

The World of Politics

SOSC 1300

3 Credits

Name: Sunhee Park

Email: sunheepark@ust.hk

Office Hours: Wednesday 1:00-2:00

Course Description

This class is designed to introduce students to two main subfields of political science: International Relations (IR) and Comparative Politics. The International Relations section focuses on developing an analytical perspective on major issues in international security and the global political economy through the study of both theory and history. The Comparative Politics section explores various institutions and systems within states, aiming to help students understand how differences in institutional settings influence political outcomes. Throughout the course, students will also be exposed to a range of methodological approaches used in the study of international relations and comparative politics.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

After completing this course, student should be able to:

1. Explain the main concepts and theories in International Relations and Comparative Politics.
2. Apply those concepts and theories to analyze international and domestic political events.
3. Think analytically and critically about international and domestic political events.

Assessment and Grading

This course will be assessed using criterion-referencing and grades will not be assigned using a curve. Detailed rubrics for each assignment are provided below, outlining the criteria used for evaluation.

Assessments:

1. Examinations (50%): There will be two exams, each covering all course materials on their respective topics (including the textbook, lecture notes, documentaries, news articles, and news clips). The exams will consist of a mixture of multiple-choice and short-answer questions.
 - a. First Examination (25%): Covers the International Relations portion.
 - b. Second Examination (25%): Covers the Comparative Politics portion.

2. Discussion (10%): In some (1 or 2) classes, you will discuss a topic assigned prior to the class. You are expected to study the topic beforehand.
 ** Note: The lowest discussion score will be dropped if there is more than one discussion.
3. Presentation and Feedback (30%): Details will be provided after the add/drop period. Presentations will be held during Section 3.
 - a. Presentation (25%): Your presentation on your chosen topic.
 - b. Feedback to peer's presentation (5%): Providing constructive feedback to your peers.
4. Class attendance (10%): Attendance will be monitored throughout the course.
5. Active Class Participation (+5%): An additional 5 percentage points will be given to students who actively contribute to class discussions.

| Assessment Task | Contribution to Overall Course grade (%) | Due date |
|-------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| First Examination | 25% | W7* |
| Discussion | 10% | TBD |
| Presentation | 25% | TBD (after add & drop period) |
| Feedback to Peer Presentation | 5% | TBD (after add & drop period) |
| Second Examination | 25% | W13* |
| Attendance | 10% | W1-W13 |

* Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be released within two weeks of the due date.

Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks

| Assessed Task | Mapped ILOs | Explanation |
|---|------------------|---|
| First Examination Second Examination | ILO1, ILO2 | Examinations are designed to assess students' foundational understanding of the theories and key concepts in International Relations (IR) and Comparative Politics (ILO1) as well as their ability to apply them (ILO2). |
| Discussion Presentation Feedback to Peer Presentation | ILO1, ILO2, ILO3 | Discussion on IR and Comparative Politics issues is designed to encourage analytical thinking and communication by using and applying concepts and theories from IR and Comparative Politics (ILO1, ILO2, ILO3). The research presentation is designed to develop analytical thinking and presentation skills in explaining phenomena related to IR or Comparative Politics (ILO1, ILO2, ILO3). Providing feedback on classmates' presentations is designed to foster critical evaluation of their research (ILO3). |

Grading Rubrics for Presentation

Research Question (RQ): 15 Points

Goal: The research question is well-formulated, clear, specific, and directly relevant to the study. The accompanying motivation provides a compelling rationale for why the research question is important and worth investigating.

- Proper RQ and compelling motivation: 15 points
- Proper RQ but no compelling motivation: 13 points
- No proper RQ but compelling motivation: 11 points
- Not proper RQ and no compelling motivation: 10 points
- No RQ and no motivation (RQ): 0 points

Literature Review: 25 Points

Goal: Identify and evaluate existing studies that present factors contributing to answering your research question (RQ).

- Various factors to explain RQ with proper citations: 25 points (23 points without proper citations)
- Have 1 or 2 factors: 20 points (20 points without proper citations)
- Not relevant: 18 points
- Not at all: 0 points

Hypothesis: 30 Points

Goal: Develop and present a hypothesis or factor that addresses your research question (RQ). The hypothesis should be original, properly constructed, and logically sound (and supporting data if possible), serving as a strong foundation for further study.

- Proper (and original) hypothesis and sound logic: 30 points
- Proper (and original) hypothesis but no sound logic: 27 points
- No hypothesis or not proper or not original hypothesis but sound logic: 25 points
- No hypothesis or not proper or not original hypothesis and no sound logic: 22 points
- No hypothesis: 0 points

Test: 30 Points

Comparative case study

Goal: Present evidence to determine whether existing factors and your proposed factor are supported. This can be achieved using either a Comparative Case Study or Statistical Analysis, each evaluated based on specific criteria.

- Two solid cases: 30 points
- Two non-solid cases: 26 points

- One solid case: 23 points
- One non-solid case: 20 points
- No case: 0 points

Or

Statistical Analysis

- Sound design and interpretation: 30 points
- No sound design but proper interpretation: 25 points
- Sound design but poor interpretation: 25 points
- No sound design and poor interpretation: 20 points
- No design and interpretation: 0 points

Final Grade Descriptors:

| Grades | Short Description | Elaboration on subject grading description |
|--------|--------------------------|---|
| A | Excellent Performance | Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter and significant analytical skills. Goes beyond core requirements to achieve learning goals. |
| B | Good Performance | Demonstrates a strong knowledge and understanding of the main subject matter, along with the ability to analyze and evaluate issues. Shows high motivation to learn. |
| C | Satisfactory Performance | Possesses adequate knowledge of the core subject matter, along with some capacity for analysis and critical thinking. Demonstrates an effort to achieve broadly defined learning goals. |
| D | Marginal Pass | Possesses limited knowledge of the core subject matter and the ability to make basic judgments. |
| F | Fail | Demonstrates insufficient understanding of the subject matter, with limited ability to think critically or analytically, and shows minimal effort toward achieving learning goals. |

Course AI Policy

The use of Generative AI in the project is permitted to assist students with brainstorming the subject area, as well as drafting and proofreading their research presentation.

Communication and Feedback

Assessment marks for individual tasks will be communicated via Canvas within two weeks of submission.

Feedback on assignments will include comments on strengths and areas for improvement.

Students with further questions about the feedback or marks should consult the instructor or TA within five working days after receiving the feedback.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity policy. Students are expected to uphold HKUST's Academic Honor Code and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The University has zero tolerance of academic misconduct. Please refer to [Academic Integrity | HKUST – Academic Registry](#) for the University's definition of plagiarism and ways to avoid cheating and plagiarism.

Required Texts and Materials

- Baylis, John, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens. Eds (BSO). 2021. *The Globalization of World Politics*. Third International Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Garner, Robert, Peter Ferdinand, and Stephanie Lawson (GFL). 2020. *Introduction to Politics*. Fourth Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

All course materials required for the class will be uploaded to Canvas.

Notice

- 1) Lecture notes: Lecture notes will be posted to Canvas on the day before class.
** Lecture notes will have minimal information. Students are expected to read the contents in the lecture notes carefully *before the class* and write your own notes *during the class*.
- 2) Cheating and plagiarism: If cheating or plagiarism is detected for any assessments, the student will be given a score of zero on that assessment and will be barred from inputting the course evaluation. Rule of thumb: To avoid plagiarism, nothing should be copied and pasted unless it is a properly cited quotation.
- 3) Late assignment submission: If an assignment is submitted after the deadline, 3 percentage points will be deducted.
- 4) Additional exams: In principle, there are no additional exams.
- 5) Syllabus: This syllabus lays out the future lesson schedule and lesson policy. The schedule is subject to change at the instructor's discretion. If there are any changes, students will be notified in class.

Course Schedule

Week 1. Introduction to Course

- Reading: BSO Introduction & GFL Ch. 1 (pp. 2-5)

Week 2. Main concept of IR and Comparative Politics: (Sovereign) state

- Reading: BSO Ch.2, GFL Ch. 8 (pp. 165-172) & Ch. 16 (pp. 370-373)

Section 1: International Relations Theories

Weeks 2-4(5). Theories of International Relations: (Neo)Realism, (Neo)Liberalism, Marxism

- Reading: BSO Chs. 6-8, Additional Reading
- Documentary

Special Topic 1: State Death***

IR theory, Game theory, statistical analysis, case study

Section 2: Main Topics in International Relations

Weeks 5-7

Topic 1: WWs, Cold War, International Security, Ukraine-Russian War

- Reading: BSO Chs. 2-4, 12, 14
- Documentary

Topic 2: International Political Economy

- Reading: BSO Chs. 13, 22

Topic 3: International Organizations

- Reading: BSO Chs. 16-17

Discussion1

Week 7 (8)

IR Part Exam

Section3: Main Topics in Comparative Politics

Weeks 8-13

Topic 1: Democracy

- Reading: GFL Chs. 4, 15

Topic 2: Political Regimes

- Reading: GFL Ch. 15

Special Topic 2: Arab Spring^{***}

Data collection, statistical analysis

Discussion2

Topic 3: Elections

- Reading: GFL Ch. 11

Topic 4: Government System

- Reading: GFL Ch. 13

Week 13

Comparative Politics Part Exam