

**Florida International University**

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**From the Selected Works of Dr. Lukas K. Danner**

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Fall 2017

**Syllabus CPO 2002 (U03):  
Introduction to Comparative Politics  
(Fall 2017)**

Lukas K. Danner, *Florida International University*



Available at: <https://works.bepress.com/dannerlu/32/>

Introduction to Comparative Politics  
CPO 2002 (U03)<sup>1</sup>  
Fall 2017

### Course Information:

Meetings: Mon., Wed. (6:25—7:40 PM)  
Classroom: Graham Center 287 A  
Class no.: 92714

Instructor: Dr. Lukas K. Danner  
Email: [LDANNER@FIU.EDU](mailto:LDANNER@FIU.EDU)  
Office hours: Fri. from 2:00 PM to 2:45 PM (GL150)  
with previous appointment

*“Even if one is interested only in one’s own society, which is one’s prerogative,  
one can understand that society much better by comparing it with others.”*

*Austrian-American Sociologist Peter L. Berger*

### Course Description:

This course is an introduction to one of four sub-fields of political science: the comparative study of different governmental systems and units. As a field, comparative politics asks why countries possess different institutions, different degrees of economic development, or different state forms. Cases of conflicts or revolutions across countries (or across time within the same country), for example, are also part of comparative politics. This course aims to equip students with the various tools and methods to be able to systematically explore the similarities and differences in a comparison of different countries and/or cases.

### Course Introduction & Learning Objectives:

The primary purpose of this course is to provide students with the analytical tools to understand different political systems and dynamics. In this course students will:

1. Gain a good understanding of the different concepts and ideas of comparative politics;
2. Become equipped with conceptual and methodological tools necessary to explain and compare different political systems and dynamics of politics;
3. Improve their research and writing ability when formulating complex arguments.

### General Organization:

To successfully accomplish the learning objectives listed above, the course is organized around six main

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<sup>1</sup> Syllabus last updated on Monday, November 20, 2017.

sections. Part one, as a way of introduction, explores the comparative approach in general, as well as some of the methodological and conceptual components of CPO research. Part two will introduce students to the basic concepts of comparative politics, such as democracy, authoritarianism, definition of the state, etc. Part three will highlight important institutions of government and part four important concepts such as revolutions or national identity. Before going into singular country profiles in part six, the comparative-international nexus will be discussed.

## Course Requirements:

**Class Preparation:** In order for students to take full advantage of the class and make it more enjoyable for all, the required readings must be completed *before* each class meeting. Students are also encouraged to come to class with a set of questions that they may have encountered while preparing for the meetings, and to share them with the rest of the students at the appropriate moment. Class preparation should go both ways: as the instructor prepares the lectures and discussion sessions, every student must also dedicate, normally, about an hour of preparation prior to each class meeting. Otherwise, the instructor will sound like he is speaking an incomprehensible language. In short, prepare thoughtfully and thoroughly before each class meeting. As far as time spent reading, taking notes, revising notes, and the like, it is realistic to calculate with at least one hour preparatory work before class and at least one hour after class in order to be successful in this course.

**General Class Participation & Attendance (together 10%):** There is a difference between *tactical dilatory* “participation,” and *quality* participation. While normal, quality class participation is always welcome, blather and dilatory interventions are discouraged. For example, simply posing misinformed questions about the readings or the lecture—when clearly exhibiting an abject lack of proper class preparation or reading of the assigned texts—may actually end up working against, rather than in favor of, the student’s grade. In contrast, active, thoughtful, quality participation, demonstrating intimate and thoughtful familiarity with the assigned readings and class topics, is highly welcome, as it will certainly help students improve his/her overall final grade. For attendance requirements, see the course policies section.

**Exams (70%):** There will be two (2) partial (midterm) exams during the semester, and one (1) comprehensive final exam during final’s week for a total of three (3) exams. Specific dates are listed below. Exams will include any or a combination of the following types of questions: identifications, factual short-answer questions, multiple-choice questions and essay questions. Students must take all exams, the midterms and the final in order to be able to pass this class. Make-up exams can only be granted, if a student has a valid and documented reason for not making the pre-set exam date; if you do miss an exam, you must make arrangements to make it up within ONE WEEK from the date of the scheduled exam. If you do not make up the exam within that time, you will receive a zero as a grade. The partial (midterm) exams count twenty (20) percent of the final grade each, and the final comprehensive exam thirty (30) percent of the final grade—for a total seventy (70) percent of your final grade. Relevant to the exams are anything learned during class lecture including students’ own lecture notes, all of the required assigned readings, and PowerPoint presentations (excluding group presentations), if used for lecture. Also, there will be no supporting materials allowed during exam (i.e. no open books, no scrap paper, etc.). Your grades will become available in Blackboard’s “My Grades.”



**Student Presentation (20%):** As part of the country focus part of our class, everyone will be required to present individually in the last weeks of the semester between October 25<sup>th</sup> and December 4<sup>th</sup> on a topic given out by the instructor and assigned on August 30<sup>th</sup> during class. The assignment schedule will be available for download via Blackboard starting August 30<sup>th</sup>. You are required to prepare a thirteen (13) minutes PowerPoint (or Prezi or Piktochart) presentation for your peers (ca. 10-15 slides), ending with a slide of discussion questions for about five (5) minutes of discussion with the class audience. The goal is introducing your peers to your assigned topic. You are required to send the PowerPoint to the instructor by two days before your assigned presentation date (latest), i.e., by the end of the Saturday before your presentation, if you are assigned on a Monday, or by the end of the Monday before your presentation, if you are assigned on a Wednesday. If you want feedback on your PowerPoint from me, you must send it no later than one week prior to your assigned date. Given the quantity of students in class, please understand that presentation times will have to be enforced at a maximum thirteen (13) minutes, discussion time at a maximum five (5) minutes.

**Final Grade Point Distribution and Schedule:**

Attendance & Participation.....	10%
First Partial Exam, Wednesday, September 27, 2017, 6:25pm-7:40pm, GC287A.....	20%
Second Partial Exam, Monday, October 23, 2017, 6:25pm-7:40pm, GC287A.....	20%
Student Presentations (October 25 – December 4; see schedule avail. via BB starting on Aug-30).....	20%
Final Comprehensive Exam, Wednesday, December 13, 2017, 5:00pm-7:00pm, CP 117.....	30%
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>100%</b>

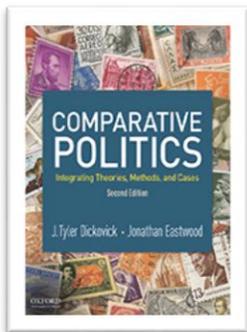
**Grading System:** The grading scale will follow FIU standards. Please note that less than a 60% average score is an automatic “F.”

No incomplete grade will be granted.

<b>A: 95-100%</b>	<b>B: 83-86%</b>	<b>C: 70-76%</b>
<b>A-: 90-94%</b>	<b>B-: 80-82%</b>	<b>D: 60-69%</b>
<b>B+: 87-89%</b>	<b>C+: 77-79%</b>	<b>F: &lt;60%</b>

**Readings:** One textbook is required for this class (see below). Textbook readings *will not* be provided to students; I will assume you have bought or rented them. Other required reading assignments, if applicable, would be provided to students through FIU Blackboard. Suggested readings will not be provided and would be the student’s responsibility, if interested in reading more on the subject. Students will not be expected to have read the suggested, i.e. optional, readings. Should they be discussed during class lecture, they will indirectly become relevant for examinations, though.

**Purchasing Textbooks:** Significant portions of the following book are assigned as required readings and will be available for purchase or rental through the FIU bookstore ([here](#)), or online:



- J. Tyler Dickovic and Jonathan Eastwood, *Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases, Second Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015). ISBN-13: 978-0-190-27099-5.

Keep in mind that readings complement lectures. Thus, readings will not be summarized in class and I will assume that you read them closely. Rather class sessions will be used to tease out important concepts from the assigned readings and discuss related issues.



The list of topics and readings is a general guideline or schedule. This is not a strict plan to cover at all cost. I establish my class pace based on the progress I sense from the class. Some topics may need additional coverage while others may need less. This is something that I cannot anticipate at the time of selecting the topics and readings for this course. Ultimately, the coverage of the syllabus depends on the nature and evolution of the class itself, not on the instructor's ability to rattle on material that is poorly understood by the majority of the students. My first and foremost priority is to make sure that *all* students progress uniformly when a serious effort is devoted to the class.

\*At any time during the semester, the instructor may input changes to the present syllabus, as he deems necessary. The instructor reserves the right to change material on the syllabus, based on his estimation of the class caliber, comprehension, and progress. In case of any such changes, the instructor will notify the modifications in class.

## Course Policies:

**Fair Warnings on Exams, Paper, Class Attendance, Preparation and Participation:** If you miss the midterm exam or the comprehensive final exam, without a well-certified and verifiable excuse, it will count as a zero. In this case, there will be no chance for a make-up exam. A written, verifiable, and valid excuse is required in order to request a make-up exam. If you have conflicting work schedule, adjust it ahead of time or drop the class to avoid future problems. I consider classes and exams more important than work at this time of your life. Examine closely the schedule included here. If you identify a schedule conflict, make your choice early on and decide whether to stay in the course or drop it to avoid future problems.

**Attendance:** In order for the classes to begin on time (and end on time, too), students should plan ahead and seriously consider coming to the classroom 5 to 10 minutes early. Attendance is mandatory and will be taken via occasional (pop-up) signature sheet and count toward students' overall grade as 10 % of the final grade together with participation in class. Generally, it is preferred that students will let the instructor know much ahead of time, if they need to miss class. Students, who consistently miss classes, even if their performance in the exams and written assignments is satisfactory, will harm their overall class grade. Coming to class is an indispensable part of the student's training and education. Traffic, parking, or car problem excuses are not accepted.

**Electronic Devices:** The use of mobile electronic devices, such as cell-/smartphones, MP3 players, and other such electronic devices goes against FIU's professional student demeanor policy and is not allowed inside the classroom during class time, and should be turned off and stored away before the beginning of each class. Don't wait to be admonished in public for such prohibited use in class. If in need of making a phone call or texting, please quietly step outside of the classroom—it is your right. Laptop computers, eReaders, or tablets may be allowed for note taking or book reference, if using the eBook-copy of the textbooks. Students are generally encouraged to take notes by hand, though. Under no circumstances will the instructor send out PowerPoints to lectures before class; PowerPoints, if used during class, would

be available after class in the class's Blackboard. Finally, the instructor permits no recording of the classes. Please adhere to these policies.



**Academic Integrity:** Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

It is also to be noted that academic dishonesty is a violation of FIU's Student Code of Conduct Procedures. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, and misrepresentation of one's work. These are academic offenses that will result in failing the course, as per the Student Code of Conduct Procedures.

**DRC-Registered Students:** The Disability Resource Center (DRC) collaborates with students, faculty, staff, and community members to create diverse learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and sustainable. The DRC provides FIU students with disabilities the necessary support to successfully complete their education and participate in activities available to all students. If you have a diagnosed disability and plan to utilize academic accommodations, please contact the Center at 305-348-3532 or visit them at the Graham Center GC 190.

**Syllabus:** The syllabus is also available online in this course's Blackboard (<http://fiu.blackboard.com/>). Please check the class's Blackboard and your FIU email account for possible communication regarding changes to the syllabus.

**Course Communication:** I do not email students to personal email addresses, except when replying to students' specific questions. Please check your FIU email (<http://panthermail.fiu.edu/>) regularly, as well as the course's blackboard (<http://fiu.blackboard.com/>) for announcements (announcements in Blackboard are simultaneously sent to your student email address. If you like to continue to use your private email address, I recommend you set up forwarding in your FIU email account to your preferred email account.

**Extra Credit Assignments:** There will be no extra credit assignments granted.

## Course Schedule:

### **Important Dates:**

Please note the following holidays when FIU is closed and other important dates in the class:

1. Monday, August 21: Classes Begin.
2. Monday, August 28: Last Day to Add, Drop or Swap courses without incurring financial liability.
3. Wednesday, August 30: Assignment of Student Presentation Topics (Country Profiles & Cases).
4. Monday, September 4: Labor Day Holiday (University closed, no classes).



5. Wednesday, September 27: First Partial Exam.
6. Saturday, October 21: Preliminary Mid-semester Course Grade available via Blackboard section "My Grades."
7. Monday, October 23: Second Partial Exam.
8. Wednesday, October 25 – Monday, December 4: News briefing presentations of current event (schedule will be determined on August 30 and be available for download via BB).
9. Monday, October 30: Last Day to drop a course with a DR grade.
10. Wednesday, December 13: Final Comprehensive Examination during Finals Week as per FIU exam schedule from 5:00pm to 7:00pm in CP 117.
11. Thursday, December 21: Grades available on My.FIU.edu (starting 9:00am).

**Class Session Topic/Reading/Assignment Schedule:**

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	READING/ASSIGNMENT
1	Aug 21 (M)	<i>Initial Class Meeting</i>	<i>Read the syllabus</i>
<b>Part I: Comparative Political Analysis</b>			
	Aug 23 (W)	The Comparative Approach	<i>Read chapter 1</i>
2	Aug 28 (M)	Theories, Hypotheses, Evidence	<i>Read chapter 2</i>
<b>Part II: The State, Development, Democracy, and Authoritarianism</b>			
	Aug 30 (W)	The State	<i>Read chapter 3</i> <b>Assignment of Student Presentation Schedule (downloadable afterwards in BB)</b>
3	Sept 4 (M)	<b>No class (Labor Day)</b>	-----
	Sept 6 (W) Sept 11 (M) Sept 13 (W)	<b>No class (Hurricane Irma)</b>	-----
4	Sept 18 (M)	Political Economy & Development	<i>Read chapters 4 &amp; 5</i>
	Sept 20 (W)	Democracy & Democratization	<i>Read chapter 6</i> <b>Download &amp; Review First Partial Exam Study Guide</b>
5	Sept 25 (M)	Authoritarian Regimes & Democratic Breakdown	<i>Read chapter 7</i>
	Sept 27 (W)	<b>First Partial Exam</b>	-----
<b>Part III: Institutions of Government</b>			
6	Oct 2 (M)	Constitutions & Constitutional Design	<i>Read chapter 8</i>
	Oct 4 (W)	Legislatures & Legislative Elections	<i>Read chapters 9 &amp; 10</i>

7	Oct 9 (M)	Political Parties, Party Systems, Interest Groups	Read chapter 11
<b>Part IV: Politics, Society, and Culture</b>			
	Oct 11 (W)	Revolutions and Contention & Nationalism & National Identity	Read chapters 12 & 13
8	Oct 16 (M)	Race, Ethnicity, and Gender & Ideology and Religion in Modern Politics	Read chapters 14 & 15 <i>Download &amp; Review Second Partial Exam Study Guide</i>
<b>Part V: The Comparative-International Nexus</b>			
9	Oct 18 (W)	CPO and International Relations	Read chapter 16
	Oct 23 (M)	<i>Second Partial Exam</i>	-----
<b>Part VI: Country Profiles and Cases</b>			
	Oct 25 (W)	United Kingdom	Read chapter 27 <i>Student Presentations begin</i>
10	Oct 30 (M)	France	Read chapter 19
	Nov 1 (W)	Germany	Read chapter 20
11	Nov 6 (M)	Japan	Read chapter 23
	Nov 8 (W)	China	Read chapter 18
12	Nov 13 (M)	Russia	Read chapter 26
	Nov 15 (W)	India	Read chapter 21
13	Nov 20 (M)	Nigeria	Read chapter 17
	Nov 22 (W)	Brazil	Read chapter 24
14	Nov 27 (M)	Mexico	Read chapter 25
	Nov 29 (W)	Italy	Read Tiersky & Jones, chapter 4 (BB) <i>Download &amp; Review Final Exam Study Guide</i>
15	Dec 4 (M)	South Africa	Read O'Neill & Fields, chapter 13 (BB) <i>Student Presentations end</i>
	Dec 6 (W)	<i>No class (prepare yourself for the Final Exam)</i>	-----
16	Dec 13 (W)	<i>In-Class Final Exam</i>	Final Exam per FIU Exam Schedule from 5:00pm to 7:00pm in CP (Chemistry & Physics) 117 (duration: 120 minutes)

