POL20020 Comparative Politics 2019–20

- Module Coordinator: dr. Martijn Schoonvelde

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- Office hours: Tuesdays, 2–3PM, Newman Room G303.

- Lectures:

  - Tuesday 11:00 - 12:00, L023 SUTH
  - Thursday 12:00 - 1:00, Th. Q ART

- Tutors:

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Content

Welcome to Comparative Politics! In this module, we will explore the political diversity of the world, and investigate questions that dominate the news. For example: What distinguishes democracies from dictatorships? When do revolutions occur, and why do some of them fail while others succeed? How do democracies organize elections and why do their electoral systems vary? Why do some countries have many political parties whereas others have only a few? How do governments form and fall? What is democratic backsliding?

	Work Package 1	Work Package 2	Work Package 3
Occurrence			
Causes			
Consequences			

What is populism, how does it vary across countries, and is it here to stay?

When investigating these questions, we will face a range of methodological issues. To name just a few: How do we classify countries as democracies or dictatorships, and how should we deal with ambiguous cases (for example, Hungary and Poland)? How do we asses the impact of political institutions when these institutions do not change (for example, the Netherlands has been a parliamentary democracy since 1848)? How do we define populism? When is it better to study just a few countries in depth (a small-N design) or just one country over time (within-case design)? When is it better to analyze many countries using statistical methods (large-N design)? What is the role of experiments in comparative politics? And how do we decide on which countries to study in the first place?

As comparative political scientists, we will adopt a scientific, deductive approach: we generally start from a theory of why something happens and we then assess the implications of that theory using data. We will also learn about the comparative method, which is an important inductive approach to learning in comparative politics. You will be asked to apply these methods in various tutorial assignments, which will put your newly acquired knowledge of comparative politics to work.

By the end of the module, you will gained have knowledge of key concepts and theoretical debates in the (broad) field of comparative politics (democracy, revolution, public opinion, electoral systems, party systems, and government formation, to name just a few). You can apply theories from comparative politics and use the comparative method to analyze present and past events, like revolutions, corruption, democratic backsliding, elections, etc. Furthermore, you will understand key aspects of a comparative politics research design (for example, conceptualization, measurement, case-selection, small-N versus large-N studies). In the process you will have learned a lot about the political world around us.

Organization

Typically, we cover a new topic every week. We do not have a textbook, but there is a reading list, which you are expected to complete before class. Slides from the lectures will be available on Brightspace as will the assigned readings. The lectures will complement the readings so it is important that you study both. Note that for some of the tutorials as well as the essay you will need to search for literature so familiarize yourself with sites like Google Scholar: `scholar.google.com`

I appreciate that you are still in year 2 and not used to public speech. However, I strongly encourage you to participate in both lectures and tutorials, as you will gain much more from the module that way. Our tutorials are designed to support your active participation and involvement in this module.

Typically, you will explore a particular question introduced in a lecture, and present your findings in the following week. For example, in Week 2, I will hold lectures related to states and state failure. In Week 3, you will use your tutorials to discuss the question of how to save a particular failed state. In Week 4, we will compare the solutions proposed by each tutorial group.

Assessment

This module includes continuous assessment based on tutorial participation and written assignments (40%), and a final two-hour exam (60%). In your tutorials, there is an essay assignment, which accounts for 20% of the final grade, and weekly tutorial assignments, which together account for 10% of the final grade. Your participation in tutorial discussions is also worth 10% of the final grade.

More information about essay-writing and referencing will be made available on Brightspace. You will also find useful links there to help you avoid plagiarism problems, and so on. Your tutor will announce the essay questions in your tutorials.

Late submission policy

All written work must be submitted on or before the due dates. Students will lose one point of a grade for work up to 5 work days late (B- becomes C+). Students will lose two grade points for work between 5 and 10 work days late (B- becomes C). When more than two weeks are necessary, the student will need to apply for extenuating circumstances application via the SPIRe Programme Office.

Communication

I strongly encourage you to interact directly with your tutors during their office hours, and with me after the lectures or during my office hours instead of sending us emails.

There is an Q&A section on Brightspace, in which I answer emails of general interest I receive from you (unless they contain questions answered by the syllabus). In principle, I answer every email online, unless it contains private matters related to your participation in the module.

You are most welcome to visit my office hours to discuss any question you may have. It is not necessary to email me to make an appointment; simply come to my office during office hours.

Your tutors will also hold office hours, and you are strongly encouraged to use those office hours to ask questions about the module.

A List of Do's and Don'ts

Do's:

- Attend all classes.
- Read all of the assigned material before class.
- Participate in class / tutorial discussions.
- Ask for help as soon as you feel yourself falling behind.

Don'ts:

- Don't ask me if something we are discussing in class is important and will be on the final exam. Assume if we are talking about it that it is important and can be on the final exam.
- If you miss class for any reason, don't ask me if you missed something important. Assume you missed something important and figure out how you are going to obtain that information.

Overview and readings

* This outline serves a general plan for the course; deviations (announced) may be necessary.

*Please use this reading list as your starting point when preparing tutorials. You should get used to downloading your own journal articles from the UCD Library e-journals collection or from scholar.google.com, and to conducting independent research on topics addressed in this module.

WEEK 1: What is Comparative Politics?

- **January 21: 11:00 - 12:00**: Introduction. Why compare?

- **January 23: 12:00 - 1:00**: What is the comparative method? And what is the scientific method?

- Readings:

  - Munck, G.L., & Snyder, R. (2007) "Debating the direction of comparative politics: An analysis of leading journals." *Comparative Political Studies 40(1)*: 5–31.
  - Lijphart, A. (1971). "Comparative politics and the comparative method." *American Political Science Review 65(3)*: 682–693.
  - Raff, J. (2018). How to read a scientific article: `https://violentmetaphors.files.wordpress.com/2018/01/how-to-read-and-understand-a-scientific-article.pdf`

WEEK 2: States and Failed States

- **January 28: 11:00 - 12:00**: What is a state?

- **January 30: 12:00 - 1:00**: What is a failed state? And why do states fail?

- Readings:

  - Call, C. T. (2008). "The fallacy of the 'Failed State'". *Third World Quarterly 29(8)*, 1491–1507.
  - Geddes, B., (1990). "How the cases you choose affect the answers you get: Selection bias in comparative politics." *Political Analysis, 2*: 131–150.
  - "Conquering Chaos." (2007). *The Economist*, January 7. `https://www.economist.com/international/2017/01/07/why-states-fail-and-how-to-rebuild-them`

WEEK 3: Democracy and Dictatorship

- All week: **Tutorial 1: Yemen and the Fragile State Index**

- **February 4: 11:00 - 12:00**: How do we know a democracy when we see one? And how do we know a dictatorship when we see one?

- **February 6: 12:00 - 1:00**: What causes countries to become democratic?

- Readings:

  - Collier, D. and Adcock, R., 1999. "Democracy and dichotomies: A pragmatic approach to choices about concepts." *Annual Review of Political Science, 2(1)*: 537–565.
  - De Mesquita, B.B. and Downs, G.W., (2005). "Development and democracy." *Foreign Affairs*: 77–86.
  - Muller, E. N., & Seligson, M. A. (1994). "Civic culture and democracy: the question of causal relationships." *American Political Science Review, 88(3)*: 635–652.

WEEK 4: Revolutions

- All week: **Tutorial 2: Democracy in China?**

- **February 11: 11:00 - 12:00**: Tutorial Discussion 1

- **February 13: 12:00 - 1:00**: How do revolutions occur? Why are they so difficult to predict? And what role does (social) media play?

- Readings:

  - Kuran, T., (1991). The East European revolution of 1989: is it surprising that we were surprised? *American Economic Review, 81(2)*: 121–125.

  - Crabtree, C., Darmofal, D. and Kern, H.L., (2015). "A spatial analysis of the impact of West German television on protest mobilization during the East German revolution." *Journal of Peace Research, 52(3)*: pp. 269–284.

  - Tucker, J.A., Theocharis, Y., Roberts, M.E. and Barberá, P., 2017. "From liberation to turmoil: social media and democracy." *Journal of Democracy, 28(4)*: pp.46–59.

WEEK 5

- All week **Tutorial 3: Social media and political change in Gabon.**

- **February 18: 11:00 - 12:00**: Tutorial Discussion 2

- **February 20: 12:00 - 1:00**: Essay Preparation Session

WEEK 6: Does democracy matter?

- **February 25: 11:00 - 12:00**: Do democratic countries perform better than autocratic countries?

- **February 27: 12:00 - 1:00**: NO CLASS

- Readings:

  - Our World in Data: https://ourworldindata.org/democracy

  - Ross, M., 2006. "Is democracy good for the poor?" *American Journal of Political Science, 50(4)*: pp. 860–874.

  - Gottlieb, J., 2016. "Greater expectations: A field experiment to improve accountability in Mali." *American Journal of Political Science, 60(1)*: pp. 143–157.

  - Stasavage, D., (2005). "Democracy and education spending in Africa." *American Journal of Political Science, 49(2)*: 343–358.

WEEK 7: Democratic decision-making and democratic systems

- All week **Tutorial 4: Regime type and child mortality.**

- **March 3: 11:00 - 12:00**: What are some fundamental problems of democratic decision-making?

- **March 5: 12:00 - 1:00**: How do we distinguish between parliamentary, presidential and semi-presidential democracies?

- **5 MARCH, 5PM, ESSAY DUE**

- Readings:

  - Linz, J. (1990). "The Perils of Presidentialism." *Journal of Democracy, 1(1)*: 51–69.

9 – 22 March: BREAK

WEEK 8: Elections and electoral systems

- All week **Tutorial 5: Gender quotas in parliament.**
- **March 24: 11:00 - 12:00**: Tutorial Discussion 4
- **March 26: 12:00 - 1:00**: What are electoral systems? What types are there? And what consequences do they have?
- Readings:

  - Horowitz, D.L., (2003). "Electoral systems: A primer for decision makers." *Journal of Democracy, 14(4)*: 115–127.
  - Norris, P., (1997). "Choosing electoral systems: proportional, majoritarian and mixed systems." *International Political Science Review, 18(3)*: pp. 297–312.
  - Bormann, N.C. and Golder, M., (2013). "Democratic electoral systems around the world, 1946–2011." *Electoral Studies, 32(2)*: pp. 360–369.

WEEK 9: Party systems

- **March 31: 11:00 - 12:00**: Tutorial Discussion 5
- **April 2: 12:00 - 1:00**: What are party systems? What is Duverger's law?
- Readings:

  - Shugart, M.S. and Taagepera, R., (2018). "Institutional Effects on Party Systems." In *The Oxford Handbook of Electoral Systems.*
  - Ford, R. and Jennings, W. (2020). "The Changing Cleavage Politics of Western Europe." *Annual Review of Political Science, 23(1)*: pp. xx–xx.

WEEK 10: Veto players and democratic backsliding

- **April 7: 11:00 - 12:00**: What is veto players theory?
- **April 9: 12:00 - 1:00**: What is democratic backsliding and how does it occur?
- Readings:

  - Tsebelis, G., (1995). "Decision making in political systems: Veto players in presidentialism, parliamentarism, multicameralism and multipartyism." *British Journal of Political Science, 25(3)*: 289–325.
  - Bermeo, N., (2016). "On democratic backsliding." *Journal of Democracy, 27(1)*: pp. 5–19.
  - "Why Autocrats Love Emergencies." (2018). *New York Times*, January 13. `https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/12/opinion/sunday/trump-national-emergency-wall.html`

WEEK 11 Populism

- All week **Tutorial 6: Saving US democracy from backsliding?**

- **April 14: 11:00 - 12:00**: What is populism?

- **April 16: 12:00 - 1:00**: What causes populism?

- Readings:

  - Mudde, C., 2004. "The populist zeitgeist." *Government and opposition, 39(4):* 541–563.
  - Rooduijn, M. and Akkerman, T., (2017). "Flank attacks: Populism and left-right radicalism in Western Europe." *Party Politics, 23(3)*: 193–204.
  - "After a Rocky 2018, Populism Is Down but Far From Out in the West" (2018). *New York Times*, January 5. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/05/world/europe/populism-voters-global.html
  - "The New Populism" (2018). *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/world/series/the-new-populism

WEEK 12 Conclusion and revisions

- **April 21: 11:00 - 12:00**: Tutorial Discussion 6

- **April 23: 12:00 - 1:00**: Conclusion and revisions