Welcome!
Welcome to UAlbany’s 2016 winter online Comparative and International Politics course! To make this four-week journey fulfilling and rewarding, the instructor and students must work together through cyberspace. Since this course is a condensed version of the 12- to 14-week course, students must work diligently with discipline throughout the four weeks in order to succeed. Therefore, this is NOT an easy course. Students must keep up with the readings and coursework on a daily basis and are expected to devote an average of three to four hours to the course work everyday, between five and six days per week.

Before we begin this journey, please make sure you read the course information carefully. If your winter plans and/or access to computer and Internet might create barriers to your success in this course, please DROP THE COURSE as early as possible. If you are not sure about whether to take this course or not, please consult the instructor IMMEDIATELY.

Please contact the instructor whenever you have any questions or concerns. Now, sit up straight, and let’s get going!

Meet the Instructor!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Yeufen Hsieh (pronounced as “Yu-fen Shi-e”)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course</td>
<td>RPOS 102 Introduction to Comparative and International Politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester</td>
<td>Winter 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td><a href="mailto:yhsieh4@albany.edu">yhsieh4@albany.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Private Communications**

For private communication with me, please use the Email (external: yhsieh4@albany.edu) ONLY.

Anything other than private communications should be posted in the appropriate course areas.

If you have general questions such as the deadline of an assignment or where to find information, about this course, please use Ask a Question under the Discussion Board link (on tool bar on the left). You are encouraged to check Ask a Question regularly. If you see your peers post a question that you might have the correct answer to, you are strongly encouraged to provide your answer.
I will check my email and log on to Blackboard regularly during the four-week period of this course. I will make sure I answer emails, questions and concerns at least two times a day (9am and 3pm, EST) from Monday to Friday and at least once a day (between 10am and 11am, EST) during weekends, unless otherwise noticed. Normally you should be able to expect less than 12-hour turnaround time with regard to email exchanges.

**Course Description**
Comparative and international politics embodies the notion of “know the world, know yourself.” This course introduces students to key scholarly discussions about how to compare politics in different countries and how to study global politics. There are no prerequisite requirements, except for an open mind and curiosity for domestic politics around the globe and world politics in general. By the end of the class, students should be familiar with the key concepts and debates in international affairs and recognize the value of learning about different polities around the world.

**Required Readings**
3. Additional articles. These articles will be available on Blackboard in each week’s Study Folder (see next section).

* Note: Students can find both textbooks on AbeBooks, and Amazon.com and Bookbyte. Please make sure you receive a hard copy of the first book (Drogus & Orvis) by **December 17th, 2015 (Thursday)** and a hard copy of the second book (Lamy et al.) by **December 31st (Thursday)**. These deadlines are for your benefit so that you will have enough time to read and then complete your assignments. If you are not sure whether you are getting the right book, please check with the instructor by email immediately.

**Overview of Learning Activities**
Note: All learning activities are designed to help students absorb the course material step-by-step. Each week has an overarching theme which is then divided into three sub-themes. Students must complete all required readings according to the schedule in order to succeed in these activities. Students must participate in EVERY learning activity. Missing one activity will have an influence over your grade, as explained in the section of "How You Will be Evaluated."

1. **Study Folder (including additional readings and study notes)**
   Every weekend when the learning module is made available, students will be able to find a Study Folder inside the module. The Study Folder will include required readings and a study note (a PDF file). The study note will include some key concepts and puzzles. Students should use this study note to read through the assigned readings, in order to capture the core ideas and debates. The study note will also briefly introduce the suggested readings (see below no. 6.).
2. Icebreaker (0%)
   Due on the first day of class (December 21st 12pm) and will be explained thoroughly in the Icebreaker Module.

3. Four Graded Warm-Up Quizzes (15%)

4. Four Graded Group Discussions (30%)

5. Four Graded Application Activities (30%)

6. Final Exam (25%)

7. Suggested Readings
   For every week’s topic, there will be two to three suggested readings. You can find the PDF files inside the folder, Suggested Readings. Students can selectively read the articles on the topics that you are especially interested in.

How You Will be Evaluated

1. Four Graded Warm-Up Quizzes 15%
   There will be one warm-up quiz in the beginning of every week in the format of one short-answer question. There are in total four warm-up quizzes. Students must participate in ALL four of them; otherwise the overall warm-up quiz grade will be automatically downgraded by 20%. The quizzes will be available on Blackboard under the section of “quizzes” by the previous Friday 11:30pm. Students are expected to independently complete these quizzes by Monday 11:30pm, after which students will not be able to answer the quiz questions.

   All four warm-up quizzes will receive a numerical grade (on a 1-5 scale), based on the quality of the answers. Only the best three quiz grades of each student will be counted toward her or his overall quiz grade. Students will receive the numerical grade and comments on each quiz by Wednesday 11:30pm.

2. Four Graded Online Discussions 30%
   Before December 18th (Friday), students will be put into groups of three to five. You will first get to know your group members through an icebreaker on the first day of the class (December 21st).

   There will be four online discussions in total. Students must participate in ALL four of them; otherwise the overall discussion grade will be automatically downgraded by 20%. Every week, each group will have to respond to one discussion question by using and referencing what they learn from the readings and other course materials.

   The questions will be available on Blackboard by every Monday 11:30pm under the section of “discussions” and each group will be assigned one question. The group discussions are scheduled between every Monday 11:30pm and Wednesday 11:30pm. Each student must post at least two carefully-thought-out and cautiously-edited messages in the group discussions. Each student must post his or her first message by Tuesday 11:30pm. Failure to do so will automatically lose 3 points on that week’s group discussion grade. The quality as well as the timing of the posts would play a role in your grade (basically, the earlier the better). This is an opportunity for students to demonstrate both their understanding of the course materials AND their ability to engage in discussions with their peers.

   There will be in total four rounds of online discussions. All of them will receive feedback and a numerical grade (on a 1-10 scale) from the instructor. Only the best
three discussion grades of each student will be counted toward her or his overall
discussion grade.

Students will receive the feedback and a numerical grade on a PDF file through
e-mails by 11:30pm on Friday.

3. Four Graded Application Activities 30%
There will be four application activities. Students must participate in ALL four of
them; otherwise the overall application activity grade will be automatically
downgraded by 20%. These activities will ask students to apply the course readings
and materials of the week to briefly analyze a current event in comparative politics or
global politics. Students are expected to participate in these application activities by
writing two to four paragraphs every week. The questions will be available on
Blackboard under the section of “application activities” by every Wednesday
11:30pm. Students are expected to independently complete these activities by every
Friday 11:30pm, after which students will not be able to answer the question.

There will be four application activities in total. All of them will receive feedback and
a numerical grade (on a 1-10 scale) from the instructor. Only the best three
application activity grades of each student will be counted toward her or his overall
application activity grade.

Students will receive the feedback and a numerical grade by 11:30pm on the
following Monday.

4. Final Exam 25%
A Final Exam module will be available on Blackboard between 9am January 11th
and 11:30pm January 18th. Please make plans to access to the final exam
question as well as other related learning material ahead of time. Students
must open the module to read and then answer the exam question. To respond to
the question, students have to write a 3-4 page double-spaced essay, and submit
the essay to Blackboard by 11:30pm January 18th.

The final exam will be graded on a 1-25 scale.

Assignment Policy
All assignments (quizzes, group discussions, application activities and the final
exam) should be submitted through Blackboard. Emailed or faxed assignments will
not be accepted. Late submissions might receive feedback but will not be graded.

Expectation for Students
Learning about different polities around the world and their relations with each other
through interactions in cyberspace can be a fulfilling experience ONLY when
students themselves are committed to this process. Therefore, students are
expected to be PROACTIVE throughout the four-week learning process. It is the
students’ responsibility to make sure they have the two textbooks at hand throughout
the four-week period. Students are expected to CAREFULLY READ THROUGH the
assigned book chapters and course materials BEFORE taking part in the course
activity, because the readings and course materials are to prepare students for all
course activities. Whenever you have a question related to the course materials, you
may choose to post the question on **Ask a Question** or email the instructor AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, so that the instructor or your peers will be able to give you timely assistance.

Students should utilize all course activities to demonstrate their understanding about the materials. This course welcomes open discussions and debates ONLY WHEN they are based on reliable sources and traceable evidence (usually from the readings, course materials and/or suggested external sources). Pure opinion is NOT enough to function as quality arguments for discussions and debates in this academic course. Therefore, always make sure your posts and answers have solid foundations to enable you to make a quality argument.

It is recommended that students spend approximately three to four hours everyday, at least five days a week during the four-week period, although the hours might vary according to your reading ability and study strategy. This is NOT an easy class considering the discipline and effort each student is expected to put in, in order to succeed in this class.

**Overview of Course Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Theme</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
<th>Assignment Due Date and Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ice Breaker</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>December 21st</td>
<td>December 21st 12pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 1: Comparative Politics, States and Governing Institutions</td>
<td>Comparative Politics: Understanding Politics Beyond the US</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>December 25th</td>
<td>Warm-Up Quiz December 21st 11:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Methods: Logic or Logics of Comparison?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>Group Discussions December 23rd 11:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State, Political Institutions and the Distribution of Power</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>Application Activities December 25th 11:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 2: Political Institutions, Accountability and Regime Types</td>
<td>State, Society and Checks and Balances of Power</td>
<td>December 26th</td>
<td>January 1st</td>
<td>Warm-Up Quiz December 28th 11:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regime Types</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Group Discussions December 30th 11:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regime Transitions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Application Activities January 1st 11:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 3: States in the International System</td>
<td>International System</td>
<td>January 2nd</td>
<td>January 8th</td>
<td>Warm-Up Quiz January 4th 11:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Think about International Relations Theoretically</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Group Discussions January 6th 11:30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Security, Conflicts and War</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Application Activities January 8th 11:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 4: Cooperation, Globalization and Other Global Issues</td>
<td>Cooperation and International Community</td>
<td>January 9th</td>
<td>January 15th</td>
<td>Warm-Up Quiz January 11th 11:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International Political Economy and Globalization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Group Discussions January 13th 11:30pm</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Human Rights and Global Civil Society**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>January 11th</td>
<td>January 18th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay Question</td>
<td>January 18th</td>
<td>January 18th 11:30pm</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Netiquette**

Online interactions enable people from different parts of the world to communicate with each other regardless the geographical distance. However, having rewarding online interactions is like having rewarding face-to-face interactions in which etiquette and respect for each other are required. Remember, you are interacting with a fellow human being sitting in front of her or his computer screen, someone just like you. Think how you will interact with a human being in front of you before you type.

Also bear in mind, written words can be powerful in a way that is different from spoken words. Being careful about the words you write shows respect for yourself as well as other participants in this online course.

For more information about netiquette, please carefully review the website [http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html](http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html).

**Policy on Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism and cheating in any form will not be tolerated. For more information about plagiarism, please review the webpage: [http://www.albany.edu/eas/104/penalty.htm](http://www.albany.edu/eas/104/penalty.htm).

**IT Support**

This course is conducted completely online. All course activities and materials must be accessed and submitted through the Blackboard Learning System. To make sure the learning process is not interrupted, students must have backup computer(s) with decent Internet access. Students must also have backup plans regarding access to a computer, Internet and the Blackboard learning system (e.g. a nearby public library), in case unexpected issues occur with your regular computer and Internet.

When issues regarding accessing to Blackboard occur, please find the IT service information on [http://www.albany.edu/its/svc_help.php](http://www.albany.edu/its/svc_help.php) and contact IT Help Desk IMMEDIATELY.

**Holidays and Weekends**

Holidays and weekends do not apply to this course. In other words, students are expected to follow the course schedule to complete their course work even when the assignment due dates fall on a holiday.

Students might have to accommodate weekend plans in order to complete assigned readings and coursework on time. Please make sure you manage your time effectively during the four-week learning period.
**Your Next Step – Icebreaker Module**

As your next step, please complete the **Icebreaker** Module by 12pm December 21st (Monday):

1. Click on the **Icebreaker** module under Course Content (on tool bar on the left).
2. Click on **Meet Your Classmates**. Then, click on the thread of **Meet Your Classmate: Instruction** posted by the instructor. After carefully reading the instructions, follow the instructions to create your own thread. To create your own thread, select the Create Thread button and be sure to enter your full name (first and last names) in the subject field. To submit, select the Post button.
3. Go back to the **Icebreaker** module. Click on **Sidewalk Chat Board**. Carefully read through the thread, “about the Sidewalk Chat Board” posted by the instructor.
4. Go back to the **Icebreaker** model. Click on **Ask a Question**. Carefully read through the thread, “How to use Ask a Question” posted by the instructor.
5. Post a thread on **Ask a Question** if you have any question about the **Icebreaker** module or post a thread on **Sidewalk Chat Board** if you have some ideas that you see fit.
6. These three forums (**Meet Your Classmates**, **Sidewalk Chat Board** and **Ask a Question**) can also be found under the **Discussion Board** link (on tool bar on the left). Make sure you are able to access these forums both through the **Icebreaker** module AND the **Discussion Board**.

*When you complete these steps, you are ready to begin the first module of the course under the Course Content link (on tool bar on the left).*

**Weekly Schedule**

**Week One: Comparative Politics, States and Governing Institutions**

1. **Readings**
   - Mahoney, James. 2010. “After KKV: The New Methodology of Qualitative Research.” *World Politics* 62(1): 120-147, read pp. 120-125 and skim the rest if you are interested.
Week Two: Political Institutions, Accountability and Regime Types

2. Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>~ -December 21st</td>
<td>Readings and Warm-Up Quiz</td>
<td>December 21st 11:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 22nd-December 23rd</td>
<td>Group Discussions</td>
<td>December 23rd 11:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 24th-December 25th</td>
<td>Application Activities</td>
<td>December 25th 11:30pm</td>
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</table>

1. Readings


Week Three: States in the International System

2. Calendar

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<th>Activities</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 26th-December 28th</td>
<td>Readings and Warm-Up Quiz</td>
<td>December 28th 11:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 29th-December 30th</td>
<td>Group Discussions</td>
<td>December 30th 11:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 31st-January 1st</td>
<td>Application Activities</td>
<td>January 1st 11:30pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Readings


and 4, pp. 68-101 (read through the whole chapter), 102-130 (focusing on pp. 103-115, 122-127 and skim the rest).


2. Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2nd-January 4th</td>
<td>Readings and Warm-Up Quiz</td>
<td>January 4th 11:30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 5th-January 6th</td>
<td>Group Discussions</td>
<td>January 6th 11:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 7th-January 8th</td>
<td>Application Activities</td>
<td>January 8th 11:30pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Week Four: States, Individual and Society in International Relations**

1. Readings


2. Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 9th-January 11th</td>
<td>Readings and Warm-Up Quiz</td>
<td>January 11th 11:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 11th-January 18th</td>
<td><em>Final Exam</em></td>
<td>January 18th 11:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 12th-January 13th</td>
<td>Group Discussions</td>
<td>January 13th 11:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 14th-January 15th</td>
<td>Application Activities</td>
<td>January 15th 11:30pm</td>
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