








Political Science (POLI) 342

Introduction to Comparative Politics (Revision 4)

Status:	Replaced with new revision, see the course listing  for the current revision 
Delivery mode:	Individualized study online  with eText 
Credits:	3
Areas of study:	Arts or Social Science
Prerequisites:	None
Precluded:	POLI 342 cannot be taken for credit if credit has already been obtained for POLI 340 or POLI 341.
Challenge:	POLI 342 has a challenge for credit option.
Faculty:	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences 

Overview

Political Science 342 studies the political systems of a number of different countries, providing the opportunity to examine the features of individual political systems and to investigate the similarities and differences among political systems in two or more countries. Comparative politics attempts to analyze and explain its findings through comparative study. As such, the goal of comparative study is to develop “law-like” generalizations and thereby facilitate both explanation and prediction, thus warranting the status of a “science.”

Political Science 342 includes in-depth studies of eight individual cases; seven countries plus the European Union (EU), which affords us the opportunity to explain different and similar observations. For instance, studying Britain and France, two of the case studies in this course, can lead to fruitful comparisons of industrial democracies, or comparisons between one or both of these two countries and other political systems. Or, as a Communist country, China can be meaningfully compared with Russia, a former-Communist country or you may use these two countries to compare with aspects of other countries. India, Mexico, and Nigeria, are all Third World countries that are examined in this course and are also useful for comparison among themselves or with other countries. The European Union represents regional integration in the larger context of globalization. Together, these case studies generate a wealth of information that allows us to construct the key features for each of the individual cases, examine similarities and differences among various political systems, and appreciate the diversity of the political world. The case studies also permit interesting conclusions and allow for the generation of useful questions. Most importantly, though, the case studies examined allow you to begin to engage in comparative political analysis. Remember that the task of comparative analysis is not simply to describe what is going on in one, two, or more countries, but it is to dig for credible reasons for why these things are going on and offer clear evidence for the ideas you unearth.

Outline

- Unit 1: Introduction
- Unit 2: The Industrialized Democracies
- Unit 3: The United Kingdom
- Unit 4: France
- Unit 5: The European Union
- Unit 6: Current and Former Communist Regimes
- Unit 7: Russia



- Unit 8: China
- Unit 9: The Global South (Third World States)
- Unit 10: India
- Unit 11: Nigeria
- Unit 12: Mexico
- Unit 13: Conclusion: Domestic Responses to Global Challenges

Objectives

When you have completed *Political Science 342: Introduction to Comparative Politics*, you should be able to achieve the following course objectives.

1. Identify the components of system theory and explain its use in political science.
2. Identify the key theoretical approaches and methods used in comparative politics. Apply these comparative approaches to one, two, or more countries (i.e., undertake comparative analysis).
3. Distinguish between and analyze the politics of three types of political systems: industrialized democracies, former and current Communist regimes, and the Third World.
4. Compare states according to their historical evolution, political culture and political participation, state institutions, form of government, and public policy.
5. Describe the important details of the political systems addressed in the course.
6. Analyze the impact of globalization on the states covered in the course.
7. Assess the level of democratization in the regimes studied in the course.

Evaluation

To **receive credit**  for POLI 342, you must achieve a grade of at least **D (50 percent)**  on the final exam and an overall course grade of at least 50%. The weighting of the composite grade is as follows:

Activity	Weight
Assignment 1: Essay Proposal	15%
Assignment 2: Midterm Assignment	20%
Assignment 3: Research Essay	30%
Final Exam	35%
Total	100%

The **final examination** for this course must be requested in advance and written under the supervision of an AU-approved exam invigilator. Invigilators include either ProctorU or an approved in-person invigilation centre that can accommodate online exams. Students are responsible for payment of any invigilation fees. Information on exam request deadlines, invigilators, and other exam-related questions, can be found at the [Exams and grades](#) section of the Calendar.

To learn more about assignments and examinations, please refer to Athabasca University's [online Calendar](#).

Materials

Hauss, Charles. 2015. *Comparative Politics: Domestic Responses to Global Challenges*. 9th ed. Toronto: Cengage.  (eText)

eText

Registration in this course includes an electronic textbook. For more information on [electronic textbooks](#), please refer to our [eText Initiative site](#).

Other Resources

The course materials include a print reading file. You will access all other course materials online.

Challenge for credit

Overview

The challenge for credit process allows you to demonstrate that you have acquired a command of the general subject matter, knowledge, intellectual and/or other skills that would normally be found in a university-level course.

Full information about **challenge for credit** [↗](#) can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Evaluation

To **receive credit** [↗](#) for the POLI 342 challenge registration, you must achieve a grade of at least **D (50 percent)** [↗](#) on the examination.



Challenge for credit course registration form

Important links

- › [Academic advising](#) [↗](#)
- › [Program planning](#) [↗](#)
- › [Request assistance](#) [↗](#)
- › [Support services](#) [↗](#)

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

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