This is an introductory level graduate course at the crossroads of international relations, comparative politics and area studies. Its aim is to introduce students of international relations to the tools and concepts commonly used in the latter two fields and to promote interdisciplinary cross-pollination. Accordingly, the first half of the course begins with a discussion of the relationship between international relations, comparative politics, and area studies and after a brief overview of the benefits of comparative analysis, moves on to weekly discussions of themes commonly studied by scholars of comparative politics such as the modern state and political institutions, democracy and authoritarianism, revolutions and social movements and national and ethnic identity and conflict. In this part, we draw heavily from works by written by comparativists and we adopt a comparative and cross-regional approach.

Building upon the themes from the first half of the course, the second half uses the area studies framework and treats regions as individual subjects of study. The aim is to introduce students to prevalent debates related to each specific region and the insights developed by scholars specializing in those regions. Unsurprisingly, scholarship on each of the regions we will look at has evolved differently so as to reflect the political, economic, social, cultural dynamics specific to that region. As a result, scholars rooted in different regional specialization not only have often asked different kinds of question, but even when dealing with similar questions, have
framed it differently, looked for answers in different places and have come up with quite diverse insights. Unfortunately, dialogue across regional boundaries has been rather limited and those insights have not always been compared or synthesized. So the second objective of this course is to promote such cross-regional dialogue and to encourage students to take part in it. Through the course, students are encouraged to explore their thematic and regional interests and borrow tools, concepts and theories developed in one scholarly field or geographical region to understand others.