



Political Science
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

**POL219 H1S: INSTITUTIONS AND BEHAVIOR
IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

**Thursdays, 11:00-13:00
Winter term 2026**

Professor Randall Hansen
Office Hours: Thursdays, 2:00-4:00 pm
Munk North House 319

Description

Since its establishment in the late nineteenth century, the discipline of Political Science has defined itself through the study of institutions. This course will examine the major democratic systems (presidential, parliamentary, semi-presidential) and explore the effects of institutions on power, coups, segregation and racial discrimination, gender and sexuality, economic reform and inequality, immigration and immigration policy, and segregation and apartheid. Institutions examined will include traditional formal institutions (electoral systems, constitutions, courts, executives, legislatures, party systems) and intermediate institutions (trade unions and interest groups). The course will examine these issues by analyzing countries in both the global north (Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States) and the global south (Brazil, Iran, India, Libya, and South Africa).

Learning Outcomes:

This course will aid students in:

1. Acquiring knowledge about the institutions that collectively constitute the state: the executive, legislature, courts, bureaucracy, the police, and the army.
2. Deepening understanding of a broad range of countries in the Americas, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.
3. Exploring how different institutional arrangements encourage or inhibit political stability, breakdown, and violence; economic equality/inequality; and minority (and, in some cases, majority) rights.

Requirements and Grade Breakdown

1. **Response Paper (20%)** to *CBC Frontburner* podcast: **Should universities have opinions?** <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/frontburner/should-universities-have-opinions-9.6999327>

Due date: February 4, 11:59 pm. Submit to Quercus.

Instructions: Write a 750-word paper on the following: Is the university an institution? If so, what sort? What is the difference? Are statements on Palestine or Ukraine inherently a violation of neutrality? If not, why not? Should it matter if there is a consensus on these topics or not? Can neutrality be achieved through any means other than silence on controversial topics? If so, who should be silent? Administrators, faculty, or both?

Use **timestamps** and at least five citations. You must cite at least two course readings and one further academic source (books with university presses, peer-reviewed articles, or chapters in academic books). Others may include similar sources, newspaper articles, substack contributions, or other podcasts (with timestamps).

There is no right answer. You will be evaluated on your knowledge of the podcast and the persuasiveness of your argument.

2. **Essay outline (10%)**: A 500-word outline of your essay

Due date: February 18, 11:59 pm. Submit to Quercus.

Instructions: Write an outline of your essay. The outline should summarize your argument, which you should be able to state in at most three sentences, as well as the evidence you will cite. Specify at least five academic sources: books with university presses, peer-reviewed articles, or chapters in academic books (published by university presses).

3. **Essay (35%)**: 2,000 words.

Due date: March 25, 11:59 pm. Submit to Quercus
See Quercus for instructions.

4. **Final In-Class Test (25%)**: April 2, 11:10 am-1:00 pm

Structure

1. Section 1: 20%. Factual questions.
2. Short answers: 50%. Complete five out of seven.
3. Essay question: 30% Complete one out of two.

5. Tutorial Participation (10%)

Students will be graded on their tutorial attendance as well as their participation in tutorials (e.g., asking and answering questions and engaging in class discussion).

NB: Tutorials will start from week 3.

Course Drop Date: March 16, 2026.

Late Penalties & Extensions

The penalty for late submission is a modest **2% per day** (*including weekends*), to a maximum of two weeks.

Extensions must be requested for legitimate reasons (illness, family tragedy) at least three full days before the essay is due (for instance, by 11:59 pm on February 1 for the first assignment). After that, no extensions are given. **Extensions are available for a maximum of 2 weeks; after that, no work will be accepted.** This policy may appear firm; however, there is no ill will implied by it; on the contrary, managing deadlines is an essential life skill, and private-sector employers take an uncompromising view of deadlines. We are not doing you any favors with an overly generous extension policy. Start your work early, and you will have no difficulty meeting deadlines. Good luck!

Email Communication

Students are encouraged to raise questions not answered by the syllabus in class, tutorial, and office hours. Email should be a last, not a first, resort. Asking questions in class and tutorials will benefit other students, and it will increase your confidence in public speaking (another essential life skill!). For matters that cannot be raised in class, TA and instructor emails are:

Teaching Assistants:

arina.dmitrenko@mail.utoronto.ca [Email hours: 9 am-5 pm].

Aiden.kerr@mail.utoronto.ca [Email hours: 9 am – 5 pm].

Instructor:

r.hansen@utoronto.ca [Email hours: 9 am-5 pm].

Essay Submission

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the

University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation website (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq> (Links to an external site.))

Course Materials

There is one required text for the course: Patrick H. O'Neil, Karl Fields, and Don Share, *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics 3rd Edition* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2023). Hereafter: 'O'Neil et al.'

You may purchase an e-copy here:

[Digital Resources for Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics \(wwnorton.com\)](https://www.wwnorton.com)

You will find instructions on how to register on the Quercus website under 'Modules.'

Hard copies are available at the University of Toronto bookstore or on Amazon.ca. There might also be used copies available.

Academic misconduct

Cheating and plagiarism are serious academic offenses and will be dealt with accordingly. For further clarification and information, please see the University of Toronto's policy on plagiarism at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

COURSE OUTLINE

1. January 8: Introduction

In defence of institutions:

Dani Rodrik and Arvind Subramanian, *The Primacy of Institutions*.

Hanna Rosin, "The Despots of Silicon Valley," *The Atlantic*, February 8, 2024 [on tech as anti-institutions, anti-democratic]

Against institutions:

Marc Andreessen, *The Techno-Optimist Manifesto*: <https://a16z.com/the-techno-optimist-manifesto/>

Cato Institute, *Abolish the Department of Education*, <https://www.cato.org/commentary/abolish-department-education>, and *What Would Really Happen if the US Department of Education Went Away* <https://www.cato.org/commentary/what-would-really-happen-us-department-education-went-away>. Interesting pieces, as both left and right can agree on some points (for instance, against mandatory testing and national or provincial standards).

PART I: HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS

2. January 15: Political Science and the Study of Institutions

O’Neil, Patrick H., Karl Fields, and Don Share. *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, 3rd Edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2023. Chapters 1–2: “Introduction” and “States.”

Recommended reading

Bevir, Mark. “Foucault, Power, and Institutions.” *Political Studies* 47.2 (1999): 345–359.
<https://journals-sagepub-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/doi/abs/10.1111/1467-9248.00204>
Goodin, Robert E. “The State of the Discipline, the Discipline of the State.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, 1–83. (Quercus)

3. January 22: The State

O’Neil, Patrick H., Karl Fields, and Don Share. *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, 3rd Edition. Chapter 6, “Democratic Regimes.”
Weber, Max. “Politics as a Vocation.” Lecture, Munich, January 1919. (Quercus)

Recommended reading

Skocpol, Theda. “Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research.” In Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, 3–38.
Tilly, Charles. “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime.” In Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, 169–191. (Quercus)
Zolberg, Aristide R. “The formation of new states as a refugee-generating process.” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 467.1 (1983): 24–38.
Migdal, Joel S., and Klaus Schlichte. “Rethinking the state.” In *The Dynamics of States*. Routledge, 2005, 11–50.
O’Dwyer, Conor. “Runaway State-Building: How Political Parties Shape States in Postcommunist Eastern Europe.” *World Politics* 56.4 (July 2004): 520–53.

PART II: COMPARING INSTITUTIONS TODAY

4. January 29: Patterns of Democracy: regime types

Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); chapters 2-3 and 6-7 [available online through U of T website].

5. February 5: Making Democracy Work – Electoral Systems

- Lijphart, Arend. *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012. Chapter 8.
- Shugart, Matthew. “The Electoral System of Israel.” In Reuven Y. Hazan, Alan Dowty, and Menachem Hofnung, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Israeli Politics and Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021, 331–350. (Quercus).

Recommended reading

- Baumgart-Ochse, Claudia. “Democratization in Israel, politicized religion and the failure of the Oslo peace process.” *Democratization* 16.6 (2009): 1115–1142.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13510340903271761>
- Küchler, Manfred. “The NSDAP Vote in the Weimar Republic: An Assessment of the State-of-the-Art in View of Modern Electoral Research.” *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung* (1992): 22–52.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20755627>
- Baldini, Gianfranco. “The different trajectories of Italian electoral reforms.” *West European Politics* 34.3 (2011): 644–663.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01402382.2011.555988>

PART III: INSTITUTIONS IN ACTION

6. February 12: American institutions & the triumph of executive power

- O’Neil, Patrick H., Karl Fields, and Don Share. “The United States.” In *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, 3rd Edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2023.
- Molly E. Reynolds, “Improving congressional capacity to address problems and oversee the executive branch,” *Policy 2020: Big Ideas*. Brookings Institution.
- David Foster, “Persistent unilateral action,” *Political Science Research and Methods* 13 (2025): 507-526.

Recommended reading

- Peter H. Aronson, “Theory of Legislative Delegation,” *Cornell Law Review* 68/1 (1982).

Reading Week — February 16–20 (no class February 19)

7. February 26: When institutions collapse: The 1964 Brazilian coup d'état

- O'Neil, Patrick H., Karl Fields, and Don Share. "Brazil." In *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, 3rd Edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2023.
- Unger, Mark. "Coups." In James Ciment, ed., *Encyclopedia of Conflicts since World War II*, Second Edition. New York: Routledge, 2015, 29–36. (Quercus)
- David, MacMichael. "Brazil: Generals' Coup, 1964." In James Ciment and Kenneth Hill, eds., *Encyclopedia of Conflicts since World War II*, Second Edition. New York: Routledge, 2006, 358–363. (Quercus)
- Economist. "Introducing the non-coup." May 20, 2014.
<https://www.economist.com/banyan/2014/05/20/introducing-the-non-coup> (Quercus)

Recommended reading

- Pereira, Anthony W. "The US Role in the 1964 Coup in Brazil: A Reassessment." *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 37.1 (2018): 5–17.
- Baker, Chris. "The 2014 Thai coup and some roots of authoritarianism." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 46.3 (2016): 388–404.
- Ciment, James. "Chile: Coup against Allende 1973." In James Ciment and Kenneth Hill, eds., *Encyclopedia of Conflicts since World War II*, First Edition. New York: Routledge, 2015, 329–335. (Quercus)
- Devine, Jack. "What Really Happened in Chile: The CIA, the Coup Against Allende, and the Rise of Pinochet." *Foreign Affairs* 93.4 (2014): 26–35.
- Holmes, Jennifer. "Political Violence and Regime Change in Argentina: 1965–1976." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 13.1 (2001): 134–154.
- Economist. "The Darkened Horizon." May 25, 2014.
- Economist. "Come on, get happy." June 7, 2014.
- Singh, Naunihal. *Seizing Power: The Strategic Logic of Military Coups*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014. Chapter 2.
- Casey, Adam E. "The Durability of Client Regimes: Foreign Sponsorship and Military Loyalty, 1946–2010." *World Politics* 72.3 (2020): 411–447.
- Pérez-Liñán, Aníbal, and John Polga-Hecimovich. "Explaining military coups and impeachments in Latin America." *Democratization* 24.5 (2017): 839–858.

8. March 5: Implementing Apartheid and Segregation

- O'Neil, Patrick H., Karl Fields, and Don Share. "South Africa." In *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, 3rd Edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2023.
- King, Desmond. "Forceful federalism against American racial inequality." *Government and Opposition* 52.2 (2017): 356–382.
- Grigoriadis, Ioannis N., and Z. Asli Elitsoy. "Inside Outsiders: Comparing State Policies Towards Citizens of Palestinian and Kurdish Descent in Israel and Turkey." *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* (2021): 1–18.

Recommended reading

- Richardson, Heather Cox. *How the South Won the Civil War: Oligarchy, Democracy, and the Continuing Fight for the Soul of America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- King, Desmond. *Separate and Unequal: Black Americans and the US Federal Government*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. Chapter 1. (Quercus)

9. March 12: Gender, Identity, and Sexuality

- Encarnación, Omar G. “Gay rights: Why democracy matters.” *Journal of Democracy* 25.3 (2014): 90–104.
- Htun, Mala. “Is gender like ethnicity? The political representation of identity groups.” *Perspectives on Politics* 2.3 (2004): 439–458.
- Pelz, Michael. *EU Expansion and LGBT Rights: Explaining Variation in State Responses to LGBT Rights in Central and Eastern Europe*. Toronto: University of Toronto PhD in Political Science, 2015. Overview chapters. (Quercus)
- Economist. “Skirting Pain: Thailand’s transvestites and transexuals.” June 14, 2003. <https://www.economist.com/books-and-arts/2003/06/12/skirting-pain> (Quercus)
- Podcast: *How MASH Predicted the Rise and Fall of Don't Ask, Don't Tell – The Stranger*.

Recommended reading

- West, Candace, and Don H. Zimmerman. “Doing gender.” *Gender & Society* 1.2 (1987): 125–151.
- Paxton, Pamela, Sheri Kunovich, and Melanie M. Hughes. “Gender in politics.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 33 (2007): 263–284.
- Celis, Karen, Johanna Kantola, Georgina Waylen, and S. Laurel Weldon. “Introduction: Gender and Politics: A Gendered World, a Gendered Discipline.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics*. Oxford University Press, 2013, 1–26.
- Guardian*. “I am not here to entertain: meet Thailand’s first transgender MP.” April 8, 2019.
- Moghadam, Valentine M. “Patriarchy and the politics of gender in modernising societies: Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan.” *International Sociology* 7.1 (1992): 35–53.
- Najmabadi, Afsaneh. “Transing and transpassing across sex-gender walls in Iran.” *Women’s Studies Quarterly* 36.3/4 (2008): 23–42.
- Parla, Ayse. “The ‘honor’ of the state: Virginity examinations in Turkey.” *Feminist Studies* 27.1 (2001): 65–88.
- Purkayastha, Bandana, et al. “The study of gender in India: A partial review.” *Gender & Society* 17.4 (2003): 503–524.
- Mir-Hosseini, Ziba. “Criminalizing sexuality: zina laws as violence against women in Muslim contexts.” *SUR – International Journal on Human Rights* 15 (2011): 7.
- Zuhur, Sherifa. “Criminal Law, Women and Sexuality in the Middle East.” In *Deconstructing Sexuality in the Middle East*. Routledge, 2016, 17–40.

10. March 19: Political Violence, Terrorism, and Forced Migration

O’Neil, Patrick H., Karl Fields, and Don Share. *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, 3rd Edition. Chapter 5, “Political Violence,” and country chapter: “Iran.”

Economist. “Libya’s neighbours are afraid of a complete breakdown of order; a warlord flees; the balance shifts.” Podcast episode, June 10, 2020. (Listen until 08:30 min.)

<https://www.economist.com/podcasts/2020/06/10/libyas-neighbours-are-afraid-of-a-complete-breakdown-of-order-a-warlord-flees-the-balance-shifts>

“Migrants and refugees in detention centres: the humanitarian consequences of Libya’s governance breakdown.”

<https://www.refworld.org/docid/583c0d874.html>

“Libya and its migrants confront new threats.”

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2020/05/20/libya-and-its-migrants-confront-new-threats/>

Recommended reading

Gerges, Fawaz A. “ISIS and the Third Wave of Jihadism.” *Current History* 113.767 (2014): 339–343.

Jones, Seth G. “The rise of Afghanistan’s insurgency: State failure and Jihad.” *International Security* 32.4 (2008): 7–40.

11. March 26: Institutions and Political Economy (ONLINE)

O’Neil, Patrick H., Karl Fields, and Don Share. *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, 3rd Edition. Chapter 4, “Political Economy.”

O’Neil, Patrick H., Karl Fields, and Don Share. “Germany.” In *Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics*, 3rd Edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2023.

Financial Times. “Germany steps up hunt for migrant workers amid fears for economy.” December 19, 2019.

<https://www.ft.com/content/e59457d4-2002-11ea-b8a1-584213ee7b2b> (Quercus)

Economist. “How Germany’s guestworkers become guest entrepreneurs.” November 19, 2020.

<https://www.economist.com/business/2020/11/19/how-germanys-guest-workers-become-guest-entrepreneurs> (Quercus)

Recommended reading

Hall, Peter A., and David Soskice. *Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. Chapter 1. (Quercus)

O’Neil et al. Political Economy sections of chapters on France, Japan, Russia, China, Mexico, and Nigeria.

Thelen, Kathleen. *Varieties of Liberalization: The New Politics of Social Solidarity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Chapters 1 and 6. (Quercus)