

POL410H1/POL2391H1S  
TOPICS IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS III  
(Culture and Society of the Nordic Region)  
Spring 2018

Thursday, 6-8pm  
Room: LA213

Instructor: Francisco Beltran

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***1. Office hours:***

Monday, 3:45pm-5:45pm, or by appointment.

***2. Course description:***

This course on the Nordic region (Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Iceland, and other Nordic territories) studies in detail some of the social institutions presented in POL300H1F Topics in Comparative Politics (Introduction to the Politics and Society of Northern Europe), and introduces some key aspects of the Nordic culture. The first part of the course will be devoted to the main social groups and values, and we will look in particular at aspects such as equality, trust and diversity. The second part will review some policies in the field of gender equality, family support, education, old age, and well-being. Last, the course will review the society and institutions of the Arctic and Greenland, some relevant examples of Nordic art, and the international projection of the Nordic culture and social model.

### *3. Intended learning outcomes:*

- To get acquainted with the most important social groups and social values in the Nordic region.
- To understand how social institutions, policies and well-being relate to each other in the Nordic social model.
- To comprehend the role culture and the arts play in the international projection of the Nordic region.

### *4. Prerequisite:*

Two courses in comparative politics or permission of instructor.

### *5. Lectures, communication, and attendance:*

**Students are required to attend every class meeting.** Accommodation of absences for religious or medical reasons is possible but should be discussed with the instructor. In any case, missing more than two or three classes may imply zero points in the participation component of the final grade.

**Attendance to the meetings on January 11, March 15 and March 22 is particularly important** (see section 7 below).

**Students are expected to read the materials before each class**, according to the schedule outlined in section 7 below. The instructor will devote part of the class to summarize the most relevant concepts and ideas included in the materials, to explain the connections between them, and to respond to any doubts. This lecture part, however, will not cover the materials in their entirety, and that is why students should have read them beforehand. The rest of the class will be devoted to a seminar-type discussion.

**Students are also expected to participate in the discussions and debates held in each class. In addition, every student has to direct a seminar-type discussion in class.** Each week, a group of students will prepare and lead a class discussion based on the topics addressed in the lectures.

**This course has a Blackboard site.** The instructor will use it to communicate important information regarding the course, including assignments' grades, as well as

to upload essential readings and materials. Students are expected to check out the Blackboard site regularly (ie. every other day).

**Email is the preferred way of communication** between the instructor and the students. Students can expect a reply to their messages in the following 24 hours, weekends excepted.

The Faculty of Arts and Science **deadline to cancel the course** without academic penalty is March 14, 2018

### ***6. Assessment and assignment submission policy:***

**The course assessment is based on participation, class discussions, and assignments.** There will be no exams. **Term work** requirements consist of:

**(1) Participation** in class discussions (15% of the final grade).

Expectations: Students are expected to participate in the class discussions on a regular basis. An intervention during the seminar discussion may consist in giving a reasoned opinion, posing questions to the rest of the class, or both. you have to show you have read and understood the material. What I value is engaging, provocative interventions, questions, answers or thoughts that establish links among the readings, the questions and/or current or historical events. At the bare minimum, you have to show you have read the material. Rambling or talking at length off-topic, or showing you have not worked on the material, will accrue you no points.

**(2) Preparing and leading a class discussion** based on the topics addressed in the lectures (15% of the final grade).

Requirements and assessment: Class discussions work as follows. Each discussion will last roughly 45 minutes, and will be led by one or two people. Everyone (both the leader(s) of the discussion and the rest of the class) should do the readings for the day in question. The leader(s) should prepare questions covering the readings or current topics directly related to the materials or the issues we are discussing that week, and pose these questions to the class.

Students will choose which week they want to lead the discussion by **emailing the instructor individually their three preferred dates by January 11**. The instructor will form the groups assigning dates on a first come, first serve basis.

The student or group should email the questions to the instructor **at least three days in advance**, so he can complement them with his own questions in case there are important aspects not addressed by them.

In terms of assessment, what I value of leading the discussion is presenting engaging, provocative questions, answers and thoughts that establish links among the readings, the questions and/or current or historical events.

**(3) Assignment 1: first response paper** (15% of the final grade).

Requirements: Two weeks before the submission deadline the instructor will upload a few newspaper articles, radio or video clips related to topics we will have already seen in class. You will then have a week to submit a three page-long response paper on one of them. You have to use at least the relevant references from the syllabus, though you can use more than that.

In your comment, you will have to explain the connections between the references and the chosen media source. Questions you have to try to answer in the paper are: what is the key idea in the source(s) you chose? How do this or other ideas relate to the course readings in the syllabus? Since the material was produced, does this interpretation of facts still hold, or new research or developments have rendered it obsolete?

The first response paper is due by February 15.

**(4) Assignment 2: second response paper** (15% of the final grade).

Requirements: same as assignment 1.

Assignment 2 is due by March 22.

**(5) Assignment 3: an analytical paper** (40% of the final grade).

Requirements: Length: 8-10 pages, double spaced, including bibliography.

You will choose one topic from a list prepared by the instructor and communicated to the students three weeks before the assignment is due.

The topics for these papers will give you broad scope to write on issues and countries that interest you. You must use our course readings extensively and appropriately, besides doing some outside research. Some questions will specifically invite you to make comparisons between countries or issues that we

have focused on in class, and others that we did not cover, or did not cover in depth.

The analytical paper should be well organized, well written, and polished. It must be in essay form, with an identifiable thesis statement (i.e., argument), and distinct introduction, body, and conclusion. You must also provide the standard scholarly apparatus, including a list of works cited at the end of the paper, and in-text citations (including page numbers) in either footnote or parenthetical form, using one of the more common citation styles.

The paper will be evaluated on the following criteria: responsiveness to the essay prompt; clarity; effective use of course materials (a key priority); and structure and writing mechanics, including grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

We encourage you to begin working on the analytical paper soon after the topics are supplied to you, and to discuss your ideas for the paper or any difficulties you are having with the instructor well before the deadline. Waiting until the last week or days before the submission deadline to begin working on the paper, or to discuss your difficulties with the instructor, is likely to result in a paper of poor quality and therefore a lower grade.

The analytical paper is due by March 29.

**All these assignments must be completed** to receive credit for the course.

The instructor will be available to discuss questions or doubts related to the assignments during office hours or by appointment.

**Students are required to submit an electronic copy of the assignments by the deadline.** No hard copy is required.

**Students are also strongly advised to use Turnitin to submit the assignments.**

“Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection for possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site”.

That said, the use of Turnitin is voluntary. If you prefer not to use this tool, come talk to me regarding alternative means of submitting the assignments.

When submitting assignments via Turnitin, students **must double-check the file was uploaded properly and on time**. Corrupted files will not be considered as submitted, and will be given a zero grade.

**Students should upload to Blackboard a signed copy of the *Academic Integrity Checklist*** (the form is at the end of the syllabus and on the course's blackboard site) by February 1. Otherwise the assignments will not be graded. Computer issues are not a valid reason for not submitting an assignment, or submitting it late, so remember to back up your work.

**Late delivery of assignments carries a penalty of 3% of the assignment's grade per day**, with a limit of seven days. This means assignments delivered eight or more days after the deadline will not be accepted.

### ***7. Course overview:***

The following is a list of the classes held during the term, with their respective dates, readings, and the assignments' due dates.

Students should read the materials before each class. Some of the materials will be placed on reserve (CR) at the Robarts Library at the beginning of the term, or available from the course Blackboard site (BB), either as a link to the source or a pdf document.

The list of readings might be complemented with specific materials (journal and newspaper articles, statistics) for each session. The additional materials will be available from the Blackboard site as well.

**Attendance to the meetings on January 11, March 15 and March 22 is mandatory.** Nonappearance to these meetings might result in a zero participation grade in the course.

#### **January 4: Organizational meeting**

Readings:

No readings for this session.

**January 11: Research workshop at the Robarts Library**

## Readings:

No readings for this session.

Deadline to choose a discussion date

**January 18: Nordic Equality in a historical and international context**

## Readings:

Eivind Myhre, Jan, "The Cradle of Norwegian Equality and Egalitarianism: Norway in the Nineteenth Century", in Synnøve Bendixsen, Mary Bente Bringslid, and Halvard Vike, eds., *Egalitarianism in Scandinavia. Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, Cham, Switzerland, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, pp. 65-85.

Gärtner, Svenja, and Prado, Svante, "Unlocking the Social Trap: Inequality, Trust and the Scandinavian Welfare State", *Social Science History*, 40, Spring 2016, pp. 33-62.

Bäckman, Olof, and Kenneth Nelson, "The egalitarian paradise?", in Peter Nedergaard and Anders Wivel, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Scandinavian Politics*, pp. 25-35.

Samuels, Alana, "How Norwegians and Americans see inequality differently", *The Atlantic*, January 11, 2017.

Discussion 1

**January 25: Social capital**

## Readings:

Fonnesbæk Andersen, Rasmus, and Peter Thisted Dinesen, "Social capital in the Scandinavian countries", in Peter Nedergaard and Anders Wivel, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Scandinavian Politics*, Oxon, Routledge, 2018, pp. 161-173.

Bauhr, Monika, et al. "Perceptions of Corruption in Sweden", *The Quality of Government Institute*, University of Goteborg, Working Paper 2010:8, April 2010.

Andreasson, Ulf, *Trust - The Nordic Gold*, Nordic Council of Ministers, Analysis Report, 2017.

Discussion 2

## February 1: Family policies I

Readings:

Baran, Mette L., et al., "Family policies in Norway", in M. Robila (ed.), *Handbook of Family Policies Across the Globe*, New York, Springer, 2014, pp. 77- 90.

Wells, Michael B., and Bergnehr, Disa, "Family policies in Sweden", in M. Robila (ed.), *Handbook of Family Policies Across the Globe*, pp. 91-107.

Björk Eydal, Guðný, and Gíslason, Ingólfur V., "Family policies: the case of Iceland", in M. Robila (ed.), *Handbook of Family Policies Across the Globe*, pp. 109-124.

Discussion 3

Academic Integrity Checklist due

## February 8: Family policies II

Readings:

Lammi-Taskula, Johanna, "Nordic men on parental leave: can the welfare state change gender relations?", in Anne Lise Ellingsaeter and Arnlaug Leira, eds., *Politicising Parenthood in Scandinavia: Gender Relations in Welfare States*, Bristol, UK, Policy Press, 2012, pp. 80-100.

Boje, Thomas P., "Working time and caring strategies: parenthood in different welfare states", in Anne Lise Ellingsaeter and Arnlaug Leira, eds., *Politicising Parenthood in Scandinavia: Gender Relations in Welfare States*, pp. 195-216.

Discussion 4

**February 15: Education**

## Readings:

Prøitz, Tina S., and Aasen, Peter, "The making and re-making of the Nordic model of education", in Peter Nedergaard and Anders Wivel, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Scandinavian Politics*, Oxon, Routledge, 2018, pp. 213-228.

Volckmar, Nina, and Wiborg, Susanne, "A Social Democratic Response to Market-Led Education Policies: Concession or Rejection?", in Ulf Blossing et al., eds., *The Nordic Education Model. 'A School for All' Encounters w Neo-Liberal Policy*, Dordrecht, Springer, 2014, pp. 117-131.

## Discussion 5

First response paper (assignment 1) due

**March 1: The challenge of demography**

## Readings:

Morten Normann, Tor, et al., *Challenges to the Nordic Welfare State - Comparable Indicators*, Copenhagen, Nordic Social-Statistical Committee, 2014, pp. 38-51.

Bengtsson, Tommy, and Scott, Kirk, "The ageing population", in Tommy Bengtsson, ed., *Population Ageing: A Threat to the Welfare State. The Case of Sweden*, Berlin, Springer Verlag, 2010, pp. 7-22.

Rønsen, Marit, and Skrede, Kari, "Nordic fertility patterns: compatible with gender equality?", in Anne Lise Ellingsaeter and Arnlaug Leira, eds., *Politicising Parenthood in Scandinavia: Gender Relations in Welfare States*, pp. 55-76.

## Discussion 6

### **March 8: Happiness and well-being**

Readings:

Wiking, Meik, ed., *The Happy Danes. Exploring the reasons behind the high levels of happiness in Denmark*, Copenhagen, The Happiness Research Institute, 2014.

Discussion 7

Questions for the analytical paper due

### **March 15: Arctic and Greenland**

Readings: TBA

Discussion 8

### **March 22: Nordic architecture and design**

Readings: TBA

Second response paper (assignment 2) due

### **March 29: International projection and cultural power**

Readings:

Stende, Truls, *Is the Nordic Region Best in the World?*, Nordic Council of Ministers, Analysis No. 02/17, 2017.

\* *The instructor will upload to Blackboard additional articles for this session.*

Discussion 9

Analytical paper (assignment 3) due

### ***8. Academic integrity:***

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement, and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves.

Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto's *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* ([www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm](http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm)). It is the rule book for academic behaviour at the U of T, and you are expected to know the rules. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Copying material word-for-word from a source (including lecture and study group notes) and not placing the words within quotation marks.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.
- Including references to sources that you did not use.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment including
  - working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work,
  - having someone rewrite or add material to your work while "editing".
- Lending your work to a classmate who submits it as his/her own without your permission.

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone.
- Looking at someone else's answers
- Letting someone else look at your answers.
- Misrepresenting your identity.
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading.

Misrepresentation:

- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including doctor's notes.
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

To remind you of these expectations, and help you avoid accidental offences, I will ask you to include a signed Academic Integrity Checklist with every assignment (see checklist at the end of this document). If you do not include the statement, your work will not be graded.

The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the *Code*. The consequences for academic misconduct can be severe, including a failure in the course and a notation on your transcript. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, seek out additional information from me, or from other available campus resources like the U of T Writing Website (<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca>). If you are experiencing personal challenges that are having an impact on your academic work, please speak to me or seek the advice of your college registrar.

Also, it is worth checking the Academic Integrity Section on the Faculty of Arts and Science site: [www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/students/academic-integrity-basics](http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/students/academic-integrity-basics)

### ***9. Accommodations for Disability:***

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or Accessibility Services at 416-978-8060, [accessibility.utoronto.ca](http://accessibility.utoronto.ca).

### ***10. Religious Accommodations:***

The University has a general policy of accommodating absences for reasons of religious obligation, strongly articulated on the Provost's webpage ([www.viceprovoststudents.utoronto.ca/publicationsandpolicies/guidelines/religiousobservances.htm](http://www.viceprovoststudents.utoronto.ca/publicationsandpolicies/guidelines/religiousobservances.htm)). Students are expected to give reasonable advance notice of their absence.

### *Academic Integrity Checklist*

JRA410H1/POL2391H1S

TOPICS IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS III (Culture and Society of the Nordic Region)

Spring 2017

Instructor: Francisco Beltran

I, \_\_\_\_\_, affirm that the five written assignments listed in the section 6 of the syllabus represent entirely my own efforts.

I confirm that:

- I have acknowledged the use of another's ideas with accurate citations.
- If I used the words of another (e.g., author, instructor, information source), I have acknowledged this with quotation marks (or appropriate indentation) and proper citation.
- When paraphrasing the work of others, I put the idea into my own words and did not just change a few words or rearrange the sentence structure
- I have checked my work against my notes to be sure I have correctly referenced all direct quotes or borrowed ideas.
- My bibliography includes only the sources used to complete this assignment.
- This is the first time I have submitted these assignments (in whole or in part) for credit.
- Any proofreading by another was limited to indicating areas of concern which I then corrected myself.
- This is the final version of my assignments and not a draft.
- I have kept my work to myself and did not share answers/content with others, unless otherwise directed by my instructor.
- I understand the consequences of violating the University's academic integrity policies as outlined in the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*.

By signing this form I agree that the statements above are true.

If I do not agree with the statements above, I will not submit my assignments and will consult the course instructor immediately.

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_