

INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Political Science 0300

University of Pittsburgh • Spring 2019

Tu & Th 1pm–1.50pm • G8 Cathedral of Learning

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Course Description

Comparative Politics is the field within political science charged with the study of domestic politics. Its main goal is to systematically compare political units —mainly countries— in order to make statements about the factors that explain how politics works. The comparative method allows us to address questions such as why some countries establish democratic institutions while others are ruled by autocrats or how the choice of electoral system modulates the capacity of citizens to discipline incumbent politicians. This course will cover the following topics: political regimes, transitions to democracy, institutional choices within democratic regimes, social cleavages and ethnic identities, corruption, electoral accountability, and the economic consequences of institutional designs. The discussion of each of these topics will be structured around specific questions that comparative politics can illuminate.

Learning Outcomes:

The goal of this comparative politics course goes beyond the accumulation of factual information about political systems across the world. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand central concepts in comparative politics such as political regime, collective action and protest, executive-legislative relations, electoral systems, ethnic identities, social cleavages and electoral accountability.

2. Identify the defining features of institutional choices like democracy vs autocracy, presidentialism vs parliamentarism, electoral systems and unitary vs federal structures.
3. Formulate analytical arguments on how the choice of political institutions or differences in social structures influence regime transitions, economic outcomes, government stability, the capacity of voters to select and hold politicians accountable, the probability of civil conflict and the mapping of policy issues that are present in the public debate.
4. Elaborate (counterfactual) statements on how a change in political institutions or in social structure would reshape the political dynamics of a country.

Recitation

In addition to attending lecture each week, you must sign up for one of the four weekly recitations.

Course materials

Several required readings are assigned each week. Most readings come from these two Comparative Politics textbooks:

- Samuels, David. 2013. *Comparative Politics*. Pearson Education.
- Clark, William R., Matt Golder and Sona N. Goder. 2018. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. CQ Press. Third Edition.

The remaining weekly readings will be made available through Courseweb.

Course requirements

Just because this is an introductory class does not mean that it will not be challenging. You are expected to do the readings and to attend lectures and recitations, which are designed to be complements for one another, not substitutes. Some of the readings might be challenging as they come from actual comparative politics research. You should aim to read them all or at least read them smartly (i.e. for the main points)—this is a valuable life skill! **You are expected to complete the relevant reading before LECTURE each week.**

While I will post slides from lectures on Courseweb, you should see these more as outlines than as comprehensive notes. If you have to miss a lecture or section, you should make arrangements to get

notes from a classmate. I will not be able to provide lecture notes, nor is it the role of the TA's to provide you with notes.

Course evaluation

Participation in recitation: 10%

Midterm Exam: 40%

Final Exam: 50%

1. **Participation in recitation (10% of the overall grade):** You are required to sign up for a recitation section, which will meet once per week. At the end of the semester your Teaching Assistant will give you a letter grade (an A, B, C, or D) based on your participation in section. You are expected to attend regularly, meaning that you do not miss more than one or two sessions in a semester. Conditional on this, you will receive an A if you participate often; a B if you participate sometimes; a C if you participate rarely; and a D if you never participate.
2. **In-class midterm Exam (40% of the overall grade):** There will be an in-class midterm on **March 7th**. The midterm may consist of multiple-choice questions and a few short writing questions.
3. **Final exam (50% of the overall grade):** The final exam is cumulative although it emphasizes material from the second half of the course. The date and time of the final exam will be announced by the registrar.

Country expert: In the semester, you will be asked to select a country from a list. Please note that you should aim to become an 'expert' on it during this semester. You are expected to use your knowledge of this country to apply theories and concepts from class and also use your country knowledge to contribute to discussions in recitation. In both the midterm and the final exam there will be a question in which you will be asked to apply the concepts learned in this course to your country of expertise.

GRADING SCALE

97-100 A+	87-89 B+	77-79 C+	60-69 D
93-96 A	83-86 B	73-76 C	<60 F

90-92 A-

80-82 B-

70-72 C-

CLASS POLICIES

Laptops and other electronics:

Research has consistently shown that the use of laptops and other electronic devices negatively impacts student performance, both for the student who is using the device and those around her/him.

Nevertheless, you may still use your laptop, but if you are using it **you must seat in the back of the classroom**. Please turn your phone off while you are in class and do not text, check Facebook, Twitter, or look up information that is not relevant to class. **If you plan to come to class to do something else, I suggest that you not come.** Please make sure to bring the readings with you to class (either in hard copy or on an electronic device).

Email:

Please make sure you check your Pitt email regularly. If you do not use your Pitt account, make sure you link your Pitt account to whichever email address you do use. I will send email messages to the class periodically and will use your official Pitt email address. If you want to contact me, please use my Pitt addresses above.

Courseweb:

All materials handed out in class will be posted here. We will also post announcements, links, graphs/tables shown in class, and other useful information. So, check CourseWeb often!

Extensions and Alternate dates

In general, I will not allow extensions on assignments or alternate exam dates. However, should you find yourself in a situation where you will not be able to turn an assignment in on-time or be present for an exam, please discuss this with me as soon as you can, and not the day the assignment is due or the day of the exam or afterwards.

Grade appeals:

Should you want to appeal a grade you've received, it must be in writing. You will need to explain why you believe you deserve a grade that is different than the one you received. The written appeal should be turned in to me and I will then schedule a time to meet with you to discuss your appeal.

Academic Integrity:

Students in this course are expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, or other acts of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated by the instructor, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. More information and the complete policy can be found at <http://www.provost.pitt.edu/info/ai1.html>.

Accommodations:

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both me and the Office of Disability Resources and Services (DRS), 140 William Pitt Union, (412-648-7890, 412-228-5347 for P3 ASL users), drsrecp@pitt.edu, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. For more information, please see <https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/drs/>

Classroom recording:

To ensure free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance permission of the instructor. Any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

Turnitin:

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity to TurnItIn.com for the detection of plagiarism. TurnItIn.com will be used solely for the detection of plagiarism in papers.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1, Session 1 – January 8th - Introduction and preliminaries

Week 1, Session 2 – January 10th – What is Comparative Politics?

The object of comparative politics. The comparative method as the approach to study the causes of domestic political features.

- *Samuels. Comparative Politics. Chapter 1.*

Week 2, Session 1 – January 15th – The State

The Problem of Collective Action. The State as a coercive agent that enforces cooperation. The origin of States. What are failed states? Why do they come about?

- *Samuels. Comparative Politics. Chapter 2.*

Week 2, Session 2 – January 17th – Political Regimes: Democracy

How to define democracy and classify countries accordingly.

- *Samuels. Comparative Politics. Chapter 3, pages 58-65.*
- *Przeworski, Adam et al. 2000. Democracy and Development. Cambridge University Press, chapter 1.*

Week 3, Session 1 – January 22nd – Political Regimes: Autocracies

How can we define authoritarian regimes? The problem of elections under authoritarianism.

- *Clark, Golder & Golder. Principles of Comparative Politics. Chapter 10.*

Week 3, Session 2 – September 24th – Transitions to Democracy – Structural Factors

Does economic development lead to the collapse of authoritarian regimes? What is the impact of natural resource wealth on the probability of democratization?

- *Clark, Golder & Golder. Principles of Comparative Politics. Chapters 6 & 7.*

Week 4, Session 1 – January 29th – Transitions to Democracy: Collective Action and Protest

Why can autocratic regimes survive despite widespread unpopularity? What explains the sudden emergence of popular protest? How do movements solve collective action problems? How does repression influence decisions to participate in mass actions?

- *Clark, Golder & Golder. Principles of Comparative Politics. Chapter 8.*
- *Kuran, Timur. 1991. Now Out of Never. The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989. World Politics, vol 44, n 1.*

Week 4, Session 2 – January 31st – Transitions away from Democracy

- *Levitsky & Zibblat. How Democracies Die. Penguin Random House. Introduction, chapters 1, 4, 5, and 6.*

Week 5, Session 1 – February 5th – Class canceled: Professor is in Barcelona.

Week 5, Session 2 – February 7th – Presidentialism vs Parliamentarism (I)

What are the main differences in the chain of democratic delegation and accountability between Presidential and Parliamentary systems?

- *Clark, Golder & Golder. Principles of Comparative Politics. Chapter 12.*

Week 6, Session 1 – February 12th – Presidentialism vs Parliamentarism (II)

How does the type of executive-legislative relations influence government and regime stability? Are there implications for the capacity to enact new legislation?

- *Linz, Juan. 1996. The Perils of Presidentialism, in Larry Diamond et al (eds). The Global Resurgence of Democracy. Johns Hopkins University Press.*
- *Samuels, David. 2007. Separation of Powers, in Carles Boix and Susan Stokes (eds). The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics. Oxford University Press.*

Week 6, Session 2 – February 14th – Electoral Systems (I)

What are the two main families of electoral systems? What are the implications for district size, ballot structure and seat-assignment formula?

- *Clark, Golder & Golder. Principles of Comparative Politics. Chapter 13*

Week 7, Session 1 – February 19th – Electoral Systems (II)

What are the implications of electoral systems for the number of legislative parties? And for proportionality between votes and seats? What about clarity of choice and accountability?

- *G. Bingham Powell, Jr. 2000. Elections as Instruments of Democracy. Yale University Press. Chapters 1 and 2.*

Week 7, Session 2 – February 21st – Legislatures

What are the functions of legislatures? How does the distinction between Parliamentarism and Presidentialism affect the functions that legislators accomplish?

- *Carey, John M. 2007. Competing Principals, Political Institutions, and Party Unity in Legislative Voting. American Journal of Political Science, vol 51 n 1.*
- *Scholl, Edward L. 1986. The Electoral System and Constituency-Oriented Activity in the European Parliament. International Studies Quarterly. Vol 30 n 3.*

Week 8, Session 1 – February 26th – Ethnic Identities

How can we define ethnic groups? Why are they politically relevant? What are the implications of ethnic diversity? Does the institutional accommodation of ethnic differences appease or ignite ethnic conflict?

- *Samuels. Comparative Politics. Chapter 6.*
- *Posner, Daniel. 2004. The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi. American Political Science Review, vol 98, n 4.*

Week 8, Session 2 – February 28th – Federalism

- Stepan, Alfred. 1999. "Federalism and Democracy: Beyond the U.S. Model," *Journal of Democracy* 10(4): 19-34.
- Ordeshook, Peter and Olga Shvetsova. 1997. "Federalism and Constitutional Design," *Journal of Democracy* 8(1): 27-42.
- Brancati, Dawn. 2006. "Decentralization: Fueling the Fire or Dampening the Flames of Ethnic Conflict," *International Organization* 60: 651-685 (focus on pp. 651-663).

Week 9, Session 1 – March 5th – **Review for midterm**

Week 9, Session 2 – March 7th – **In-class midterm**

Week 10 - Spring Break

Week 11, Session 1 – March 19th – Social Cleavages and Party Systems (I)

What are some of the main dimensions of political conflict in advanced democracies? How does this structure electoral competition?

- *Clark, Golder & Golder. Principles of Comparative Politics. Chapter 14.*

Week 11, Session 2 – March 21st – Social Cleavages and Party Systems (II)

How do cleavages and electoral rules interact to create party systems?

- *Mair, Peter and Cas Mudde. 1998. The Party Family and Its Study. Annual Review of Political Science, vol 1, n. 1.*
- *Benoit, Ken and Michael Laver. 2006. Party Policy in Modern Democracies. Routledge. Chapter 1 and Appendix B (skim).*

Week 12, Session 1 – March 26th – Political Regimes and Outcomes

What are the consequences of political regimes on economic and governance outcomes?

- *Clark, Golder & Golder. Principles of Comparative Politics. Chapter 9.*

Week 12, Session 2 – March 28st – Consequences of Democratic Institutions

How do institutions impact economic redistribution?

- *Samuels. Comparative Politics. Chapter 12.*
- *Clark, Golder & Golder. Principles of Comparative politics. Chapter 16.*

Week 13, Session 1 – April 2nd – Clientelism and Patronage (I)

- *Auyero, Javier. The Logic of Clientelism in Argentina: An Ethnographic Account. Latin American Research Review. Vol 35, No 3 pp 55-81.*
- *Brusco, Valeria, Marcelo Nazareno and Susan C. Stokes. 2004. Vote Buying in Argentina. Latin American Research Review. vol 39, n 2.*

Week 13, Session 2 – April 4th – Clientelism and Patronage (II)

- *Stokes, Susan, Thad Dunning, Marcelo Nazareno and Valeria Brusco. 2013. Brokers, Voters and Clientelism. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 7 and 8.*

Week 14, Session 1 – April 9th – Corruption (I)

- *Fisman, Ray & Miriam Golden. Corruption: What Everyone Needs to Know. Chapters 2 & 3.*

Week 14, Session 2 – April 11th – Corruption (II)

- *Fisman, Ray & Miriam Golden. Corruption: What Everyone Needs to Know. Chapters 7 & 8.*

Week 15, Session 1 – April 16th – Civil Conflict

- *Ross, Michael. 2008. “Blood Barrels: Why Oil Wealth Fuels Conflict.” Foreign Affairs (May/June).*
- *International Crisis Group. 2012. “Colombia: Peace at Last?” Latin America Report No. 45.*

Week 15, Session 2 – April 18th – Review for final exam.