# Course Information

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<th>Course</th>
<th>Course code</th>
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<td>Comparative Governments and Politics</td>
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<tr>
<th>Name of Instructor</th>
<th>Vida Macikenaite</th>
<th>Credit Number: 2 credit</th>
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<tr>
<th>Instructor’s contact Information</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Office Hours</th>
<th>E-mail:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#208</td>
<td>by appointment</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vida@iuj.ac.jp">vida@iuj.ac.jp</a></td>
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<tr>
<th>Class Schedule</th>
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## Course Description:
This course provides a broad overview of the comparative politics subfield. It focuses on relevant theoretical concepts and their application to empirical issues. The course addresses a wide range of questions, such as: How can regimes in Latin America, South Africa or Iran be classified? Is Russia a democracy? What are the functions of the President of Germany and how do they differ from those in other countries? Why has Northern Italy developed faster than the South? Has Myanmar become a democracy after the last elections in 2015? Is there a single best set of institutions? What electoral systems are best suited for multiethnic divided societies? We will address these and many other questions throughout the course.

## Learning Objectives:
This course is designed with two objectives in mind. First, it provides the students with tools to understand how politics works across countries by helping them acquire basic terminology of political science. Second, the course offers practical knowledge through empirical literature and case study analysis, which not only enables the students to understand and independently analyze politics of countries worldwide but also deepens their understanding of their own country.

## Career Relevance:
General understanding of political systems and cross-national knowledge are essential for a wide range of careers, may it be at national governments, international organizations, NGOs, or international corporations.

## Course Context or Rationalization:
This course prepares the students for more specific courses in several ways. First, it teaches to make and evaluate arguments about politics in different countries. Second, it provides knowledge on a wide range of countries, which serves as a foundation for further studies of international relations in different regions.

## Delivery Methods:
The course is based on interactive lectures, which include short case study presentations by the students and class discussions of selected case studies.
Assessment:
Class participation: 20%
In-class quizzes: 25%
Class presentation: 25%
Final exam: 30%

Prerequisite:
The class is designed to be accessible to students with no prior study of comparative politics or specific knowledge of particular countries.

Textbook(s) | Reference books/Journal Articles:
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N/A | [See weekly schedule below]

Other Instructor assigned articles from The Economist, New York Times, Foreign Policy, Foreign Affairs, and others as appropriate.

Class Outline

**PART I. INTRODUCTION**

2. Comparative methods: case studies and large-N analysis.
   - Bates, Robert H. When Things Fell Apart: State Failure in Late-Century Africa. Cambridge University Press, 2008 (skim the text to get the main argument).

**PART II. POLITICAL REGIMES: DEMOCRACIES AND DICTATORSHIPS**

   - Clark et al., Ch.12, pp. 457-534.

7. Varieties of autocracies. Stability of authoritarian regimes
   - Clark et al., Ch. 10, pp. 349-412.

8. Case studies of different regimes: China, Iran, Nigeria, South Africa

9. Regime change: democratic transition and consolidation

10. Regime change: selected Latin American countries.
    - [optional] Linz, Juan and Alfred Stepan, Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, other chapters

13. Economic determinants of political regimes. Problems with group decision-making. Does economic growth lead to democracy?
   - Clark et al., Ch. 6.

   - Clark et al., Ch.7.

15-16. The effect of political regimes: Does it make a difference?
   - “Democracy or Dictatorship: Does it Make a Difference?” in Clark et al, Principles of Comparative Politics, Ch.9, pp. 325-348.
   - (optional) “Varieties of Democracy and Political Outcomes,” n Clark et al, Principles of Comparative Politics, Ch. 16, pp. 741-826.

PART III. INSTITUTIONS, ACTORS AND PROCESSES

17. Political parties and party systems. Selected case studies.

18-19. Elections and electoral systems. Approaches to voting and elections (sociological and rational approaches to voting, economic and strategic voting). Best suited electoral systems for multiethnic divided societies.

20. Political culture. Social capital.