

POLI 130: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Recitation

Sections 601, 602, 605

Instructor: Silviya Nitsova

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Office Hours: Wednesday 9-11 am, 12.45-1.45 pm

Location: 300 Hamilton Hall/Zoom

Sign-up Link: <https://calendly.com/snitsova/office-hours>

Poll Everywhere: <https://pollev.com/poli130>

Course Description

This recitation class is intended as a further exploration and critical discussion of the themes, arguments, and concepts introduced in the literature and lectures for POLI 130. Our discussions will largely focus on the assigned readings for the course, but we may sometimes review short articles or videos on current world events. Your active engagement in recitation will help you consolidate the information presented in the readings and in lecture, learn how to critically assess this information, gain hands-on experience with core concepts, and improve your written and verbal argumentation and communication skills.

Class Policies

Attendance. You do not have to inform me about the reasons for which you have to miss recitation the first two times. Unexcused absences beyond these two “grace” absences will negatively affect your participation grade.

Class preparedness. Recitation is our opportunity to fully explore the material presented in the readings. It is crucial that you do the assigned readings before coming to recitation. This will give you the opportunity to think about the main themes and questions you may have that we can cover in recitation.

Since our recitation section meets on Mondays, we will be working with the assigned readings and lecture material from the previous week.

Technology in the classroom. Minimizing distractions will help you and your classmates get the most out of recitation.

Academic Integrity. Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. [Plagiarism](#) is a serious violation of the [Honor Code](#).

Class environment. I aim to make recitation a safe and open environment. Part of that is respecting all questions, comments and experiences that other classmates choose to share. Not everyone will share your view, but if we all agree to listen to and respect each other, then recitation will be a positive environment where all opinions are welcome. This also means

that I will not tolerate offensive language (derogatory, racist, sexist, homophobic, etc.) and talking over other students. Breaking this rule will result in your removal from the classroom for the day.

Masking policy. Although the university no longer requires masking in class or public spaces, the individual choice of students to wear a mask for their health and safety should be respected. Additionally, in face-to-face meetings with me, wearing a mask is strongly suggested. If you prefer not to wear a mask during meetings with me, please prepare to meet outdoors or to have a virtual meeting via Zoom. For additional information on COVID-19 and university policies around public health practices, visit [Carolina Together](#).

Students with disabilities. If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know. Some aspects of the course and its assignments may be modified to facilitate your success. I will work with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services to determine appropriate accommodations. I will treat any information you provide as confidential.

Deadlines. You get two days of extension (no questions asked) for paper assignments. Once these days are exhausted, late papers will be marked down a third of a letter grade for each day following the due date. I will not approve requests for make-up exams submitted after the regularly scheduled exam has begun. If you have a serious reason to request a deadline extension/make-up exam, you should notify me in advance.

Communicating concerns. If you have any questions or concerns regarding recitation, the course as a whole or the progress you are making in it, please talk to me. The earlier you make your concerns known, the better I will be able to (help you) address them.

Student feedback. I highly value students' reflections on their own learning experiences and welcome continuous feedback. Feel free to come to office hours and share with me what you think works well for you and what you think could be improved about recitation. You can also fill out an anonymous feedback form [here](#).

Email. I usually respond to emails within 24 hours, except on weekends. If I have not responded within 48 hours, please send me a follow-up email.

Grading Policy

Your overall grade for the course is broken down as follows: Participation: 5%, Quizzes: 10%, Short essay 1: 20%, Short essay 2: 20%, Midterm exam: 20%, Final exam: 25%. There is also a research requirement you have to fulfill.

Grades for each component, except for quizzes, will be uploaded on the recitation Sakai site under "Gradebook."

Each component will be graded on a scale from 0 to 100. Numerical grades are translated to letter grades according to the scale below. In calculating final grades, rounding will not be used.

If you would like to discuss any of the grades you receive or the progress you are making in the course at any point during the semester, come to office hours or make an appointment. I will

Numerical Grade	Letter Grade
100-94	A
93-90	A-
89-87	B+
86-84	B
83-80	B-
79-77	C+
76-74	C
73-70	C-
69-67	D+
66-60	D
<60	F

be happy to go over comments and strategies to improve. Grade modifications will be made in accordance with Professor Anderson’s grade modification policy (see course syllabus).

Participation

You are expected to actively engage in class discussions and activities on a regular basis.

In addition, each week two students will be responsible for writing 3-4 discussion questions each on that week’s readings. The questions should be posted under “Forums” on the recitation section Sakai site **by 8 am on Monday**. All students should read and think about these questions before coming to recitation. This is intended to focus the conversation on topics or concepts that you may find interesting, unclear or difficult.

I will grade your participation holistically at the end of the semester, considering the quality of your contribution, the frequency of your contribution, and your overall participation trend.

Questions and well-argued answers/comments, that is answers/comments that include a main point and provide evidence in support of that point, count as high-quality contributions.

Coming to office hours to discuss topics related to the class counts towards participation.

Short Essays

You will be required to submit two short papers (5-7 double-spaced pages each) throughout the semester. We will go over the prompts, paper guidelines, and assessment criteria in class.

Helpful Resources

[UNC Writing Center](#) and [UNC Learning Center](#) are two fantastic resources you could use to improve your writing and learning skills. I have received largely positive feedback from students who have used their services in the past.

Important Dates

Short Essay 1 due: September 14

Midterm exam: October 12

Short Essay 2 due: November 9
Final exam: December 9, 12 pm