



Stony Brook University

Dept. of Political Science
Syllabus

Important Note: Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course schedule, but the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus changes necessary. It is your responsibility to check Blackboard for corrections or updates to the syllabus. Any changes will be clearly noted in course announcements and your Stony Brook email.

Part 1: Course Information

POL 103: Introduction to Comparative Politics

DEC: F

SBC: SBS

3 credits

Instructor: Reuben Kline, Associate Professor of Political Science

reuben.kline@stonybrook.edu

Office hours: I will hold office hours 10am-12pm on Mondays and 10-11am on Wednesdays.

My office is SBS S739. I understand that these times might not work for all students, so you can also schedule an appointment with me. Zoom appointments are also possible.

[I will not be holding office hours the first Monday (January 23rd) of the semester.]

Teaching Assistants:

Graduate TA: Tom Campbell thomas.campbell@stonybrook.edu

Office hours: 11am - 1pm on Mondays. SBS S766.

COURSE LOCATION: Engineering 145

Course Description: Analysis of political institutions and processes in the contemporary world, emphasizing the interaction of political structures and processes in a variety of political settings.

Required Course Textbook and Materials:

Clark, Golder and Golder *Foundations of Comparative Politics*, 1st Edition (CQ Press).

ISBN 13: 978-1506360737; ISBN-10: 1506360734.



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Course Delivery Mode and Structure:

This is an in-person course.

We will meet Mondays and Wednesdays at 8:30-9:50 AM in ENGINEERING 145.

How We Will Communicate:

Email me or the TA directly. If you use Blackboard's **email tool** from the course site, it will automatically include your full name, course name and section when you send me an email. If you email me directly from your Stony Brook email address, please include the same information. **Please allow between 24-48 hours for an email reply.** Your Stony Brook University email must be used for all University-related communications. You must have an active Stony Brook University email account and access to the Internet. All instructor correspondence will be sent to your SBU email account. **Plan on checking your SBU email account regularly for course-related messages.** To log in to Stony Brook Google Mail, go to <http://www.stonybrook.edu/mycloud> and sign in with your NetID and password.

Regular announcements will be sent from Blackboard. These will be posted in the course site and may or may not be sent by email.

Technical Requirements:

This course uses Blackboard for the facilitation of communications between faculty and students, submission of assignments, and posting of grades and feedback. The Blackboard course site can be accessed at <https://blackboard.stonybrook.edu>

If you are unsure of your NetID, visit <https://it.stonybrook.edu/help/kb/finding-your-netid-and-password> for more information. You are responsible for having a reliable computer and Internet connection throughout the term. **Caution!** You will be at a disadvantage if you attempt to complete all coursework on a smart phone or tablet. It may not be possible to submit the files required for your homework assignments.

Technical Assistance:

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem with Blackboard you can:

- Phone: 631-632-9800 (client support, Wi-Fi, software and hardware)
- Submit a help request ticket: <https://it.stonybrook.edu/services/itsm>
- If you are on campus, visit the Walk-Up Tech Support Station in the Educational Communications Center (ECC) building.

Part 2: Course Learning Objectives and Assessments

After learning basic game theory from the course textbook and other sources, you will be able to define basic game theory solution concepts like the Nash equilibrium and be able to give examples of strategic interaction within politics. You will be able to define the features of

different regimes types, including various types of authoritarian regimes, and parliamentary, presidential, and semi-presidential regimes. You will also be able to list some of the empirical implications of these types of regimes. Having studied electoral systems, you will be able to successfully identify features of majoritarian and proportional representation systems, list the most common types of each, and describe the tradeoff between the advantages and disadvantages of each.

How to Succeed in this Course:

- Complete all assigned readings in the course
- Do each of the assignments and turn them in on time.
- Participate in course discussions
- These are trying times for everyone. **If, for whatever reason, you are experiencing any problems keeping up with the assignments, please let me know as soon as possible.** Knowing there is a problem is the only way I can help.

Part 3: Course Schedule

Week or Learning Module	Topic and Student Learning Outcomes	Readings	Activities, assignments, assessments, etc.	Due Dates and Points
1: Comparative Politics & Science	We will discuss the scope of "comparative" politics.	CGG chs. 1 and 2		
2: What is "politics"?	You will compare, contrast, and discuss several definitions of "politics". We will become familiar with the Exit, Voice, and Loyalty (EVL) game. What are the essential features of politics?	CGG ch. 3	Essay pt. 1: Choose a country that you will analyze throughout the semester. It cannot be the US. If you are an international student, your country of origin. Otherwise, you are free to choose any country you want to learn more about (needs to have a Freedom House and Polity score). We'll provide a list.	Due: 11:59pm, Wednesday, February 1 st . (submit on Blackboard.)
3 What is the "state"?	You will compare, contrast, and discuss several definitions of	CGG ch. 4		

	"state". What are the essential features of the "state"?			
4 What is democracy?	You will familiarize yourself with the most common measures used by scholars to categorize democratic regimes.	Freedom House & Polity IV Principles of Comparative Politics 2 nd Edition, ch. 5. [Reading is from another textbook by the same authors. It will be posted on Blackboard]	Homework 1: Game theory	Due: 11:59pm, Wednesday, February 15 th . Assignment will be available February 8 th .
5 The Economic Determinants of Democracy and Dictatorship	You will evaluate the arguments for the economic drivers of regime type.	CGG ch. 5	Essay pt. 2: Choose which measure of regime type is more appropriate for your country. Why did you choose that measure? Is your country a democracy or dictatorship?	Due: 11:59pm, Wednesday, February 22 nd . (submit on Blackboard)
6 The Cultural Determinants of Democracy and Dictatorship	You will evaluate the arguments for the cultural drivers of regime type.	CGG ch. 6		
7 Democratic Transitions	You will analyze the process of democratic transitions using collective action theory.	CGG ch. 7	Essay pt. 3: Describe prominent features of your country's economy and culture. Major religions? Major industries? History of economic development? Othe	Due: 11:59pm, Wednesday, March 8 th (submit on Blackboard)

			important cultural/economic features.	
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8 Varieties of Dictatorship	You will characterize different types of authoritarian regimes and their bases of support.	CGG ch. 8	Homework 2	Due: 11:59pm, Wednesday, March 22 nd Assignment will be available March 8 th
9 Problems with Group Decisionmaking	You will be able to identify certain inherent problems with collective decisionmaking.	CGG ch. 9		
Midterm Exam	Multiple choice, asynchronous, online.		Exam will be on Blackboard.	Exam window: 12pm March 29 th thru 11:59pm March 31 st .
10 Parliamentary and Presidential Regimes	You will characterize different types of democratic regimes and their institutional arrangements.	CGG ch. 10		.
11 Elections and Electoral Systems	You will learn about the different ways democracies turn votes into representation.	CGG ch. 11	Essay pt. 4: Classify your country according to what we learned in chapters 8 & 10. What type of dictatorship or democracy is your country? Why?	Due: 11:59pm, Wednesday, April 12 th (submit on Blackboard)
12 Social Cleavages and Party Systems	You will learn about the ways in which social divisions can demand representation, and how electoral systems can constrain this demand.	CGG ch. 12		.
13 Institutional Veto Players	You will assess the empirical	CGG ch. 13	Homework 3	Due: 11:59pm, Wednesday, April

	implications for democratic performance.			26 th (submit on Blackboard)
14 Consequences of Democratic Institutions	You will assess the empirical implications for democratic performance.	CGG ch. 14	Essay pt. 5: Put pts. 1-4 together into a cohesive essay describing and analyzing your country's regime type, the causes and consequences of the regime type.	Due: 11:59pm, Wednesday, May 3 rd (submit on Blackboard)
Final Exam	Multiple choice asynchronous, online.		Exam will be on Blackboard.	Exam Window: 12pm May 10 th thru 11:59 pm May 12 th

Part 4: Grading, Attendance, and Late Work Policies

Viewing Grades on Blackboard: Points and feedback for graded activities will be posted to the My Grades tab in the Tools area of Blackboard. Homeworks and exams will be graded automatically. *Essays will be graded within one week of the due date.*

In this course, you will be assessed on the following:

Activity/Assignment	Points	Dates
Homeworks	30 (10, 10, and 10)	Weeks 4, 8, and 13
Short Essay	30 (5, 5, 5, 5, and 10)	Weeks 2, 5, 7, 11, and 14
Exams	40 (midterm 20; final 20)	Midterm: asynchronous, online exam period March 29 th thru March 31 st * Final: asynchronous, online exam period May 10 th thru May 12 th
Total	100	

*Exams: The midterm exam period will open at 12pm Wednesday, March 29th, and will close at 11:59 pm on Friday, March 31st. The final exam period will open at 12pm on Wednesday, May 10th, and will close at 11:59 pm on Friday, May 12th. These exams will be available for you to take any time during these windows. You can take the exam at any time during its window, but once you start it, you will have to finish it at that time. You cannot open it and save it and go back to it later. In other words, you can start the exam any time during the exam period, but once you have started you can't pause and

come back to it, you must finish it. If there are technical problems, let me know right away so we can take care of them as soon as possible. If you have a DSS accommodation, you will be given whatever accommodation you are entitled to just as you would with an in-class exam. Details about the structure and content of the exams will be provided later in the semester.

Letter Grades:

Final grades assigned for this course will be based on the percentage of total points earned:

- [Undergraduate Grading System](#)

Grade Schedule:

≥ 93%: A
< 93 and ≥ 90: A-
< 90 and ≥ 87: B+
< 87 and ≥ 83: B
< 83 and ≥ 80: B-
< 80 and ≥ 77: C+
< 77 and ≥ 73: C
< 73 and ≥ 70: C-
< 70 and ≥ 67: D+
< 67 and ≥ 60: D
< 60: F

Attendance Policy: Attendance is not required, but it is highly recommended. You do not directly get credit for attending lectures, but it will make it much easier to do well in the course!

Late Work Policy: Assignments submitted up to one week after their respective due date will be assessed a 20% penalty. Assignments will not be accepted more than one week after their respective due dates.

Part 5: University and Course Policies**University Policies:****Student Accessibility Support Center Statement:**

If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact the Student Accessibility Support Center, 128 ECC Building, (631) 632-6748, or at sasc@stonybrook.edu. They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and the Student Accessibility Support Center. For procedures and information go to the following website: <https://ehs.stonybrook.edu/programs/fire-safety/emergency-evacuation/evacuation-guide-people-physical-disabilities> and search Fire Safety and Evacuation and Disabilities.

Academic Integrity Statement:

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Instructors are required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Technology & Management, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty please refer to the academic judiciary website at http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/academic_integrity/index.html

Important Note:

Any form of academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, will be reported to the Academic Judiciary.

Critical Incident Management:

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn.

Course Policies:**Understand When You May Drop This Course:**

It is the student's responsibility to understand when they need to consider withdrawing from a course. Refer to the Stony Brook Academic Schedule for dates and deadlines for registration: http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/registrar/calendars/academic_calendars.

- [Undergraduate Course Load and Course Withdrawal Policy](#)

Incomplete Policy:

Under emergency/special circumstances, students may petition for an incomplete grade. Circumstances must be documented and significant enough to merit an incomplete. If you need to request an incomplete for this course, contact me for approval as far in advance as possible.

Course Materials and Copyright Statement:

Course material accessed from Blackboard, SB Connect, SB Capture or a Stony Brook Course website is for the exclusive use of students who are currently enrolled in the course. Content from these systems cannot be reused or distributed without written permission of the instructor and/or the copyright holder. Duplication of materials protected by copyright, without permission of the copyright holder is a violation of the Federal copyright law, as well as a violation of Stony Brook's Academic Integrity.

Online Communication Guidelines and Learning Resources:

Maintain professional conduct both in the classroom and online. The classroom is a professional environment where academic debate and learning take place. I will make every

effort to make this environment safe for you to share your opinions, ideas, and beliefs. In return, you are expected to respect the opinions, ideas, and beliefs of other students—both in the face-to-face classroom and online communication. Students have the right and privilege to learn in the class, free from harassment and disruption. The course follows the standards set in the Student Code of Conduct, and students are subject to disciplinary action for violation of that code. If your behavior does not follow the course etiquette standards stated below, the grade you receive for a posting may suffer. I reserve the right to remove any discussion messages that display inappropriate language or content.

Discussion Etiquette:

- Politics inherently involves disagreement. We can disagree without being disagreeable. Offensive language or rudeness will not be tolerated. Discuss ideas, not the person.
- Be specific and clear, especially when asking questions.

My Role as the Instructor:

As the instructor, I will serve as a “guide” in our classroom. My role is to:

- To assist each of you when it comes to making connections between discussion, lectures, and textbook material.
- To fill in important things that may have been missed.
- To re-direct discussion when it gets too heated or veers off topic.

Part 6: Student Resources

Academic and Major Advising (*undergraduate only*): Have questions about choosing the right course? Contact an advisor today. Phone and emails vary—please see website for additional contact information; website: <https://www.stonybrook.edu/for-students/academic-advising/>

Academic Success and Tutoring Center (*undergraduate only*):
<https://www.stonybrook.edu/tutoring/>

Amazon @ Stony Brook: Order your books before classes begin. Phone: 631-632-9828; email: Bookstore_Liaison@stonybrook.edu; website: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/bookstore/>

Bursar: For help with billing and payment. Phone: 631-632-9316; email: bursar@stonybrook.edu; website: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/bursar/>

Career Center: The Career Center’s mission is to support the academic mission of Stony Brook University by educating students about the career decision-making process, helping them plan and attain their career goals, and assisting with their smooth transition to the workplace or further education. Phone: 631-632-6810; email: sbucareercenter@stonybrook.edu; website: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/career-center/>

Counseling and Psychological Services: CAPS staff are available by phone, day or night.

<http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/caps/>

Ombuds Office: The Stony Brook University Ombuds Office provides an alternative channel for confidential, impartial, independent and informal dispute resolution services for the entire University community. We provide a safe place to voice your concerns and explore options for productive conflict management and resolution. The Ombuds Office is a source of confidential advice and information about University policies and procedures and helps individuals and groups address university-related conflicts and concerns. <http://www.stonybrook.edu/ombuds/>

Registrar: Having a registration issue? Let them know. Phone: 631-632-6175; email: registrar_office@stonybrook.edu; <http://www.stonybrook.edu/registrar/>

SBU Libraries: access to and help in using databases, ebooks, and other sources for your research.

- Research Guides and Tutorials: <http://guides.library.stonybrook.edu/>
- Getting Help: <https://library.stonybrook.edu/research/ask-a-librarian/>

Student Accessibility Support Center: Students in need of special accommodations should contact SASC. Phone: 631-632-6748; email: sasc@stonybrook.edu; <https://www.stonybrook.edu/sasc/>

Writing Center: Students are able to schedule face-to-face and online appointments. <https://www.stonybrook.edu/writingcenter/>