

Risks and Threats of the Global Agenda

Fall 2023

Instructor: Dr. Matias Giannoni

Contact Information

Office:	ADM-313-M
Email:	giannoni@tec.mx
Office Hours:	By Appointment

Overview and Goals

This course delves into the contemporary challenges and threats faced by democratic states and governance. It draws upon a rich tapestry of academic disciplines, including comparative politics, political economy, international relations, and gender studies, to explore a diverse range of global threats. Our primary focus lies in robust, up-to-date research conducted by scholars pushing the boundaries of knowledge within each of these domains.

Unlike traditional lectures that impart established “truths”, this course takes the form of a seminar. Here, we engage in lively discussions surrounding empirical research and grapple with theoretically complex subjects that lack consensus within the academic community.

Our dialogues will encompass topics such as radical and anti-system politics, the impacts of technological advancements and artificial intelligence on labor markets and politics, the spread of misinformation, the challenges posed by climate change, and the intricate interplay between gender politics and the ascent of the radical right in Western democracies.

The course aims to equip students with the skills to critically approach, analyze, and conduct research that is both pioneering and grounded in empirical evidence, particularly in the context of global threats to contemporary democracies.

While my personal epistemological perspective leans toward positivism, with a strong inclination towards quantitative research methods in my own work, I wholeheartedly encourage and support students in bringing interpretivist and other paradigms into our class discussions.

Our sessions will convene twice a week, with the initial portion dedicated to a lecture format. During this phase, I will introduce key themes, debates from the literature, and present some of the lingering questions and critical issues that the field of scholarship is yet to resolve. The latter half of each class will evolve into a seminar-style discussion, where active student participation is strongly encouraged.

Prerequisites

Willingness to work hard on unfamiliar materials and carefully read all the texts each week.

Course Requirements

Grades will be based on:

- Online Forum Participation (20% of final grade).
- Final homework assignment (55% of final grade)
- Two in-class quizzes (15% of the final grade)
 - Friday, November 10
 - Friday, November 24
- Movie review (10% of the final grade)

The in-class quizzes will consist of analytical problems and assess understanding and comfort with the readings from the previous weeks. They will consist of multiple choice and true or false items.

Each week, we will watch a movie related to that week's topics. Students have to pick only **one movie** (any of the five we will watch) and write a two-page essay relating the movie to the bibliography discussed in class, to be submitted before the end of the course.

Notes on Academic Integrity

Please respect and follow the rules on academic integrity. In particular, the following is a (partial) list of the acts we will consider academically dishonest:

- Obtaining or consulting course materials from previous years
- Sharing course materials with people outside of the class
- Copying and pasting someone else's answers, even if you collaborated with the person in a legitimate way
- Using any form of machine learning or statistical natural language processing algorithms (commonly referred as AI tools) to draft answers

Course Website

The readings will be posted on Canvas in the course website.

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments¹

1 Methodological Foundations

- Comparative Analysis
- Cross-Case Qualitative Causal Inference
- Mixed-Methods
- Synthetic Control

Required Readings:

1. Htun, M., & Jensenius, F. R. (2021). Comparative Analysis for Theory Development. In E. S. Simmons & N. Rush Smith (Eds.), *Rethinking Comparison: Innovative Methods for Qualitative Political Inquiry* (pp. 190–207). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108966009.010>
2. Seawright, J. (2021). Beyond Mill: Why Cross-Case Qualitative Causal Inference Is Weak, and Why We Should Still Compare. In E. S. Simmons & N. Rush Smith (Eds.), *Rethinking Comparison: Innovative Methods for Qualitative Political Inquiry* (pp. 31–46). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108966009.002>
3. Roberts, A. (2020). Consensus and dissensus in comparative politics: Do comparativists agree on the goals, methods, and results of the field? *International Political Science Review*, 41(4), 490–506. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512119858370>
4. Abadie, A., Diamond, A., & Hainmueller, J. (2015). Comparative Politics and the Synthetic Control Method. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(2), 495–510. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12116>
5. Lieberman, E. S. (2005). Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research. *American Political Science Review*, 99(3), 435–452. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055405051762>
6. Simmons, E. S., & Smith, N. R. (2021). Theory and Imagination in Comparative Politics: An Interview with Lisa Wedeen. In E. S. Simmons & N. Rush Smith (Eds.), *Rethinking Comparison: Innovative Methods for Qualitative Political Inquiry* (pp. 251–274). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108966009.013>

2 Representation & Radical Politics

- Crisis of Representation
- Rise of Populism
- Economic Theories of Populism and Anti-System Politics
- Populist Attitudes and Threat Perceptions

¹The readings are enumerated in the order in which they will be discussed during the week.

- Active Anti-System Behavior and Terrorism

Required Readings:

1. Przeworski, A. (Ed.). (2019). Introduction. In *Crises of Democracy* (pp. 1–24). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108671019.001>
2. Gidron, N., & Hall, P. A. (2019). Populism as a Problem of Social Integration
3. Gest, J. (2016). *The new minority: White working class politics in an age of immigration and inequality*. Oxford University Press
4. Häusermann, S., Kurer, T., & Zollinger, D. (n.d.). Aspiration versus Apprehension: Economic Opportunities and Electoral Preferences, 54
5. Stewart, P. (2011, April 12). Introduction: Weak States, Global Threats, and International Security. In S. Patrick (Ed.), *Weak Links: Fragile States, Global Threats, and International Security* (p. 0). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199751501.003.0001>
6. Leblang, D., & Peters, M. E. (2022). Immigration and Globalization (and Deglobalization). *Annual Review of Political Science*, 25(1), 377–399. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051120-105059>

3 Misinformation & Technological Change

- Truth, Rumours and Misinformation
- Social Media
- Automation and Artificial Intelligence

Required Readings:

1. Aird, M. J., Ecker, U. K. H., Swire, B., Berinsky, A. J., & Lewandowsky, S. (2018). Does truth matter to voters? The effects of correcting political misinformation in an Australian sample. *Royal Society Open Science*, 5(12), 180593. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsos.180593>
2. Swire-Thompson, B., Ecker, U. K. H., Lewandowsky, S., & Berinsky, A. J. (2020). They Might Be a Liar But They're My Liar: Source Evaluation and the Prevalence of Misinformation. *Political Psychology*, 41(1), 21–34. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12586>
3. Anelli, M., Colantone, I., & Stanig, P. (2019). We Were the Robots: Automation and Voting Behavior in Western Europe
4. Levy, F. (2018). Computers and populism: Artificial intelligence, jobs, and politics in the near term. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 34(3), 393–417. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxrep/gry004>
5. Baccini, L., & Weymouth, S. (2021). Gone For Good: Deindustrialization, White Voter Backlash, and US Presidential Voting. *American Political Science Review*, 115(2), 550–567. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055421000022>

6. Cinelli, M., De Francisci Morales, G., Galeazzi, A., Quattrociocchi, W., & Starnini, M. (2021). The echo chamber effect on social media. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 118(9), e2023301118. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2023301118>
7. Damnjanović, I. (2015). Polity Without Politics? Artificial Intelligence Versus Democracy: Lessons From Neal Asher’s Polity Universe. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, 35(3-4), 76–83. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0270467615623877>

4 Financial Crisis & Climate Politics

- Financial Models
- Energy Politics
- “Green Finance”
- Labor and Environmental Problems

Required Readings:

1. Mackenzie, D. (2006, April 14). Performing Theory? *An Engine, Not a Camera: How Financial Models Shape Markets*. Retrieved October 19, 2023, from <https://direct.mit.edu/books/book/2002/chapter/54547/Performing-Theory>
2. Raghuram, R. (2011, August 8). Let Them Eat Credit. *Fault Lines: How Hidden Fractures Still Threaten the World Economy* (pp. 21–45). Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400839803-003>
3. Gabor, D., & Sylla, N. S. (n.d.). Derisking Developmentalism: A Tale of Green Hydrogen. *Development and Change*, n/a(n/a). <https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12779>
4. Amengual, M., & Bartley, T. (2022). Global Markets, Corporate Assurances, and the Legitimacy of State Intervention: Perceptions of Distant Labor and Environmental Problems. *American Sociological Review*, 87(3), 383–414. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00031224221092340>
5. Colgan, J. D., & Hinthorn, M. (2023). International Energy Politics in an Age of Climate Change. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 26(1), 79–96. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051421-124241>

5 Cultural Backlash & Gender

- Gender and International relations
- Women and Power
- Affective Politics
- White Working Class Politics

Required Readings:

1. Chouliaraki, L. (2021). Victimhood: The affective politics of vulnerability. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 24(1), 10–27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549420979316>

2. García Mingo, E., & Díaz Fernández, S. (2022). Wounded men of feminism: Exploring regimes of male victimhood in the Spanish manosphere. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 13675494221140586. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13675494221140586>
3. Banet-Weiser, S., & Miltner, K. M. (2016). #MasculinitySoFragile: Culture, structure, and networked misogyny. *Feminist Media Studies*, 16(1), 171–174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2016.1120490>
4. Juarez Miro, C., & Toff, B. (2023). How Right-Wing Populists Engage with Cross-Cutting News on Online Message Boards: The Case of ForoCoches and Vox in Spain. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 28(4), 770–790. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19401612211072696>
5. Brulé, R. E. (2023). Women and Power in the Developing World. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 26(1), 33–54. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-062121-081831>
6. Drezner, D. W. (2022, May 3). The Supergendered Politics of the Posthuman World. *Theories of International Politics and Zombies* (pp. 63–72). Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780691223520-008>

Filmography

- *Sorry We Missed You*
- *A Hero*
- *Crimes of the Future*
- *Mustang*