GOV 20: Foundations of Comparative Politics
Fall 2025

Section Information and Expectations

TF: Adrian Scheibler

Email: ascheibler@fas.harvard.edu

Office Hours: Wed. 10:00–12:00 at Jenny's Cafe[1] or email me for an appointment.

Office Hours Signup: calendly.com/adrianscheibler/gov-20-office-hours

Section Website: https://adrianscheibler.github.io/teaching/gov20_fall25.html

Assignments: Please note these important deadlines.

7. October: Short Paper 1 (10%)	18. November: Short Paper 2 (15%)
30. October: Midterm (20%)	Date TBD: Final exam (40%)

Section Attendance: Section attendance is an important part of this course, and your attendance is required. Please email me ahead of time if you cannot attend a section. Life happens, and each student is allowed one unexcused, no-questions-asked absence. Any additional absences must be cleared with me in advance and supported by documentation to be excused; otherwise, these will affect your section participation grade. I will also ask you to submit a one-page response in lieu of attendance.

Participation: Active section participation is crucial for the learning process and constitutes 15% of your overall course grade. To receive full credit, you are expected to complete all assigned readings and contribute to discussions and activities. Section is the place to bring your questions, ideas, opinions, and critiques of the lectures and readings. If you have any concerns about your participation, please talk with me.

Laptops: Laptops and tablets are allowed in section for note-taking and referencing course materials. Their use should support learning; please avoid distractions such as social media, messaging, or unrelated browsing during section.

Papers: You are required to complete two papers in this course. Papers will be evaluated on the strength of your argument and supporting evidence, **not** on summaries of readings or lectures.

- You may consult with me about topics, thesis statements, outlines, and writing strategies. I cannot read drafts per course policy. For additional writing assistance, I encourage you to consult with the Harvard College Writing Center.

- All sources must be cited with page numbers, including direct quotes, paraphrases, and facts not considered common knowledge. When in doubt, cite the source. You can choose any academic citation format as long as you are consistent.

- To encourage planning, I observe a "communication blackout" beginning the day before an assignment is due; I will not answer questions during that time.

- Questions about paper grades will be addressed only after a 24-hour waiting period once papers are returned. This is to encourage thinking about the substance of the comments as opposed to reacting to the letter grade received.

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[1] Harvard Art Museums, Harvard University, 32 Quincy St, Cambridge, MA 02138, USA

- Each student has a 24-hour late bank to use as a grace period for paper deadlines. You may use this time in increments (e.g., 2 hours on the first paper and 5 hours on the second). After the 24 hours are exhausted, late papers will be penalized by one grade level per day.

- Extensions are rarely granted and only in exceptional circumstances. Requests must be made more than 24 hours before the due date.

Contacting Me: Please contact me via email with any questions or concerns about the course. I will attempt to respond to emails within 24 hours. All emails should have a subject line that begins with "Gov20:" so I can promptly respond to your email.

Office Hours: I have weekly office hours on Wednesday mornings. If that time does not work, please email me to find an alternative time. You do not need to have questions prepared, and walk-ins are welcome, though I prefer advance sign-up on Calendly. I encourage each of you visit my office hours at least once before the first paper is due.

Generative AI and Plagiarism: Don't do it. All written work submitted in this course must be your own. You may consult with other students about topics or sources, but you must cite all references. ChatGPT and other AI tools to generate writing is not allowed and constitutes plagiarism. Violations of this policy will be taken seriously and can result in referral to the College Administrative Board for sanctions. In addition, these tools tend to produce inferior papers that do not meet the assignments' requirements. Good social science papers have creative theses and and thoughtful analysis, and AI will not be capable of producing that. Most importantly, you are here to learn, and outsourcing your thinking will not do you any favors.

Section Suggestion Box: Please feel free to give your anonymous input about topics, concepts, readings, or news stories you would like to cover in section throughout the semester at: https://forms.gle/V9T3amBJpbgQ6Pq59. General feedback is also welcome via this form.