

INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Political Science, UN1501
Columbia University, Spring 2017

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Time: M/W 10:10-11:25
Location: Rennert Hall,
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COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course provides a broad overview of the comparative politics subfield by focusing on important substantive questions about the world today. The course is organized around four questions. First, why can only some people depend upon the state to enforce order? Second, why are some countries more democratic than others? Third, what different institutional forms does democratic government take? Finally, are some institutions more likely than others to produce important social outcomes such as representation, accountability, redistribution, and political stability?

Because the study of comparative politics requires the knowledge of specific cases, we will focus on eight countries: China, Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, and the United Kingdom.

This course will prepare you for higher-level courses in political science in two ways. First, it will teach you make and evaluate arguments about politics. Second, it will introduce you to the methods that political scientists use in their research.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

Your grade will be based on:

- *Participation in weekly discussion sections (15%):*

Attending sections is compulsory. Discussion sections begin the week of January 30th.

You are expected to have done the required readings for the week before your section meets. Your TA may set additional assignments for section.

One section assignment will be a brief survey including questions about politics commonly asked in cross-national survey research. You will fill out the survey online in the week of January 30th.

○ *Exams (3 x 25%):*

There will be three in-class exams covering the lectures and assigned readings. You *must* sit these exams at the scheduled time. If you cannot do the exam because of you are sick, you must provide a note from your doctor stating that you could not take the exam. The exams will be held in class on:

- Monday, February 20th
- Monday, April 3rd
- Monday, May 1st

○ *Written Assignment (10%):*

You will write a paper that uses the material we will cover this semester to make the case that changing one of the institutions we've studied will increase accountability, equity, or democratic stability in a specific country. The final paper should be no longer than 2000 words, not counting the bibliography. The final paper will be due at 9am on May 4th. We will circulate a description of the assignment and a list of eligible countries on April 5th. You must clear your proposed paper topic with your TA by April 12th.

If you have a concern about a grade you receive you should write your TA a memo describing why your grade ought to be revised upwards. Your TA may either increase *or* decrease your grade.

READINGS

There are two required books, which are available at [Book Culture](#).

Clark, William R., Matt Golder, and Sona N. Golder. 2013. *Principles of Comparative Politics* 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA 91320 CQ Press.

Samuels, David, ed. 2013. *Case Studies in Comparative Politics*. Upper Saddle River, NJ Pearson.

All other readings are available through URLs in this syllabus.

PART I. THE STATE, ORDER, AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Session 1 (1/18): Introduction

Sessions 2 & 3 (1/23 & 1/25): The State

Principles, Ch. 4 The Origins of the Modern State

[Tilly, Charles. 1985. War Making as Organized Crime. In *Bringing the State Back In* edited by P. Evans, D. Rueschemeyer and T. Skocpol. New York: Cambridge University Press.](#)

[Ensminger, Jean. 1996. Collective Action: From Community to State. In *Making a Market: The Institutional Transformation of an African Society*. New York & Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.](#)

Sessions 4 & 5 (1/30 & 2/1): Political Violence

[Samuels, David J. 2012. "Political Violence" in *Comparative Politics*. Pearson: Boston, pp 257-284](#)

[Wilkinson, Steven I. 2004. *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Chapters 1 and 2.](#)

Case Studies, India, pp. 195-224

Case Studies, Nigeria, pp. 321-350

PART II. POLITICAL REGIMES - DEMOCRACY AND DICTATORSHIP

Sessions 6 & 7 (2/6 & 2/8): Describing Political Regimes

Principles, Ch. 5, Democracy and Dictatorship: Conceptualization and Measurement

Principles, Ch. 10, Varieties of Dictatorship, pp. 349-384

Case Studies, Russia, pp.278-299

Case Studies, Mexico, pp. 236-244

Sessions 8 & 9 (2/13 & 2/15): The Effect of Political Regimes

Principles, Ch. 9, Democracy or Dictatorship: Does It Make a Difference?

Case Studies, India, pp. 225-230

Session 10 (2/20): Exam 1

Sessions 11-13 (2/22, 2/27, & 3/1): Explaining Political Regimes

Principles, Ch. 6, The Economic Determinants of Democracy and Dictatorship

Principles, Ch. 7, Cultural Determinants of Democracy and Dictatorship

Case Studies, Germany, pp. 78-87 & 94-97

Case Studies, United Kingdom, pp. 40-49

Case Studies, Mexico, pp. 244-250

PART III: POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS IN DEMOCRACIES

Sessions 14 & 15 (3/6 & 3/8): Parties, Elections, and Political Behavior I

Principles, Ch. 13, Elections and Electoral Systems

Principles, Ch. 14, Social Cleavages and Party Systems

Case Studies, Japan, pp. 151-174 & 188-189

Case Studies, Germany, pp. 98-111

Case Studies, United Kingdom, pp. 49-71

Spring Break: (3/13 & 3/15)

Sessions 16 & 17 (3/20 & 3/22): Parties, Elections, and Political Behavior II

[Gerber, Alan, Donald P. Green, and Christopher W. Larimer. 2008. Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment. *American Political Science Review* 102 \(1\):33-48.](#)

[Ichino, Nahomi, and Noah Nathan. 2013. "Crossing the Line: Local Ethnic Geography and Voting in Ghana." *American Political Science Review* 107 \(2\):344-361.](#)

[Gonzalez-Ocantos, Ezequiel, Chad Kiewiet de Jonge, Carlos Meléndez, Javier Osorio, and David W. Nickerson. 2012. Vote Buying and Social Desirability Bias: Experimental Evidence from Nicaragua. *American Journal of Political Science* 56 \(1\):202-217.](#)

Sessions 18 & 19 (3/27 & 3/29): Executives and Legislatures

Principles, Ch. 12, Parliamentary, Presidential, and Semi-Presidential Democracies

[Carey, John M. 2007. Competing Principals, Political Institutions, and Party Unity in Legislative Voting. *American Journal of Political Science* 51 \(1\):92-107.](#)

Session 20 (4/3): Exam 2

Session 21 (4/5): Federalism and Decentralization

Principles, Ch. 15, Institutional Veto Players, pp. 673-691

Case Studies, India, pp. 208-209

Case Studies, Germany, pp. 90-91

Case Studies, Russia, pp. 290-292

PART IV: POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIAL OUTCOMES

Sessions 22-23 (4/10 & 4/12): Representation and Accountability

Principles, Ch. 16, Consequences of Democratic Institutions, pp. 743-765

[Bhavnani, Rikhil. 2009. Do Electoral Quotas Work after They are Withdrawn: Evidence from a Natural Experiment in India. *American Political Science Review* 103 \(1\):23-35.](#)

[Ferraz, Claudio, and Fred Finan. 2011. Exposing Corrupt Politicians. *J-Pal Policy Briefcase*.](#)

Sessions 24-26 (4/17, 4/19, & 4/24): Redistributive Politics and the Welfare State
Principles, Ch. 16, Consequences of Democratic Institutions, pp. 766-788

[Alesina, Alberto, and Edward Glaeser. 2004. *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe: A World of Difference*. New York: Oxford University Press, Chapter 6.](#)

[Esping-Andersen, Gosta. 1990. *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, Chapters 1-3.](#)

Session 27 (4/26): Democratic Stability

Principles, Ch. 16, Consequences of Democratic Institutions, pp. 788-826

Session 28 (5/1): Exam 3