

Pols 237: Comparative Politics

Spring 2026, Tuesday and Thursday 10:30-11:45

Langner 235

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Student Office Hours: Tuesday 8:15-9:15 and 1:15-2:15, Thursday 1:15-2:15

Syllabus Updated: January 15, 2026

OneDrive Link: <https://pols.tiny.us/237Spring2026>

Course Description: Why does the United States have a two-party system? Why does violence break out in certain countries but not others? What implications do constitutions have for how people vote? Comparative politics is a method of studying political science that emphasizes features that distinguish political systems across the world. We will explore this variation and seek to understand how states interact within the international system. Along the way, we will begin developing reading, writing, and research skills that are foundations for critical thinking. Our goal will be to develop an understanding of political events that interest you, to learn how to study these events, and to interact with other students to grapple with these issues in ways that are useful for future courses and for your careers.

Prerequisites: Pols 231 strongly recommended.

Text: None.

Catalog Description: Comparing the domestic politics of countries around the world, including both rich, industrialized democracies like the U.S. and the democratic and authoritarian countries of the developing world. Topics include government institutions, parties and elections, economic policy making and the role of civil society. This course supports the students' development in the global citizenship competency: understanding culture, understanding cultural context, and understanding individual/culture/community contact.

Student Learning Outcomes:

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand and describe major issues in each area of comparative politics and suggest future directions for study.
2. Competently read all kinds of political science research. Demonstrate the ability to discuss debates in the literature with competence.
3. Work through the political science research process, understand key issues and decisions to make when conducting research, and apply these lessons to your own research project.
4. Analyze public policy impacts of international and domestic interventions.
5. Evaluate how comparative politics fits within the international system.
6. Demonstrate analysis skills by participating in an extended simulation.

Course Philosophy:

This course is designed to provide you with a realistic understanding of how comparative politics interacts with the international system. The course is built around an extended United Nations-like simulation that asks you to become an expert in a country and its current events, apply knowledge from comparative politics to solve international issues, and interact with other

students to develop solutions to international problems. Think of the course as what would happen if a Model United Nations course combined with core comparative politics research and an introduction to the political science research process. This combination is designed to help give you a good background in comparative politics and to provide a simulation of particular benefit to students interested in public policy and international relations.

I expect that we will all work to maintain a positive classroom environment. While we often use data and models to provide evidence, political scientists do not have definitive answers to any question. Thus, we will work to understand others' perspectives in a constructive and respectful manner. During the course, we will be discussing topics that may be sensitive in nature for some students. Treat these topics with care and ground your comments in theories and methods from political science.

Assignments:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Points</u>
Social Annotation	As indicated (most classes)	156
Class Engagement	Evaluated three times	100
Country Position and Strategy	January 29	100
Daily Strategy	Selected class	50
Resolutions	Three selected classes	100
Reflective Journal	February 10, April 23	100
Strategy Slides/LR Check In	April 7	60
Research Proposal		
Research Question	January 22	34
Annotated Bibliography	February 12	50
Literature Review	March 5	100
Bill	April 28	150

Letter Grade Distribution:

A ≥ 895; B 795 – 894; C 695 – 794; D 600 – 694; F ≤ 599; Satisfactory ≥ 695

Class Formats:

This class functions as a quasi-simulation of the member states of the United Nations General Assembly. There are two class period formats: discussion and UN.

At the beginning of the course, you will choose to represent a country in the UN (except for the United States). For our purposes, we will select general assembly members from the Security Council. The four permanent members on the Security Council other than the United States are: China, France, Russian Federation, and the United Kingdom. The ten elected members of the UN Security Council as of 2026 are: Denmark, Greece, Pakistan, Panama, Somalia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Latvia, Bahrain, and Colombia. There will be two delegates for each country; depending on class size, we may not have representation from all countries.

Discussion Meetings:

- Before class: Complete the assigned reading and annotations and any other assignments.
- During class: No simulation. Discussion about research topics.
- Reflective Journal: Each student describes how the class session is related to their research proposal or the UN simulation.

UN Meetings:

- Before class: Complete the assigned reading and annotations. Some students will have chosen to complete a daily strategy during the class period; those students should prepare and submit their daily strategy. Some students will have chosen to submit resolutions for that class period; those students should prepare and submit their resolutions.
- During class:
 - I call the meeting to order.
 - Initial resolutions (about 10 minutes). Students who submitted resolutions briefly summarize them.
 - Brief discussion with delegation partner about strategy (about 5 minutes).
 - Agenda setting (about 5 minutes). Delegations discuss what issues need to be addressed based on the draft resolutions.
 - Negotiation and revising resolutions (about 15 minutes). Each delegation reads submitted resolutions. Delegations that submitted resolutions modify them to fit issues discussed in daily strategies and to form coalitions so that resolutions pass.
 - Presenting resolutions and discussion (10+ minutes). Delegations present resolutions. Discussion about revisions to the resolution and questions about the resolution.
 - Vote on resolutions. Resolutions that are passed impact the state-of-the-world.
 - Continue passing resolutions as time permits.
 - Closure of session.
- Reflective Journal: Each student provides a reflection on their strategy for the class session, what their delegation accomplished, and goals or modifications for future sessions.

Topics and Readings: Below is the schedule of reading and assignments for each class. I may change the course outline, but I will give you plenty of prior notice.¹

January 15: Conceptualizing Comparative Politics

- Format: Discussion.

¹ I have made a conscious effort to represent gender and ethnic/regional diversity of scholarship in these readings.

January 20: Research Questions

- Format: Discussion.
- Reading Due (annotations due):
 - Hoover Green, Amelia. 2013. "How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps."
 - Baglione, Ch. 2.
- Assignments Due: Beginning of semester survey. Decorate country nameplate (and bring to class!). Sign up for your daily strategy and three days to submit resolutions on OneDrive.

January 22: Introduction to the United Nations

- Format: Discussion.
- Reading Due (annotations due): Benson, Michelle, and Colin Tucker. 2022. "The Importance of UN Security Council Resolutions in Peacekeeping Operations." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 66(3): 473-503.
- Assignments Due: Research Question and paragraph.

January 27: UN Resolutions

- Format: Discussion.
- Reading Due (no annotations): McBride, Michael, and Aaron Holtz. 2020. "Tips for Writing More Effective Resolutions."

January 29: Nations

- Format: UN.
- Reading Due (annotations due): Jones, Rhys, and Peter Merriman. 2009. "Hot, Banal, and Everyday Nationalism: Bilingual Road Signs in Wales." *Political Geography* 28: 164-173.
- Assignments Due: Country Position and Strategy.

February 3: Literature Search

- Format: Discussion.
- Reading Due (annotations due): Baglione, Ch. 3.

February 5: Groups

- Format: UN.
- Reading Due (annotations due): Htun, Mala. 2004. "Is Gender Like Ethnicity? The Political Representation of Identity Groups." *Perspectives on Politics* 2(3): 439-458.

February 10: Nations and Groups

- Format: Discussion.
- Reading Due (annotations due): Baglione, Ch. 4.
- Assignments Due: First self-assessment and reflective journal (first half upload).
Optional mid-semester survey.

February 12: Literature Review

- Format: Discussion.
- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: Annotated Bibliography.

February 17: Regimes

- Format: UN.
- Reading Due (annotations due): Wigell, Mikael. 2008. "Mapping Hybrid Regimes: Regime Types and Concepts in Comparative Politics." *Democratization* 15(2): 230-250.

February 19: Bill Writing

- Format: Discussion.
- Reading Due (annotations due): Cupples, Julie. 2023. *Addressing the Lack of Due Process Rights in the American Immigration System*. Annotated bill portion.

February 24: Institutions and Constitutions

- Format: UN.
- Reading Due (annotations due): Sedelius, Thomas, and Jonas Linde. 2018. "Unravelling Semi-Presidentialism: Democracy and Government Performance in Four Distinct Regime Types." *Democratization* 25(1): 136-157.

February 26: Electoral Systems

- Format: Discussion.
- Reading Due (annotations due): Kjaer, Ulrik, and Mona Lena Krook. 2019. "The Blame Game: Analyzing Gender Bias in Danish Local Elections." *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 7(2): 444-455.

March 3: Bill Writing

- Format: Discussion.
- Reading Due (annotations due): Introduction to Legislative Drafting with Professor David Marcello (parts 1 through 4 all on Perusall):
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wnZOefjHtUA>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAeSSJNQNNI>
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vk-I6-0_c_U
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c0pKBWADJG0>

March 5: Regimes, Institutions, and Constitutions

- Format: Discussion.
- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: Literature Review.

March 17: Parties

- Format: UN.
- Reading Due (annotations due): Asunka, Joseph, Sarah Brierley, Miriam Golden, Eric Kramon, and George Oforu. 2019. "Electoral Fraud or Violence: The Effect of Observers on Party Manipulation Strategies." *British Journal of Political Science* 49(1): 129-151.

March 19: Elections, Electoral Systems, and Parties

- Format: Discussion.
- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: Second self-assessment.

March 24: Bill Writing Workday

- Format: Discussion.
- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: None.

March 26: Effective Governance and Corruption

- Format: UN.
- Reading Due (annotations due): O'Brochta, William. 2023. "Politicians' Complaint Response: E-Governance and Personal Relationships." *Governance* 36(4): 1147-1164.
- Note: Be critical! The purpose is to have a good scholarly discussion of the reading.

March 31: Effective Governance and Corruption

- Format: Discussion.
- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: None.

April 7: Strategy Slides/LR Check In

- Format: Discussion.
- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: Strategy Slides/LR Check In.

April 9: Strategy and Bill Writing

- Format: Discussion.
- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: None.

April 14: Foreign Aid and Human Rights

- Format: UN.
- Reading Due (annotations due): Adhikari, Bimal. 2021. "UN Human Rights Shaming and Foreign Aid Allocation." *Human Rights Review* 22(2): 133-154.

April 16: Foreign Aid and Human Rights

- Format: Discussion.
- Reading Due: None.

- Assignments Due: None.

April 21: Bill Writing Workday

- Format: Discussion.
- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: Reflective journal (second half) and third self-assessment.

April 23: Immigration and Information and Communications Technology

- Format: UN.
- Reading Due (annotations due): Fresnoza-Flot, Asuncion. 2009. "Migration Status and Transnational Mothering: The Case of Filipino Migrants in France." *Global Networks* 9(2): 252-270.

April 28: Immigration and Information and Communications Technology

- Format: Discussion.
- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: Bill.

Final Exam: Bill Discussion and Simulation

- Format: Discussion.
- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: None.
- Note: We will complete the end of semester survey during class. If you will not be in class, please complete it by class time.

Description of Assignments:

Social Annotation (156 points)

Completing and engaging with course material and other students is essential to your success in this course. We will be using Perusall (linked on Brightspace) for social annotation. The idea behind social annotation is that you can engage with other students in the course while reading the required content. This will help you to read in a more active and engaged way, to come to class more prepared for our discussions, and to generate ideas that you would like to raise in class. My motivation in asking you to do social annotations is to help you read efficiently. This is a skill that you *can* develop.

For each assigned reading where annotations are due, complete the following:

- Go to Brightspace and click on the link for an assigned reading. You must access Perusall through Brightspace for your annotations to be saved.
- Read the text. I recommend skimming through the entire text once, marking any points of confusion, and asking clarification or definition questions. These are not substantive annotations that count toward your grade, but they will help you read more effectively.
- Return to the text later and read it again. While doing so, **make at least five substantive annotations**. Examples of substantive and not substantive annotations follow.

- Reading and completing the annotations for a particular class period should take you no less than 1 hour and no more than 2 hours. If you find yourself spending more time on an assignment, refer back to the Hoover Green piece on reading effectively. Feel free to come talk to me if you are having any difficulty. This assignment is not meant to take up too much time.

How to write a substantive annotation:

1. Find a part of the reading that is interesting, surprising, or about which you would like to make an annotation.
2. Highlight the relevant text and leave an annotation or, if someone else has already highlighted the text, leave a comment responding to their annotation.
3. In your annotation, go beyond agreeing with or re-stating what the reading is saying. Discuss how you have thought about and processed the information you read. Make connections to concepts from your notes or that you learned in class. Discuss how the reading relates to you personally or to current events. Provide depth by writing at least three sentences per annotation.
4. Complete at least five substantive annotations, spread throughout the reading.

Non-exhaustive examples of substantive and not substantive annotations:

Notice that the substantive comments go far beyond a single sentence and focus on explaining and making connections.

	Not substantive	Substantive
Definition	This term means [description of term].	This term means [description of term]. By introducing this concept, the authors [describe why the concept is important]. In addition, we discussed this concept in class [describe how].
Upvote	[Student uses the green checkmark to upvote another student's comment]	[Upvote comment] This makes a lot of sense to me because [describe why]. But, I can also see how [introduce a different point of view].
Question	What are the impacts of [describe something]?	What are the impacts of [describe something]? I think that the impact is [describe impact] because [describe reason]. This is important because [describe why].
Agreement	I agree.	I agree because [describe why]. [Tell story about experience you have had related to the concept being discussed].
Example	This is true today.	This is true today because [describe specific instance]. I know people impacted by [describe topic and how people are impacted].
Clarification	What does this mean?	What does [describe phrase] mean? My interpretation is that it probably means [describe possible meaning], but I also found a source online [list source] that says [describe what the source says]. Clarifying this definition is important because [describe why].

Interesting	This is interesting. I had not thought about this before.	This resonated with me because I have had [describe some experience]. I also see [describe the topic] mentioned frequently in the news like in a recent story [describe story].
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Submission and Evaluation: You should submit annotations for the indicated readings. **Your three lowest annotation grades will be dropped (this includes any annotations you do not turn in, so feel free to skip when you are busy).** Be sure to check your annotation grades frequently, as simply completing five annotations will not get you credit if those annotations are not substantive.

If you experience some problem completing annotations in Perusall, you can e-mail me your annotations by the time they are due.

I evaluate annotations in the following way:

- I will engage with you in Perusall by responding to questions and annotations.
- After annotations are due, I count the number of annotations you submitted to ensure you submitted at least five annotations. I then check to ensure that your annotations are substantive. This is not an exact science, which is why I drop your three lowest annotation grades. You will receive an evaluation of:
 - Complete (100%): Excellent annotations: at least five substantive annotations; material is engaged well.
 - Incomplete (0%): Unsatisfactory annotations: poor quality annotations (only short responses or not substantive responses) or fewer than five substantive annotations. Or no submission/submitted late.
 - Each individual annotation grade is only a small part of your overall course grade. Missing one annotation will not impact you much, but missing many will.

Class Engagement (100 points)

I hope that class time will be a productive space to discuss readings, work in groups to complete activities, teach your peers, and relate the course to your life experiences. Class engagement goes beyond simply showing up for class, though being in class is definitely an important component.

You play a critical part in maintaining an inclusive classroom climate. You must participate both during class and during the work we do outside of class (annotations, projects, et. cetera); if you feel uncomfortable participating, please reach out to me so we can figure out a way for you to be engaged.

Evaluation: You will provide a self-assessment of your class engagement at three points during the semester. At the final point, you will assign yourself a grade for class engagement.

1. I consistently ask questions and participate in class by (several sentences).
2. I have improved my class engagement thus far by (several sentences).
3. I plan to improve my class engagement by (several sentences).
4. What grade from A to F would you assign yourself for engagement in this course? Why?

Country Position and Strategy (100 points)

Your delegation will work together to submit a document outlining your country's position in the United Nations and your strategy for engaging in the general assembly.

The country position and strategy will have the following components:

1. **Position:** Provide a narrative of not less than 750 words describing the relationship between your country and the United Nations. Read and cite relevant scholarly articles and reports that discuss this relationship from a historical perspective. Mention any recent or ongoing UN resolutions or interventions that directly impact your country.
2. **Strategy:** Provide a narrative of not less than 750 words describing what your delegation would like to accomplish during the simulation. This is your delegation's plan for who to work with, what resolutions to try to pass, what resolutions to block, and how to engage during negotiations. You are expected to follow this strategy during the simulation. Whereas the position narrative should include sources, the strategy narrative is your delegation's own plan based in the historical relationship that your country has with the UN.
3. **Resource Allocation:** You must allocate resources to the United Nations in order for it to function. The resources collectively allocated by all countries in the simulation constitute what the UN can do during the semester. Resolutions all must contain a list of resources used. Discuss your resource allocation for these resources in a narrative of not less than 500 words total.
 - a. **Cost (in US Dollars):** Your country may donate any amount of money to the UN up to their annual budget. You should choose to donate a reasonable amount and fully justify your choice within the bounds of your country's role in the UN, your country leader's priorities, and any major issues currently going on in the country.
 - b. **Troops:** Your country may donate any number of members of your armed forces to the UN up to the total number in your country. For simplicity, assume that you will not be paid for donating troops, but that you can compensate for low monetary donations with higher troop donations. Choose to donate a reasonable number of troops and fully justify your choice based on military or strategic threats in your area.
 - c. **Effort:** Your country can invest up to 100% of its government's effort in supporting the UN. Choose a reasonable percentage for your country based on the importance your country places on the UN and the extent to which your country relies on the UN for support.

Evaluation: Submit one position and strategy document per delegation to Brightspace. You will evaluate your position and strategy during the first self-assessment with these questions:

1. Reviewing the syllabus criteria for the position portion of this assignment, describe how you have met the criteria.
2. Reviewing the syllabus criteria for the strategy portion of this assignment, describe how you have met the criteria.
3. Reviewing the syllabus criteria for the resource allocation portion of this assignment, describe how you have met the criteria.
4. Describe how work was allocated within your delegation to complete this assignment. Was the work equitably distributed?

5. Weighting all three sections roughly equally, what overall grade from A to F would you assign for your work? Why?

Daily Strategy (50 points)

As part of our classes that follow the UN meeting format, you will be asked to prepare and present a daily strategy that describes what you hope your delegation will achieve in a given UN meeting. There are nine UN sessions. You will sign-up to submit your daily strategy in one of these sessions.

A daily strategy must engage with the simulation *as it is currently occurring*. You must be specific and refer to specific resolutions already passed or introduced and specific actions that different delegations have taken thus far.

A daily strategy contains two parts:

1. A 500 word narrative describing exactly what you propose doing in the UN session. What is your strategy for this session? Why? Why this session? Who will you work with? Why? What will you work with them on? Why?
2. A list of each country delegation other than your own and a two-sentence description of your impression of that delegation's strategy in the simulation thus far for each delegation. What are they doing and why?

Evaluation: Your daily strategy should be submitted as one file to Brightspace before the class session when you signed up. You will complete the daily strategy self-assessment on the self-assessment immediately after you complete your daily strategy. The self-assessment will include the questions listed below.

1. My daily strategy narrative describes exactly what I propose doing in the UN session with meaningful justification and description.
2. My daily strategy lists each country delegation other than my own and a two-sentence description of my impression of that delegation's strategy in the simulation.
3. If you were to evaluate your daily strategy a grading scale from A to F based on how well it fulfills the above listed criteria, what grade would you assign and why?

Resolutions (100 points)

As part of our classes that follow the UN meeting format, you will be asked to prepare and briefly summarize draft resolutions that you wrote before class. There are nine UN sessions. You will sign-up to submit and summarize two resolutions on three different class sessions (for a total of six resolutions).

Each resolution should present a solution to a problem relevant to your country and to the UN and related to the topic for that day's UN meeting. For example, if the topic is "nations," you should write a resolution that will address an issue related to nations, nationalism, borders, separatism, or other relevant concerns. Your resolution must be something that the UN can actually implement.

Evaluation: You should submit your resolutions before the class when they are due as separate files on the OneDrive in the “Draft Resolutions” folder. You will be responsible for briefly summarizing your resolutions to the UN meeting and working to revise your resolutions so that they can pass during the meeting. You must use the resolution template on OneDrive as the basis for your resolution. Your resolution must include the resource allocation items for implementation cost, troops required, and effort required at the top, followed by the text of the resolution.

You will complete the resolutions self-assessment on the self-assessment immediately after you complete a resolutions submission. The self-assessment will include the questions listed below.

1. My resolutions were submitted on time, include the resource allocation components, and are related to the topic for the UN meeting.
2. My resolutions have some chance of being adopted. Describe how you prepared a resolution that you thought would garner support from other member states. List the member states you were targeting with your resolution.
3. My resolutions are based in reality. Describe research you conducted to write your resolution in a convincing way, including prior resolutions that you read.
4. My resolutions solve a meaningful problem using tools that the UN has at their disposal. Describe the problem your resolution is trying to solve and how the UN has authority to address that problem.
5. If you were to evaluate your resolutions on a grading scale from A to F based on how well they fulfill the above listed criteria, what grade would you assign and why?

Reflective Journals (100 points)

I often ask students to take “class notes” in my courses. These reflective journals are different from class notes. Here, you should document your reflections on UN meetings and describe the things you have learned and how you are going to apply them to your policy analysis and research proposal during discussions.

You should take some notes during class, but you will need to add reflections after class, as the reflective portion is the main objective of these reflective journals. Each class session should have a header with the date, and there should be an entry for each class session. If you miss a day of class, be sure to speak with a friend in the class so that you can write relevant reflections for that class period. Copying from other students without appropriate attribution is plagiarism.

For UN simulation class periods, focus your reflections on what the resolutions that passed have to do with your country, whether these resolutions have a positive or negative impact, and your short- and long-term strategy for improving your country’s position in the simulation.

For discussion class periods, focus your reflections on how the topics discussed relate to your research proposal or your participation in the UN simulation. You can include notes from your work on your own research proposal, if appropriate.

Evaluation: Write either in a physical notebook or in a computer file. Twice during the semester, you will be asked to submit your reflective journal. Those dates are marked on the topics and readings. Your journal should be submitted to Brightspace before class.

You will conduct a self-assessment which will include the following questions about your reflections.

1. My reflective journal is organized. Each class day is labeled with a heading, and I have used a consistent system to organize my journal.
2. My reflective journal is reflective. It describes my reactions and thoughts about the UN meetings and provides connections between discussion meetings and the research proposal and/or our UN simulation. Each entry in the journal is 200+ words and contains sufficient detail such that I can meaningfully remember my reactions to a given class period by referring to my journal.
3. My reflective journal is my own work. Copying from other students without appropriate attribution is considered plagiarism.
4. If you were to evaluate your reflective journal on a grading scale from A to F based on the “reflective” and “sufficiently detailed” criteria, what grade would you assign and why?

Strategy Slides/LR Check In (60 points)

When this assignment is due, we will have completed most of the UN simulation sessions for the semester. It will also be close to when your revised literature review is due.

Do the following:

1. Create three slides:
 - a. Slide 1: Review your country position and strategy assignment and your daily strategy (if you have submitted it) from earlier in the semester. List five aspects of your strategy that you have been following, each with a specific example.
 - b. Slide 2: Review your country position and strategy assignment and your daily strategy (if you have submitted it) from earlier in the semester. List five aspects of your strategy that you have not followed, each with a specific example.
 - c. Slide 3: List each country in the simulation other than your own. Categorize the strength of your alliance with that country on a 1 to 5 scale where 1 is weak and 5 is strong. Provide a brief justification for five of your categorizations.
2. Submit your progress toward revising your literature review. You do not need to be finished with your revisions. This is a checkpoint assignment only. You are responsible for submitting revisions. Highlight the revisions you have made in red or use a track changes feature to track your revisions.

Evaluation: I will grade this assignment in the following way:

- Strategy Slide 1: Five aspects of strategy followed with examples (12 points). Fewer than five aspects or no examples (0 points).
- Strategy Slide 2: Five aspects of strategy not followed with examples (12 points). Fewer than five aspects or no examples (0 points).

- Strategy Slide 3: All countries categorized and five justified (16 points). Countries missing or not all justified (0 points).
- Literature review revision progress: Revised literature review submitted with changes tracked or indicated in red (20 points). Not submitted, not revised, or no changes tracked/indicated in red (0 points).

Research Proposal (334 points)

We are working as applied political scientists in this course, and applied political scientists use research as a way to inform their community and public engagement. Our goal is to gain exposure to each part of the political science research process and to practice these components by developing a research proposal. The research proposal will provide you with the opportunity to work collaboratively with others in the class to learn more about what career political scientists do and to develop skills that transfer to different careers. This research proposal will give you an introduction to the extensive research article writing process.

Sources must be peer reviewed political science journal articles or books. If --- and only if --- you have already passed POLS/SOCI 433, you may choose to write your research question about some form of comparative law or comparative social policy. In those cases only, you can read and use law reviews, policy reports, and/or court cases to form your annotated bibliography and literature review. Should you meet the qualifications and wish to do this, you must let me know in your research question submission.

Research Question (34 points)

Your research proposal will address a research question: a problem that you feel needs to be addressed or a puzzle you have discovered. You will use this research question to write all the other components of your research proposal, though it is perfectly okay if your question shifts slightly as the course progresses. Your research question and proposal must be different from any research questions you have used in previous courses.

For this assignment, write a *one sentence* research question followed by a 250-word description of your question. In the description, include why you think the question is interesting and how the question relates to contemporary issues in comparative politics. Since this is a course on comparative politics, your research question should be applicable and of interest to scholars of comparative politics.

Evaluation: Your research question and paragraph description will be evaluated based on the following rubric.

Research Question Grading Rubric

34 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
Research Question			
Is concise	2	1	0

Presents a puzzle/addresses a debate in the field or in public policy	5 4	3 2	1 0
Sets up a project that is falsifiable, not descriptive	5 4	3 2	1 0
Can plausibly be tested empirically	2	1	0
Description			
States why the question is relevant and important (at least 4 sentences)	10 8	6 4	2 0
Describes how the question fits into contemporary political discourse	10 8	6 4	2 0

Annotated Bibliography (50 points)

An annotated bibliography summarizes sources and helps prepare you to write a literature review. For this assignment, created an annotated bibliography by collecting at least ten scholarly sources that you cite in APSA format with at least a one paragraph explanation of how each source addresses your research question. **Annotated bibliographies with fewer than ten scholarly sources and paragraph explanations will receive a 0.**

Evaluation: Your annotated bibliography will be evaluated based on the below rubric.

Annotated Bibliography Grading Rubric

50 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
Source Selection			
Uses APSA citation style	10 8	6 4	2 0
Cites at least ten sources	4	2	0
Includes a range of publication years	2		0
Sources are canonical and/or closely related to the research question (only journal articles or academic books are cited, no websites or news stories)	5 4	3 2	1 0
Sources are grouped into “schools” depending on the theoretical arguments and empirical findings	5 4	3 2	1 0
Each school has a meaningful name	4	2	0
There are several sources for each school	4	2	0
Descriptions			
Each source is summarized in several sentences	5 4	3 2	1 0
Each source contains an explanation of why you chose to cite that source and why it is relevant for your RQ	6 5	4 3	2 0
Each source has a description of how you plan to use the work in your article in several sentences	5 4	3 2	1 0

Literature Review (100 points)

A literature review focuses readers' attention on research that directly attempts to answer your research question. Your annotated bibliography summarizes sources; the literature review uses sources to describe why your research question is interesting and worth investigating. Construct a minimum 1,500 word literature review that contextualizes your research question within existing literature. **Literature reviews of fewer than 1,500 words, not including references, will receive a 0.**

Evaluation: Your literature review will be evaluated based on the below rubric.

Literature Review Grading Rubric

100 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
Has an appropriate title	4	2	0
Begins with an introduction summarizing the "schools" and distinguishing your research question from them	5 4	3 2	1 0
Does not summarize cited work	10 8	6 4	2 0
Only includes relevant sources for identifying a theoretical gap in the literature and building your theoretical argument	10 8	6 4	2 0
Each paragraph is directly related toward contextualizing and describing the importance of your research question	10 8	6 4	2 0
Effectively groups sources with each school and talks about common themes among sources	10 8	6 4	2 0
Uses the "funnel" format with each school to discuss common themes within the school first	10 8	6 4	2 0
Your research question is clear and clearly differentiated from prior work	10 8	6 4	2 0
Structure is easy to read with no block paragraphs	4	2	0
No direct quotations are used	10 8	6 4	2 0
Ends with a conclusion discussing how your research question builds on the literature	5 4	3 2	1 0
Reference list in APSA citation style	10	5	0
Includes a word count (including only the literature review, not references) at the top of the first page of the paper	2		0

Bill (150 points)

The next step in the research article writing process is writing a theoretical argument, which provides justification for your hypothesis. For now, you will apply what you learned about your research question while writing the literature review to construct a piece of legislation that you think will adequately (and reasonably) address the problem your research question identifies.

Your bill will have several components. First, you will include a cover page called a change sheet that lists the changes you made to your literature review since you last submitted it. Take as much or as little space for this change sheet as you need to provide a detailed description of the changes you made. You should then include a revised literature review (but not the annotated bibliography). Next, you will include an introduction to your bill. Then, you will include the bill itself that is annotated to explain how and why you made different decisions when designing the bill. Finally, you should include a references list in APSA format covering all references cited in the literature review, the introduction to the bill, and the bill itself. **The annotated bill section must be more than 2,000 words or the assignment will receive a 0.**

Evaluation: Your bill will be evaluated based on the below rubric.

Bill Grading Rubric

150 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
Change sheet is detailed	10	5	0
Revisions to Literature Review	10 8	6 4	2 0
Bill Introduction			
Lists an “if/then” hypothesis that follows from the research question	5 4	3 2	1 0
Hypothesis is falsifiable	5 4	3 2	1 0
Includes a detailed description of how the proposed bill relates to what you learned while writing your literature review (2+ paragraphs)	5 4	3 2	1 0
Describes and cites existing pieces of legislation upon which you based the structure and content of the bill (2+ paragraphs)	10 8	6 4	2 0
Explicitly discusses techniques you used to write your bill based on the example bill we read and annotated (2+ paragraphs)	10 8	6 4	2 0
Annotated Bill			
Is formatted to look like an actual piece of legislation	5 4	3 2	1 0
Is clearly and logically structured into sections and sub-sections	5 4	3 2	1 0
Adequately justifies the legality of the bill and its goals	5 4	3 2	1 0
Includes clear and comprehensive definition list	10 8	6 4	2 0
Describes administrative structure needed to implement the bill	5 4	3 2	1 0
Describes funding mechanisms and implementation timeline	5 4	3 2	1 0
Bill text is comprehensive so readers with no knowledge of your proposal can fully understand it reading the bill	10 8	6 4	2 0

Frequent annotations included in footnotes for each decision you made when writing the bill	14 12	8 6	4 0
Annotations are thorough and answer all questions a reader could have about the bill's design	14 12	8 6	4 0
Annotation justifications include frequent citations to existing legislation and scholarly sources	10 8	6 4	2 0
Reference list in APSA citation style	10	5	0
Includes a word count (including only the bill section, not references or the literature review) at the top of the first page of the article	2		0

Course Policies:

- General:
 - You agree to the provisions in the Common Syllabus, available on Brightspace.
 - All assignments are to be turned in on Brightspace and are due at class time on the date indicated unless otherwise noted.
 - You are responsible for ensuring that your assignments submit to Brightspace successfully and that the file you submitted can be displayed. All file submissions except the class notes must be in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) or PDF format. Files in other formats cannot be read by Brightspace.
 - Should you have an accommodation, please meet with me during the first two weeks of classes, either during office hours or by appointment, to discuss.
- Plagiarism:
 - Citations must be in American Political Science Association (APSA) style. Use of this style is important, as it governs the writing of professional political science. The APSA style manual is posted on Brightspace.
 - Book format: Grace, Philip. 2016. *Affectionate Authorities: Fathers and Fatherly Roles in Late Medieval Basel*. London: Routledge.
 - Journal article format: Walsh, Germaine Paulo. 2002. "Is Jane Austin Politically Correct? Interpreting Mansfield Park." *Perspectives on Political Science* 31(1): 15-26.
 - In-text citation format: Professors at TLU are doing interesting research (Grace 2016; Walsh 2002).
 - Plagiarism, including inappropriate attribution, is an Academic Honesty Violation and is grounds for failure from the course.
 - Always cite your sources. If you are unsure if you are paraphrasing, rewrite to use either a direct quotation or paraphrase differently. Feel free to talk to me if you are unsure whether or how to cite a source.
 - You can use the Turnitin draft coach on Word Online to run a Turnitin report.
 - Wikipedia is not an appropriate academic source.
 - Artificial intelligence tools will be of little help in this course. Only tools that assist with brainstorming concepts or basic spelling and grammar are allowed in this course. If you use one of these tools, you must cite it. All work must be wholly your own, and sentences must be constructed without assistance. All other uses are Academic Honesty Violations.

- Student Office Hours:
 - Student office hours are a time for you to come by to speak with me without an appointment. Please come by to see me early in the semester. I am happy to discuss your progress in the course, political science topics, and potential career paths. These student office hours are for you; please do not feel like you are imposing by stopping by. If you want to come by but don't know what to ask, ask me about my favorite place to travel to!
- Technology:
 - We will use technology in class. As a result, you are expected to bring a laptop, tablet, or smartphone to each of our class sessions (laptop or tablet preferred). If you will not have regular access to one of these devices, you can borrow a laptop from the library, use a classmate's laptop, or speak with me and we will work out an alternative approach.
 - You are expected to use your devices for class purposes only. Using your device in other ways is distracting to other students, and I reserve the right to deduct up to 10% of your final grade or to drop you from the class in serious cases.
 - Taking photos, recording audio/video of class, or distributing any class materials is not permitted.
- Attendance:
 - I understand that there are reasons that you may need to be absent from class. I expect that you will be responsible and attend class as much as possible. Accordingly, **you do not need to let me know when you will be absent** unless it is a university sponsored absence. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to learn what we did from someone else in class, to review all material on Brightspace, and to come speak with me during student office hours if you have questions.
 - Attending class is the biggest key to success in this course. **It is best to limit absences to 3 or fewer during the semester. 6 or more absences result in automatic failure from the course.**
- Late Work:
 - All assignments in this course are most relevant to you and to the rest of the students if they are turned in the day that they are due. As such, assignments will only be accepted late if prior arrangements for an extension have been made.
 - Extensions will only be given in extraordinary circumstances. Feel free to speak with me if numerous assignments are due around the same time; we can develop a plan together to help you complete everything on time. To request an extension, you must e-mail me at least 48 hours before the assignment is due with the reasons behind your request. We can then work together to figure out how you can turn the assignment in on time or make alternate arrangements in extraordinary circumstances.
- Grading:
 - Everyone can succeed in this course, and it is my goal to help you do so! Coming to class prepared, completing assignments on time, working hard, and doing your best are the biggest tickets to doing well.

- Grades will only be changed if I made an arithmetic error or mistake. If you feel that this happened to you, please send me an e-mail no later than three days after the assignment is returned detailing the error.
- If you are concerned about a grade you receive, please discuss it with me. I am happy to discuss how you can improve in future work.
- I do not give incomplete grades unless there is a documented medical crisis or documented emergency late in the semester and you have communicated about this to me when the incident occurs.
- Failing to complete a self-assessment results in a zero for the assignments graded on the self-assessment.
- **Checking Your Grade:**
 - You can always check your grade in the course by looking at the Grades tab. Be sure to view all rubric feedback on graded items.
 - The course grade reflects the points you have earned thus far in the course (starting at 0 points). You can calculate your estimated final grade using the grade estimator spreadsheet on Brightspace.
- **Contacting Me:**
 - E-mail is the best way to contact me outside of student office hours. Please do not use Brightspace Messages, as I am unlikely to see your message promptly. You can call my office phone, but my e-mail response time is likely to be quicker.
 - I will respond to your e-mails promptly. In general, you can expect a response within 24 hours and that e-mails will be answered between 9AM and 5PM, Monday through Friday. While I understand students work outside of these hours, please plan ahead to give me time to respond.
 - Be sure to check the syllabus before e-mailing; questions answered in the syllabus will not be answered via e-mail.
 - Often, e-mail is best used to set-up an individual meeting. It is easier for us to understand each other in a meeting rather than via lengthy e-mail exchanges.
 - Please treat e-mails as professional correspondence. E-mails may only come from your tlu.edu e-mail address and should include a salutation (e.g., Dear Dr. O'Brochta), a clear message, and a signature with your name and the class you are enrolled in.