

INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

POLI1091
Spring 2020

Instructor	Prof. Thibaud Marcesse
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Office Hours	Fridays, 10-12pm, or by appointment
Time	MWF 9:00-9:50am
Venue	Campion 235

Course Description

This class introduces students to the major topics of comparative politics, a subfield of political science that compares and analyses political systems around the world. It is a very broad topic for a single semester and, inevitably, some important topics will not be covered. Nonetheless, I have organized the class around 12 important questions that drive research in the subfield, each of which involves important theoretical and substantial areas of contemporary political science research. The objective is not to give students definitive answers to these broad questions, but instead to provide them with tools and concepts to understand what questions the broader scholarly debate revolves around and the type of answers, theories and evidence that political scientists bring to bear on these debates.

Attendance and participation

Classes will consist of a combination of lecture, class discussion, and group presentations. Please note that lectures will not simply review or summarize the readings. It is up to you to complete the readings in advance and to be prepared to relate them to the themes of the lecture. Copies of the slides that accompany lectures will be posted on the class Canvas site at the end of the week, after class. However, you should not expect the slides to cover the lecture in detail, and they will not dispense you from attending class.

Attendance and participation account for 15% of your final grade. Students are expected to attend all classes. The class will have a substantial discussion component, including class-wide and small group discussion, in which you are expected to actively participate. You are expected to have read all materials before class and should bring copies of the readings with you to class. Because I expect you to thoroughly pay attention to class lectures and discussion, I will enforce a strict laptop and phone ban.

Excused absences: More than one unexcused absence over the course of the semester will negatively affect your attendance and participation grade. If you have a legitimate reason why you cannot attend a class (for example, due to a health or family emergency, approved athletic events, or religious observances), you must notify me and receive prior approval for the absence.

Office hours and communication

I will hold office hours on Mondays, from 10am to 12pm, by appointment only. I will inform you of a change in schedule by Friday the week prior. You are invited to use the following link to make an appointment with me: <https://calendly.com/thibaud-marcesse/office-hours>.

I guarantee a response to your email requests within 24hrs, and emails sent over the weekend will receive a response by the following Monday 5pm, at the latest.

Academic integrity

All students are expected to know and comply with the university's policies on academic integrity. Your work must be fully your own. It is necessary to acknowledge the work and ideas of others with proper citations. Plagiarism is a serious offence, and no forms of borrowing without acknowledgement are acceptable. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the academic code. See: <http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/polisci/integrity/html>; <http://www.bc.edu/publications/ucatalog/policy.html#integrity>.

Accommodation and disability service

If you are a student with a documented disability seeking reasonable accommodations in this course, please contact Kathy Duggan, (617) 552-8093, duganka@bc.edu, at the Connors Family Learning Center regarding learning disabilities and ADHD, or Paulette Durrett, (617) 552-3470, paulette.durrett@bc.edu, in the Disability Services Office regarding all other types of disability, including temporary disabilities. Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations.

Course requirements

Assignments

1. Group presentation

You will have to work collaboratively and present in front of your peers on a number of topics listed below (in the course schedule). These presentations will be no more than 20 mn long, and will lead to a class discussion. You are welcome to make the use of PowerPoint but that is not required. Likewise, you are free to use any media source (videos, movie clips for instance...).

2. Midterm exams

There will be two (2) short midterm exams on February 28th and April 8th involving a mix of short answers and essays and covering the topics discussed thus far in the semester. Both exams will be 75 mn long. Details on the exam format will be provided in advance.

3. Final exam

Grading policy

Three components will determine your grade: Final Exam, Midterm Exams and Group Presentations. The relative weight of each assignment is as follows:

Final Exam	40%
Midterm Exams	35%
Group Presentation	25%

Grade scale

A+/A/A-	96-100/93-95-90-92
B+/B/B-	86-90/83-85/80-82
C+/C/C-	76-80/73-75/70-72
D+/D/D-	66-70/63-65/60-62

Assignment due dates

Midterm Exam #1	February 28th
Midterm Exam #2	April 8th

Course Schedule

This is no assigned text for this course. The readings listed below will all be made available on Canvas via course reserves. Do let me know if you have any trouble accessing the readings online.

Week 1 (January 13th, 15th and 17th): How do we compare countries?

The first week will serve as an introduction to the course and will provide students with some basic points about the method of inquiry we will use in the class. For instance, we will discuss the scientific method and the difference between normative and positive theory, and the difference between correlation and causation. We will also examine the comparative method and how we will apply it, as well as the logic of functional equivalences and its limitations in comparing political systems. We will finish with a discussion of different general types of theories in comparative politics: cultural, structural and agency (rational-choice) theories.

Required readings:

- Lim, T. (2010). Chapters 1, 2 and 3. *Doing Comparative Politics* (pp. 1-97). Lynne Rienner Press.

Week 2 (January 21st, 22nd and 24th): Why are there states?

This class examines theories about why states exist, and the role of war in building up states historically. We also examine the difference between empirical and juridical statehood, and the problems posed by weak states.

Required readings:

- Tilly, C. (1985). War Making and State Making as Organized Crime in P. Evans, D. Rueschemeyer, and T. Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back in* (pp. 169-191). Cambridge University Press.
- Jackson, R. and Rosberg, C. G. (1982). "Why Africa's weak states persist: the empirical and the juridical in statehood," *World Politics*, 35 (1): 1-24.
- Buss, T. F. (2015). "Foreign aid and the Failure of State Building in Haiti, from 1957 to 2105," *Latin American Policy*, 6 (2): 319-339.

Recommended readings:

- Weber, M. (1958) [1919]. Politics as a Vocation. In H. Gerth, C. Wright Mills (eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, (ed.). Oxford University Press.

Note: no class on January 20th (Martin Luther King Day). Instead, we will meet on Tuesday, January 21st.

Week 3 (January 27th, 29th and 31st): How do national economies develop?

This class discusses what we mean by economic development and how we measure it. It then discusses the historical process of structural transformation, before comparing the West's experience of development in the 19th century with the experience of "late developers" in the late twentieth century.

Required readings:

- Landes, D. (1999). *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations* (pp. 29-45 and 186-200). W. W. Norton.
- Gerschenkron, A. (1965). *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (pp. 5-30).

Recommended readings:

- Johnson, C. (1982). *MITI and the Japanese miracle: the growth of industrial policy: 1925-1975*. Stanford University Press.
- Woo-Cummings, M. (1999). *The Developmental State*. Cornell University Press.

Group presentation #1 (January 31st): The Developmental State in East Asia**Week 4 (February 3rd, 5th and 7th): Why are some countries richer than others?**

Economic growth theory predicts that all economies should converge on the same level of national income. So why do we observe “divergence big time” as Pritchett argued? This lecture addresses the main answers to this question, including the roles of geography, culture and political institutions.

Required readings:

- Lim, T. (2010). Chapters 4 and 5. *Doing Comparative Politics* (pp. 105-176). Lynne Rienner Press.
- Sokoloff, K. and Engerman, S. L. (2000). History Lessons: Institutions, Factors Endowments, and Paths of Development in the New World. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 14 (3): 217-232.

Recommended readings:

- Pritchett, L. (1997). Divergence, Big Time. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 11 (3): 3-17.
- Robinson, J. and Acemoglu, R. (2012). *Why Nations Fail: the Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty*. Crown Publishers.
- Parthasarathi, P. (2011). *Why Europe grew rich and why Asia did not*. Cambridge University Press.

Week 5 (February 10th, 12th and 14th): What is democratic about democracies?

We can only compare democracies if we establish precise definitions of terms such as democracy. This class examines both normative and empirical definitions of democracy. On the normative side, we distinguish between majoritarian and consensual forms of democracy. On the empirical side, we distinguish between substantive and procedural or Schumpeterian definitions. We then distinguish between consensual vs majoritarian conceptions of democracy, and their institutional manifestations.

Required readings:

- Schmitter, P., Karl, T. (1991). What Democracy is and ... is not. *Journal of Democracy*, (2)3: 75-88.
- Dahl, R. (1973). *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (pp. 1-10). Yale University Press.
- Lijphart, A. (2012). Chapters 2,3 and 4 in *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in thirty-six Countries* (pp. 9-59). Yale University Press.

Recommended readings:

- Collier, D., Levitsky, S. (1997). Democracy with adjectives: Conceptual innovation in comparative research, *World Politics*, 49 (3): 430-451.

Group presentation 2 (February 14th): Brexit and the Westminster Parliamentary Model.**Weeks 6 and 7 (February 17th, 19th, 21st, 24th, 26th and 28th): Do democratic institutions matter?**

The short answer is yes, but... A longer answer requires that we examine what we mean by institutions and how it is that they matter. To answer this question, we will look at the impact of formal institutions in three areas: we will focus on the impact of electoral rules on legislatures. We will then examine the issue of gender in legislatures, and whether institutional tinkering can change the gender balance, and we will end with a closer look at whether the consensual institutions dear to Lijphart's heart actually make a difference in terms of socio-political outcomes.

Required readings:

- Lijphart, A. (2012). Chapters 5, 8 and 16 in *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in thirty-six countries* (pp. 60-78, 130-57 and 274-294). Yale University Press.
- Krook, M. L. (2014). The Political Representation of Women and Minorities, in L. LeDuc et al. (eds.) *Comparing Democracies: Elections and Voting in Changing World* (pp. 96-111). Sage.

Recommended readings:

- Reynolds, A. (1999). Women in the legislatures and executives of the world: Knocking at the highest glass ceiling. *World Politics*, 51(4): 547-572.
- Powell, G. B. (2000). *Elections as instruments of democracy: Majoritarian and proportional visions*. Yale University Press.

Group presentation #3 (February 24th): Do gender quotas ensure better representation?

Note: Review session will be held on Wednesday 26th and in class mid-term exam on February 28th.

Week 8 (March 9th, 11th and 13th): Why do some countries pursue more redistribution than others?

The previous lectures have showed that countries have different levels of economic development. But economic development is not solely about growth, it is also about the way growth is distributed and how its benefits reach the greatest numbers. This week we look at the variation in the extent to which states provide welfare. Many advanced economies have very sophisticated welfare systems, while equally or even richer countries have lower levels of welfare provision. This variation actually straddles the line between democracies and authoritarian regimes. What lessons can we learn from this comparative analysis?

Required readings:

- Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). Chapter 1 in *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (pp. 10-34). Princeton University Press.
- Polanyi, K. (1944). Chapter 6 in *The Great Transformation* (pp. 71-80). Farrar & Rinehart.
- Piketty, T. (2015). Putting Distribution Back at the Center of Economics: Reflections on Capital in the Twenty-First Century, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 29(1): 67-88.

Recommended readings:

- Iversen, T. (2005). *Capitalism, democracy and welfare*. Cambridge University Press.
- Skocpol, T. (1992). *Protecting Mothers and Soldiers: the political origins of social policy in the United States*. Belknap Press of Harvard University.
- Mettler, S. (2011). *The submerged state: how invisible government policies undermine American democracy*. Chicago University Press.

Week 9 (March 16th, 18th and 20th): Why are some countries more democratic than others?

This class examines different answers to this question, including Modernization theory, institutional theories, political economy and political cultural approaches.

Required readings:

- Limongi, N., Papaterra, F., et al. (1996). What Makes Democracies Endure? *Journal of democracy*, 7(1): 39-55.
- Huntington, S. P. (1993). The Clash of Civilizations? *Foreign Affairs*, 72(3): 22-49.
- Stepan, A. (2000). Religion, Democracy and the Twin Tolerations. *Journal of democracy*, 11(4): 37-57.

Recommended readings:

- Ross, M., (2001). Does Oil Hinder Democracy? *World Politics*, 53 (3): 325-361.
- Lipset, M. S. (1960). Economic Development and Democracy in *Political Man: the social bases of politics* (pp. 31-51). Johns Hopkins University Press.

Week 10 (March 23rd, 25th and 27th): How do citizens influence states?

This lecture examines how citizen preferences influence governments. We focus on different ways to conceive of citizen pressure on states, from interest groups to mass movements, and the logic of state responses to these external pressures.

Required readings:

- Lim, T. (2010). Chapter 8. *Doing Comparative Politics* (pp. 253-284). Lynne Rienner Press.
- Lijphart, A. (2012). Chapter 9 in *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in thirty-six countries* (pp. 158-173). CT: Yale University Press.
- Zuo, J. and Benford, R. D. (1995). Mobilization Processes and the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement, *The Sociological Quarterly*, 36 (1): pp. 131-156.

Recommended readings:

- Putnam, R. (1995). Bowling Alone: America's declining Social Capital, *Journal of Democracy*, 6(1): 65-78.
- Olson, M. (2009). *The Logic of Collective Action*. Harvard University Press.

Week 11 (March 30th, April 1st and 3rd): What is authoritarian about authoritarian regimes?

This class introduces students to the institutions and everyday practices of non-democratic regimes, mostly in the contemporary period. We focus on hybrid regimes, or “electoral autocracies”, regimes that are not really democratic despite convening regular elections, and we examine the strategies that authoritarian leaders use to remain in power.

Required readings:

- Hadenius, A. & Teorell, J. (2007). Pathways from Authoritarianism. *Journal of Democracy*, 18(1): 143-157.
- Levitsky, S. and Way, L. (2002). The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism. *Journal of Democracy*, 13(2): 51-65.
- Albaugh, E. A. (2011). An Autocrat's Toolkit: Adaptation and Manipulation in ‘Democratic’ Cameroon. *Democratization*, 18(2): 388-414.
- Levitsky, S. and Ziblatt, D. 2018. Chapter 1 in *How Democracies Die* (pp. 11-32). NY: Crown.

Recommended readings:

- Schedler, A. (2002). The Menu of Manipulation. *Journal of Democracy*, 13(2): 36-50.
- Brownlee, J. (2007). *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*. Cambridge University Press.

Week 12 (April 6th, 8th,15th): How and why do countries democratize?

We start with a descriptive summary of the three waves of democratization. We then examine different theories about the process of transition from authoritarian to democratic forms of government.

Required readings:

- Huntington, S. (1993). Chapter 1 in *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (pp. 3-30). University of Oklahoma Press.
- Anderson, L. (2011). Demystifying the Arab Spring: parsing the differences between Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. *Foreign Affairs*. 90 (3): 2-7.

Recommended readings:

- Bunce, V. (2003). Rethinking recent Democratization: Lessons from the Postcommunist Experience. *World Politics*, 55 (2): 167-192.

Take home mid-term exam on April 8th.

Week 13 (April 17th, 22nd and 24th): Where do cultural identities come from and when do they politically matter?

This week, we examine different theories about the existence of ethnic and other cultural identities, and the circumstances under which they are mobilized politically and even turn violent. This lecture will then ask whether certain types of political institutions are more likely to increase different forms of identity conflict, and whether once mobilized, different institutions can reduce their potential for conflict.

Required readings:

- Kasfir, N. (1979). Explaining Ethnic Political Participation, *World Politics*, 31(3): 365-388.
- Posner, D. (2004). The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi. *American Political Science Review*, 98(4): 529-545.

Recommended readings:

- Chandra, K. (2006). What is ethnic identity and does it matter? *Annual Review of Political Science*, 9: 397-424.
- Lijphart, A. (2004). Constitutional Design for Divided Societies, *Journal of democracy*, 15(2): 96-109.

Week 14 (April 27th and 29th): What causes civil wars?

This lecture examines different theories about the causes of internal conflict in the contemporary era, from greed and grievance explanations to the role of international factors and the security dilemma.

Required readings:

- Lake, D. A., & Rothchild, D. (1996). Containing fear: The origins and management of ethnic conflict, *International Security*, 21(2): 41-75.
- Strauss, S. (2013). *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda* (pp. 7-14, 17-40 and 224-239). Cornell University Press.

Recommended readings:

- Collier, P. & Hoeffler, A. (2004). Greed and Grievance in Civil War, *Oxford Economic Papers*, 56(4): 563-595.
- Kaplan, R. (1994). The Coming Anarchy, *Atlantic Monthly*, 273(2): pp. 44-76.