

# **POLS3339 Comparative Political Systems (Online)**

7-Week Term

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Format: Online instruction via Blackboard through MyUTEP portal

## **Course Description**

We live in an era in which our socioeconomic welfare and security challenges depend critically on the policies and political processes in other countries. This course is designed to introduce you to the major theoretical and conceptual domains of inquiry in comparative politics that will help you better understand the world. We will study how politics and political systems work across different countries and in different times. We will learn tools that comparative political scientists use to answer important questions, such as why authoritarian leaders persist in some countries, why democracy is fragile or strong in different countries, and how electoral systems affect the patterns of political competition and types of political leaders elected. To better understand the world, you also need to have good knowledge of other countries. Thus, in this course you will also increase your substantive knowledge of various countries in the world, including Brazil, China, Germany, India, Iran, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, and the United Kingdom.

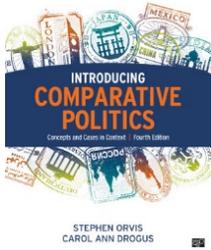
## **Learning Outcomes**

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

1. Understand and use various concepts and terms in comparative political science, such as political regimes, democratization, collective action problems, and political representation;
2. Understand and evaluate major theories in comparative political science;
3. Explain sources of political regime change, political stability and instability, and conflict;
4. Identify and analyze alternative political institutions, including the ways in which leaders are selected and power is distributed and constrained;
5. Evaluate the performance of a given state in terms of its policy-making capacity, economic development, political stability, social equality, and political participation; and
6. Compare and contrast countries using comparative politics frameworks with respect to their functioning and consequences, and evaluate how the United States compares to other countries.

This course helps you to develop the following skills targeted by the UTEP Edge: problem-solving, global awareness, communication, critical thinking, and social responsibility.

## Required Course Text



Stephen Orvis and Carol Ann Drogus. 2017. *Introducing Comparative Politics: Concepts and Cases in Context*. (4<sup>th</sup> Edition) Washington, DC: CQ Press. ISBN: 9781506375441.

This book is available at the UTEP Bookstore. You can also purchase your copy online. Please allow yourself sufficient time to obtain the text so that you will have your copy by the time the course begins.

## A Special Note on This Course

This course is unique in two ways compared to standard face-to-face semester-long courses. First, this course is delivered online. Online classes have an advantage of greater flexibility for students. However, they also require you to be your own boss; they require a high degree of self-discipline. You must be diligent to complete the readings, lectures, quizzes, class discussions, exams, and other assignments in time. There are more deadlines to meet. And the pace of the class is fast. Let's forget the misconception that online courses are easier; they are at least as challenging as face-to-face classes, if not more demanding. While I am available to help you understand course material should you need help, you must do your own work and meet the deadlines. I will be unable to grant exceptions that would be unfair to other students.

Second, this is an intensive short-term course which condenses 16-week material into seven (7) weeks. While a regular semester-long face-to-face class may require you to work 6-8 hours each week, for a typical student in this 7-week online class, it will involve approximately 14-16 hours of dedicated time to succeed. From my experience, despite the amount of work required in a relatively short period of time, many students do like, and do well in, accelerated classes. Nevertheless, I want you to be aware that if you sign up for this class, you need to be prepared to complete all the lectures and assignments that require significantly more work per week than a typical semester-long class does.

## Contacting the Professor

If you have a question regarding or need help with technological issues, contact UTEP's Technology Help Desk (see the section on UTEP Technology Support Help Desk).

If you have a question regarding a course material or assignment, please post it on the Help Board on the course's Blackboard page. Please make sure that your question is not addressed by the syllabus. If it is, I will simply refer you to the syllabus.

If you need to contact me regarding your personal matters (e.g., your performance, request for a make-up exam due to documented, severe, and unexpected illness, etc.), UTEP email is the best way to reach me. I will make every effort to respond to your email within 24-48 hours of receipt during weekdays. I will try to respond to weekend messages by Monday. Please use your UTEP email address when you email me. Your email should include the course number in the subject line and your name and UTEP ID number in the body of your email.

## Learning Modules

This course is designed using a modular format—where each week is "packaged" so that all the materials, submission areas, discussion posts, quizzes, and the final exam for a given week are in one area in the course's Blackboard page.

## Grading

Your course grade will be based on the following.

Course Requirement	Maximum Eligible Points	% of Course Grade
Weekly reading quizzes (incl. syllabus quiz); # of questions varies by week	First 100 out of 120 total	15%
Weekly module quizzes (incl. lectures, videos & readings); # of questions varies by week	First 140 out of 150 total	30%
Weekly discussion posts (each assignment consists of an original post and a minimum of two responses)	800 (100 pts each; must complete the first one and choose 7 out of the 9 remaining discussion post assignments)	25%
Final exam	100	30%

Using the table above, you can assess how well you are doing in the class. For example, to find out your performance in the weekly reading quizzes, let's say you earned a total of 90 points throughout the course of the semester. Your performance in this category is calculated by 90 points/100 maximum eligible points, and multiply it by 100 to make it a percentage. Your performance is at 90% of the total reading quiz grade. You can similarly calculate your performance in the other categories. Your course grade will be based on your performance in each category, weighted by its percentage contribution to the course grade.

Course Grade Scale	
90 ≤	A
80 ≤ & < 90	B
70 ≤ & < 80	C
60 ≤ & < 70	D
<60	F

For fairness with other students, I do not give individual-specific extra credit. However, the course has a built-in structure to give you enough opportunities to do well (see the description of the weekly reading and module quizzes). If you would like my feedback on how to improve your performance, please contact me sooner than later, and definitely do not wait until the end of the course.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Reading Assignments and Reading Quizzes**

Each week has assigned readings. You should start off the week by reading the assigned chapters of the text. You can find the schedule of reading assignments at the end of this syllabus and in a separate course calendar. You should carefully do the readings by taking notes, and by reading more than once if necessary. When you feel you are ready to take the week's reading quiz, you should log in and take the quiz. The reading quizzes contain 10-20 multiple choice questions, depending on the week's volume of readings and content. These quizzes are individual assessments, and the quiz questions will be selected randomly from a pool of questions.

You can use your notes (hard copy only) to take the quizzes, but you have on average only one minute per question. That is, if there are 10 questions, for example, you have up to 10 minutes to finish the entire quiz. Thus, you will need to prepare yourself well before taking the quiz; you will not have time to hunt for the answers while taking the quiz. You are allowed only one (1) attempt at the quiz, and once started, you cannot pause or stop and return to retake the quiz. Therefore, please make sure that you are ready to take the quiz before you start and allow yourself sufficient time to complete it. You need to enable LockDown Browser and Monitor (webcam) to take the quiz, which will prevent you from accessing notes stored in your computer or online.

If you score perfectly on all reading quizzes, you will earn 120 points, but 100 points will be enough to earn the highest grade on the quiz requirement. In other words, even if you do not do perfectly on each and every quiz, as long as you do well most of the time, you will still have a chance to earn a highest quiz grade over the course of the 7-week term.

### **Module Lectures and Module Quizzes**

Each module has lectures with appropriate auxiliary materials, such as videos and online exercises. Please read and complete these tasks carefully, by taking notes where necessary. Take the module quiz at the end of each module. The module quizzes will consist of multiple choice questions, and cover the content of the lectures and auxiliary materials as well as their theoretical and empirical implications and applications. The number of questions on the module quizzes vary. These quizzes are individual assessments, and the quiz questions will be selected randomly from a pool of questions.

You can use your notes (hard copy only) to take the module quizzes, but you have only one minute per question on average (see the example under reading quizzes). Thus, you will need to prepare yourself well before taking the quiz; you will not have time to hunt for the answers while taking the quiz. You are allowed only one (1) attempt at the quiz, and once started, you cannot pause or stop and return to retake the quiz. Therefore, please make sure that you are ready to take the quiz before you start and allow yourself sufficient time to complete it. You need to enable LockDown Browser and Monitor (webcam) to take the quiz, which will prevent you from accessing notes stored in your computer or online.

If you score perfectly on all module quizzes, you will earn 150 points, but 140 points will be enough to earn the highest grade on the module quiz requirement. In other words, even if you do

not do perfectly on each and every quiz, as long as you do well most of the time, you will still have a chance to earn a highest module quiz grade over the course of the 7-week term.

### **Class Participation and Discussion Posts**

Each module will include at least one discussion topic. For each discussion topic, you will submit an original discussion post in response to the discussion topic, and respond to the original discussion posts of at least two (2) other students. Unless otherwise instructed, your original discussion post should be at least 150 words and should not exceed 400 words. Your response post should be between 50 and 150 words. To receive credit for your participation, **you should submit your original discussion post by Friday at 10 pm and your response to at least two other students' original posts by the close of the module.** Each of your original discussion post will receive up to 80 points, and your two responses to other students' posts up to 10 points each, depending on the quality of your posts. If you post your response to more than two original posts (which I encourage you to do), I will consider the best two for your grade.

There are ten (10) discussion post assignments. Everyone is required to complete the first one (introduction). You need to complete seven (7) out of the nine remaining discussion post assignments of your choice.

The discussion posts are intended to foster mutual learning in the class. Before posting a discussion, you should read the assigned readings and mini-lectures and complete any other auxiliary learning materials for the module.

I expect everyone to actively participate in the online class discussion and do so in a positive and appropriate way (see the "Effective Electronic Communication (Netiquette)" section below). To receive full credit, you must effectively address the discussion topic, by demonstrating the knowledge from the module's materials, and where needed, by using evidence to support your argument. You also need to follow the word count requirements and "netiquette" rules. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in lower grades, and depending on the severity of the problem, no credit for the post.

#### **Remember:**

- Netiquette rules.
- Be sure to read everyone's posts before posting. Avoid repetition of what someone else has already said. Add something new to the discussion.
- No credit will be received for yes/no answers. Posts should justify positions and provide specific examples. Students must demonstrate that they have read the assignment and their classmates' comments carefully and thoughtfully.
- Be sure to post in a timely fashion to receive credit for the discussion. Pay close attention to the deadlines.
- Beware of unintentionally committing plagiarism. If you are borrowing information and ideas, you must cite your sources.

## **Final Exam**

The final exam will be cumulative, testing you on all of the course materials. You will take the final exam in the last week. The course schedule indicates the dates and times during which the final exam is open. You can log in to take the exam at any time during these hours and will have up to two (2) consecutive hours to finish it. Once you start, you cannot pause it or return to take it again. Therefore, please make sure that you allow yourself sufficient time to complete the exam. The exam will include multiple choice and short essay questions. Multiple choice questions are drawn from the pool of module quizzes. They are timed, allowing, on average, up to one (1) minute per question. You will choose two (2) short essay questions out of three potential questions, randomly drawn from the pool of short essay questions. **The final exam should be taken closed-book and closed notes.**

The exam is to be taken individually—it is not allowed to discuss or share the exam questions with anyone else. The questions on the exam will be drawn randomly from a large pool of potential questions, and therefore the probability that any two students in the class will take an identical set of exam questions is extremely low. Please refer to the section on “Academic Integrity” below to review the university and instructor policies on cheating, collusion, and plagiarism.

## **Using LockDown Browser and a Webcam for Online Exams and Quizzes**

This course requires the use of Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor (a webcam) for quizzes and the final exam. The webcam can be built into your computer or can be the type that plugs in with a USB cable. The Respondus Lockdown Browser tool in Blackboard is a custom browser that prevents students from printing, copying, and accessing other applications or websites during proctored online exams. It locks down the testing environment within the learning management system so that during tests students are unable to go to other URLs, access other applications, capture screen content, or print. Respondus Monitor requires students to use a webcam and microphone with LockDown Browser. As soon as the exam is complete, the instructor can view the recordings from the student's test session.

Please see “Using LockDown Browser and Monitor” provided separately on the course’s Blackboard page on how to install and use the software. Take an ungraded practice test after you install it.

## **Due Dates, Make-Up Policy, etc.**

**Each module will open on Monday at 12:01 am of the week and close on Sunday at 11:59 pm, with the exception of Week 7 which closes the last day of the term.** All course deadlines and time references indicated in the syllabus, course calendar, and learning modules are in Mountain Standard Time (MST). Due dates are firm. I do not extend deadlines or make exceptions for technical issues based on your computer or internet problems. Therefore, do not wait until the last minute to complete module assignments, quizzes, and the final exam. Non-emergency doctors’ appointments, work, and the like also do not serve as a valid justification for requesting a deadline extension or a make-up exam.

**Make-up exam and deadline extension requests will be considered only in the case of a documented emergency**, such as medical emergency involving treatment in an emergency room and death in your immediate family. **To request a make-up exam or deadline extension, please make the request in writing prior to the due date with proper documentation** indicating the nature of the emergency, the name(s), the time away (start and end dates and times), and the contact information of the issuer of the document. If you are unable to make this request in writing prior to the due date, please do so within one day of your return. In any case, no make-up exam or deadline extension will be granted to a request made after one week of the due date. Note that a make-up exam and quizzes may be in a different format than the original exam or quizzes and may require more intensive preparation.

If you cannot provide proper documentation, please do not make those requests. The structure of the course makes it possible for you to pass the class, or even earn a high course grade, even if you miss one of the assignments (except the final exam) as long as you do well on all other assignments.

<b>Course Requirement</b>	<b>Due Dates</b>
Weekly reading quizzes (incl. syllabus quiz)	Sundays at 11:59 pm (Weeks 1-6) Saturday at 11:59 pm (Weeks 7)
Weekly module quizzes (incl. lectures, videos & readings)	Sundays at 11:59 pm (Weeks 1-6) Saturday at 11:59 pm (Weeks 7)
Weekly discussion posts	Submit your original discussion post by Fridays at 10 pm Submit your response to at least two other students' posts by Sundays at 11:59 pm (Weeks 1-6) or Saturday at 11:59 pm (Weeks 7)
Final exam	Week 7. Please see the course schedule for the dates and times.

### **Effective Electronic Communication (Netiquette)**

All students are expected to adhere to professionalism and demonstrate mutual respect at all times in their communication with fellow students and the professor. You need to take greater care in electronic communication because without the aid of body language and voice tones, your words are more prone to misinterpretation and you may offend someone unintentionally. You should avoid unnecessary provocations or arguments. Definitely no personal attack is permitted. Always be courteous and respectful when communicating with fellow students and the professor, and proofread your posting to ensure that it is written professionally and without any hint of incitement or insult.

**No inappropriate behavior will be tolerated.** Inappropriate student behavior will be reported to and handled by the University. The professor retains the discretion to drop students from the course for any inappropriate behavior.

Please keep in mind the following netiquette rules:

- Always consider audience. Remember that members of the class and the professor will be reading any postings.

- Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and to the professor at all times. No harassment, flaming, or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
- Do not use inappropriate language, all capital letters, or language short cuts. Online entries should be written in standard English with edited spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- When reacting to someone else's message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face-to-face situation.

Here are some **useful tips for effective online communication and interaction.**

**Language:** Given the absence of face-to-face clues, written text can easily be misinterpreted. Avoid the use of strong or offensive language and the excessive use of exclamation points. If you feel particularly strongly about a point, it may be best to write it first as a draft and then to review it, before posting it, in order to remove any strong language.

**Be Forgiving:** If someone states something that you find offensive, mention this directly to the professor. Remember that the person contributing to the discussion is also new to this form of communication. What you find offensive may quite possibly have been unintended and can best be cleared up by the professor.

**This is Permanent:** Think carefully about the content of your message before contributing it. Once sent to the group, there is no taking it back. Poor writing does not reflect well on you, and your audience might not be able to decode misspelled words or poorly constructed sentences. It is a good practice to compose and check your comments in a word-processor before posting them.

**Test for Clarity:** Messages may often appear perfectly clear to you as you compose them, but turn out to be perfectly obtuse to your reader. One way to test for clarity is to read your message aloud to see if it flows smoothly. If you can read it to another person before posting it, it is even better.

**Remember Your Place:** A Web-based classroom is still a classroom, and comments that would be inappropriate in a regular classroom are likely to be inappropriate in a Web-based course as well. Treat your professor and your fellow students with respect.

**Follow the Parameters/ Stick to the Point:** Follow the posting requirements and parameters set up by your professor. Contributions to a discussion should have a clear subject header, and you need to stick to the subject. Don't waste others' time by going off on irrelevant tangents.

**Read First, Write Later:** Don't add your comments to a discussion before reading the comments of other students unless the assignment specifically asks you to. Doing so is tantamount to ignoring your fellow students and is rude. Comments related to the content of previous messages should be posted under them to keep related topics organized, and you should specify the person and the particular point you are following up on.

### **Academic Integrity and Scholastic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty is NEVER tolerated by UTEP or the Department of Political Science. All cases are reported to the Dean of Students for possible disciplinary action. All work submitted must be original and your own; students may not submit graded work from another course. Forms of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, cheating, collusion, and plagiarism. **Cheating** may involve communicating with another student or possessing unauthorized materials during a test. Falsifying research data, reports, or academic work offered for credit is also a form of cheating. **Collusion** involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. One example of collusion is preparing a discussion post for another person or having someone prepare a discussion post for you. **Plagiarism** involves the presentation of another person's work as your own, whether you mean to or not. For example, if you copy parts of or whole papers off the Internet without proper citation of the sources, it is a form of plagiarism. Lack of proper citation of sources is considered plagiarism even if borrowed ideas are paraphrased.

### **Copyright and Fair Use Requirements**

Students also need be well aware of the copyright and fair use requirements. The University requires all members of its community to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The University will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for student violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies.

### **Copyright Statement for Course Materials**

All materials used in this course are protected by copyright law. The course materials are only for the use of students currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. Students who wish to use any portion of the course materials for purposes other than the work in this course shall make a formal written request to obtain an explicit written authorization for requested use. Unauthorized use or dissemination of the course materials is strictly prohibited.

### **Accommodations**

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu), or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at [www.sa.utep.edu/cass](http://www.sa.utep.edu/cass). CASS' Staff are the only individuals who can validate and if need be, authorize accommodations for students with disabilities.

### **Software and Technology Requirement**

As you prepare to take this online course, it is essential that you check computer requirements and keep all software up to date in order to access course content. Please check if you meet the following software and technology requirements, and update and/or obtain them as needed.

### ***High speed internet access***

### ***Supported Browsers***

- For a PC: Firefox, Internet Explorer (Do NOT use IE7), and Chrome
- For a Mac: Safari, Firefox, and Chrome

Blackboard will work most efficiently when you

- Allow pop-ups
- Regularly clear your browser cache

### ***Plug-ins***

Cookies, pop-ups and Java are all required in order for your learning management system to function correctly.

### ***Check Your Java***

1. Go to <http://java.com>
2. Click on "Do I Have Java?"
3. Click on "Verify Java Version."
4. Update Java if needed.

You may also need ***additional browser plug-ins*** to view some content for the course. Common plug-ins include:

- Adobe Reader
- Flash Player
- Windows Media Player
- VLC Player
- QuickTime

### ***Microsoft Office***

UTEP students, faculty, and staff can access most software offered in UTEP student computer labs from their personal computing devices. Students can use a laptop, tablet, or smartphone with an internet connection, and use software on demand. If your computer is not equipped with Microsoft Office, go to [my.apps.utep.edu](http://my.apps.utep.edu) and follow directions. For more information, visit the University's [my.apps webpage](#).

### ***UTEP Virtual Private Network:***

UTEP's electronic resources, such as electronic books and articles from the library, are available to registered students when working from outside the campus network. In order to access these resources, you will need to set up a Virtual Private Network (VPN) that recognizes that you are a UTEP student. Go to the University's [VPN webpage](#) for instructions.

### ***Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor***

You need to install the LockDown Browser and Monitor (a webcam) to take online quizzes and the final exam. Please see "Using LockDown Browser and Monitor" provided separately on the course's Blackboard page on how to install and use the software.

***UTEP Technology Support Help Desk***

The University's Technology Support Help Desk is located on the third floor of the UTEP library. The Help Desk is your point of contact for any technology related questions. The Help Desk also offers services virtually. To find more about the Help Desk, visit its [website](#).

## Course Schedule

\* The following is a tentative schedule. The course schedule may change at the professor's discretion. You will be notified of any changes made to this schedule. **Please see the separate Course Schedule document for dates.**

Module	Activities	Assessments	Estimated Average Completion time
<b>Week 1</b>  <b>Introduction to comparative politics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read syllabus</li> <li>• Read Text                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ch. 1 “Introduction”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Read lectures and mini-lecture</li> <li>• Introductory discussion board</li> <li>• Discussion board</li> </ul>	Syllabus quiz  Reading quiz  Discussion posts (2)  Module quiz	7 hours
<b>Week 2</b>  <b>Modern states and varieties of political regimes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Text                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ch. 2 “The Modern State”</li> <li>○ Ch. 3 “States, Citizens, and Regimes”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Read lectures</li> <li>• Watch Videos</li> <li>• Discussion board</li> </ul>	Reading quiz  Discussion posts (1)  Module quiz	15 hours
<b>Week 3</b>  <b>Identity, nationalism, and contentious politics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Text                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ch. 4 “States and Identity”</li> <li>○ Ch. 7 “Contentious Politics: Social Movements, Political Violence, and Revolution”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Read lectures and mini-lecture</li> <li>• Watch Videos</li> <li>• Discussion board</li> </ul>	Reading quiz  Discussion posts (1)  Module quiz	15 hours
<b>Week 4</b>  <b>Democratic political institutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Text                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ch. 5 “Governing Institutions in Democracies”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Read lectures</li> <li>• Watch Video</li> <li>• Discussion board</li> </ul>	Reading quiz  Discussion posts (2)  Module quiz	15 hours
<b>Week 5</b>  <b>Institutions of political representation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Text                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ch. 6 “Institutions of Participation and Representation in Democracies”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Reading quiz  Discussion posts (1)	14 hours

<b>electoral systems and political parties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read lectures</li> <li>• Watch Videos</li> <li>• Discussion board</li> </ul>	Module quiz	
<b>Week 6</b> <b>Authoritarianism and regime change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Text <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ch. 8 “Authoritarian Institutions”</li> <li>○ Ch. 9 “Regime Change”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Read lectures and mini-lecture</li> <li>• Watch Videos</li> <li>• Discussion board</li> </ul>	Reading quiz  Discussion posts (1)  Module quiz	15 hours
<b>Week 7</b> <b>States, development and policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Text <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ch. 11 “Political Economy of Development”</li> <li>○ Ch. 12 “Public Policies when Markets Fail: Welfare, Health, and the Environment”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Read lectures</li> <li>• Watch Videos</li> <li>• Discussion board</li> </ul>	Reading quiz  Discussion posts (2)  Module quiz  Final exam	18 hours