



Political Science 2545G (570) (571)
COMPARATIVE POLITICS
Fall/ Winter 2025-2026

Instructor: Z. Hassan
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Course Information

Calendar Description:

This course sets out the major themes, concepts, and approaches used in comparative politics. It undertakes systematic comparisons of political developments and institutions while providing students with an introductory look at the character of national political life in a variety of areas of the world.

Antirequisite(s): Political Science 2245E.

Prerequisite(s): 1.0 Political Science course(s) at the 1000-level.

Extra Information: 2 hours + 1 tutorial hour.

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: Category A

Subject Code: POLISCI

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Political Science 2545G (Section 570)
Introduction to Comparative Politics
Winter 2026

Instructor: Dr. Zheger Hassan

Email: zhassan3@uwo.ca

Office: Online

Office Hours: TBD

Course Description: This course introduces students to the major themes, concepts, issues, and methodologies in comparative politics. The main objective of the course is to help students develop the analytical and critical skills to understand and study comparative politics systematically and to prepare students who wish to undertake more advanced courses in political science as well as in comparative politics. Comparative politics is a diverse field that includes the study of the state, democracy, political institutions, regime-types, social movements and revolutions, power, conflict, and nationalism across and within countries. Comparativists ask general questions, such as: What are the causes of democracy and dictatorship? What explains the resilience of authoritarian regimes? The field also asks more specific questions, such as: What accounts for democratic transitions in some countries but not others? What explains the persistence of authoritarian regimes in the Middle East?

Prerequisite: 1.0 Political Science course(s) at the 1000-level.

Antirequisite: [Political Science 2245E](#).

Course Objectives:

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

- Develop an understanding of the core theories and methods in comparative politics;
- Develop an understanding of the key political institutions and regime-types such as the state, democracy, and authoritarianism;
- Understand and explain how political parties, electoral systems, identity, and interest groups shape and influence institutions and electoral outcomes;
- Compare and contrast countries, institutions, political actors by using the theories and methods covered in the course;
- Develop the ability to critically assess these ideas and information and to clearly communicate your knowledge in written and oral form.

Note on course delivery:

The course material will be delivered to students by synchronous (and in-person) instruction.

The educational materials developed for this course, including, but not limited to, lecture notes and slides, handout materials, examinations and assignments, and any materials posted to OWL, are the intellectual property of the course instructor. These materials have been developed for student use only and they are not intended for wider dissemination and/or communication outside of a given course. Posting or providing unauthorized audio, video, or textual material of lecture content to third-party websites violates an instructor's intellectual property rights, and the Canadian Copyright Act. Recording lectures in any way is prohibited in this course unless specific permission has been granted by the instructor. Participation in this course constitutes an agreement by all parties to abide by the relevant University Policies, and to respect the intellectual property of others during and after their association with King's University College.

Required Readings: J. Tyler Dickovick, Jonathan Eastwood, and David B. MacDonald, *Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases*. Fourth Edition. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2023).

Cost: EBook \$77.00 (CAD) -- https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=KC&term=W2025B&courses%5B0%5D=570_KC/POL2545G

Supplementary readings will be made available on the course website through OWL.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

Assignment	Value	Date due
Tutorials	20	Ongoing
Research Paper	25	February 27, 2026
Midterm Test	25	March 13, 2026
Final Exam	30	Final Exam Period (April 2026)

Tutorials:

Attendance at weekly tutorial sessions is *strongly recommended* for success in the course. One-third of the tutorial grade will be determined by your attendance and the remainder by your active and engaged participation. Tutorials will provide students with the opportunity to ask questions, make comments, and discuss the lecture and readings. Tutorial activities will include debates, group discussions, group assignments, and other tasks. To receive full credit for participation students must not only regularly attend the discussion section, but also have completed the reading assignments for that week and actively participate in the discussion. Students are expected to participate in a constructive and respectful manner. Please refer to 'King's Code of Student Conduct' (available on our OWL site) for additional guidance on classroom expectations.

Midterm Test:

The first-term test will cover material from readings, lectures, and tutorial discussions. The

midterm test will be in-person during regular class time.

Research Paper:

Each student will be assigned to a country on which they will be expected to conduct research and produce a research essay on the state of democracy in the country by comparing it to a second country of their choosing. By comparing the similarities and differences between the two countries, students will be able to identify and analyze the primary challenge(s) to democracy in the country that is assigned to them. Papers must be between 2,000-2,500 words in length, double-spaced, not counting appendices, the compulsory title page, and bibliography. The paper *must be formatted in Times New Roman or Calibri 12pt font with 2.54 cm margins* all around. Papers that do not meet these basic criteria will be penalized. Students must conduct research with a **MINIMUM of 10 references**. Of these, reference at least four relevant articles from academic journals and at least one book. Note that while such sources as current affairs magazines (Economist, Foreign Policy, etc.) or media sites (CBC, CNN, BBC, etc.) are informative they are different from academic peer-reviewed journals. Students must avoid using Wikipedia – it may be useful to get a quick overview of a topic, but it is not always reliable and therefore must be avoided. Further instructions and detailed guidelines will be posted to OWL. Detailed instructions will be made available on the first day of the course.

Final Exam (April 2026):

The final exam will take place during the Final Exam Period in April 2026. The final exam will be in-person on a date and location to be determined by the University.

Academic Offenses and Plagiarism:

Scholastic offenses are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the University policy on plagiarism.

All written assignments must be submitted in electronic format to the plagiarism checking website Turnitin.com (available through the course website and under license to the University). Please be advised that: All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between the University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) software on any course assignments is not permitted unless explicitly authorised in advance by the instructor. When writing the research paper, the use large language models (LLMs) should be supplemented with an appendix with the entire exchange(s) with the LLM. Students are expected to write a narrative at the beginning of the appendix explaining precisely how they used the LLM (e.g., to generate ideas, turns of phrase, elements of text, long stretches of text, lines of argument, pieces of evidence, etc.). This narrative should also

explain why they used the LLM (e.g., to save time, to overcome writer's block, to clarify prose, etc.).

Late Policy:

Read carefully: Written assignments must be submitted by the deadline by 11:59PM. If you fail to meet this deadline, your assignment *will be considered late*. Late assignments will receive a penalty of 15%. Late assignments are then due the following week by 11:59PM. After that, the assignment will not be accepted and will receive a grade of zero.

Extensions will be granted ONLY under the following circumstances:

- (1) Humanitarian grounds (e.g., in the case of death or serious illness in the family);
- (2) Medical grounds.

In each circumstance, you will be expected to provide documented evidence. A copy of which may also be submitted to the Academic Dean's Office.

POL2545 Lecture Schedule and Reading List

Week 1 (January 8): Introduction to the Course & Discussion and Organization of Countries

Week 2 (January 15): Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method

Dickovick et al., Chapter 1.

Recommended:

Arend Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and The Comparative Method," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 65, No. 3 (1971): 682-693.

Week 3 (January 22): The State

Dickovick et al., pp. 53-65.

Recommended:

Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation." pp. 22-28.

Week 4 (January 29): The State II

Dickovick et al., pp. 65-77.

Recommended:

Robert H. Jackson, and Carl G. Rosberg, "Why Africa's Weak States Persist: The Empirical and the Juridical in Statehood," *World Politics*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (1982): 1-24.

Week 5 (February 5): Democracy

Dickovick et al., pp. 134-148.

Recommended:

Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), pp. 1-16.

Week 6 (February 12): Democratization

Dickovick et al., pp. 148-163.

Recommended:

Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi, "Modernization: Theories and Facts," *World Politics*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (1997): 155-193.

Week 7 (February 16-20): Spring Reading Week – No Class

Week 8 (February 26): Authoritarianism

Dickovick et al., pp. 165-180.

Recommended:

Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, "Modern Nondemocratic Regimes," in Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan (eds.), *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp. 38-54.

Week 9 (March 5): Authoritarianism II and Midterm Test Review

Dickovick et al., pp. 180-193.

Recommended:

Larry Diamond, "The Democratic Rollback: The Resurgence of the Predatory State," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 2 (2008): 36-48.

Week 10 (March 12): Midterm Test

Week 11 (March 19): Institutions I: Parliamentary and Presidential Systems

Dickovick, Eastwood, and MacDonald, Chapter 10.

Recommended:

Arend Lijphart (ed.), *Parliamentary versus Presidential Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), chapters 1 and 14.

Week 12 (March 26): Institutions II: Political Parties and Electoral Systems

Dickovick, Eastwood, and MacDonald, Chapter 11.

Recommended:

Carles Boix, "Setting the Rules of the Game: The Choice of Electoral Systems in Advanced Democracies," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 93, No. 3 (1999): 609-24.

Week 13 (April 2): Course and Final Exam Review

KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
GENERAL COURSE POLICIES
2025-2026

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

Friday Make-Up Exams may only be written with the instructor's consent.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses_enrollment/exams_and_tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf.

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course.

Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

For further information, please see:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under Special Examinations).

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:
<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University

College: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-supportservices/personal-counselling/>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:
https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/

Academic Support Services at King's University College:
<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

GBSV Support:

King's is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at:
<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing Care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by email or by calling 519-661-3568.

Further supports can be found on this website: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safecampus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with you instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammarchecking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality Reports - TurnItIn.html>.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.