12 page analysis (adjusted up for more team members) and present a TedX Talk on their topic and cases. More information to come.

Course Policies

Screens

There will be no screens of any type allowed in class. If you need to check your phone or use your laptop, you **MUST** exit class. Evidence has demonstrated that screen usage in class is like second-hand smoke to those near and behind an active screen and leads to lower performance for all.

Attendance and/or Participation

This will be an active classroom, where you will be expected to participate. I have noticed a drastic difference in the exam performance between students who regularly attend class and those who don't. You are expected to come having carefully read the materials for that day. Exam content will include reading not covered in class and class material not covered in the readings. Lecture slides will **not** be shared.

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Review Georgia Tech's Honor Code and the student Code of Conduct.

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarism on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Plagiarizing is defined by Webster's as "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own: use (another's production) without crediting the source."

If caught plagiarizing, you will be dealt with according to the GT Academic Honor Code. **USING AI WITHOUT PROPER CITATION IS PLAGIARIZING. IF YOU USE AI WITHOUT PROPER CITATION, YOU WILL BE HANDLED BY THE DEAN OF STUDENTS.** If you use AI and it is "invented or false AI garbage," your grade will be adjusted. AI is wrong a lot.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. The Student-Faculty Expectations articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

Pre- &/or Co-Requisites

None

Collaboration, Group Work, and Use of Generative AI

Discussion questions are to be your own work, written by you and not AI! Exams are to be your own work. All in-class exams will be closed book and notes.

Extensions, Late Assignments, & Re-Scheduled/Missed Exams

Late discussion questions will be penalized accordingly. Make-up exams are given for illness, approved Institute activities or religious observances.