

**UCLA Department of Political Science****PoliSci 50****Introduction to Comparative Politics****Fall Quarter 2024****Professor Michael Thies**<https://bruinlearn.ucla.edu/courses/194687>**Contents**

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CONTACT DETAILS

Lecture time:	Asynchronous, pre-recorded lectures
In-Person LIVE Sessions:	Thursdays 9:30am-10:45am, Bunche 2209A
Discussion Sections:	Thursdays 4-8pm, Fridays 12-2pm
First Class:	Thursday, September 26, 2024
First Discussion Sections:	Thursday-Friday, September 26-27, 2024
In-class Midterm Exam:	Tuesday, October 29, 2024, 9:30-10:45am
Last Class:	Thursday, December 05, 2024
In-class Final exam:	Thursday, December 12, 2024, 8am-11am

Instructor:	Professor Michael Thies
Office:	via Zoom (link to Zoom room is on the course website)
Office Hours:	Tu 9:30-11:30am & Th 1:15-3:15pm
Email:	thies@polisci.ucla.edu
Course Website:	https://bruinlearn.ucla.edu/courses/194687

Graduate Teaching Assistants	Sections	Office Hours
Daniel Carnahan danielcarnahan@g.ucla.edu	A, B, C	Tuesdays 1:15pm-2:15pm on Zoom (by appointment) Wednesdays 11:15am-12:15pm in Bunche 3288
Merabi Chkhenkeli merabi@g.ucla.edu	D, E, F	Tuesdays 3:15 pm - 4:15 pm on Zoom (by app't) Thursdays 2:45 pm - 3:45 pm on Zoom (by app't)
Sara Elbanna salbanna2@g.ucla.edu	G, H, I	Mondays 1:30-2:30 on Zoom (by appointment) Wednesdays 12:45-1:45 on Zoom in Bunche 3288, by app't

COURSE INTRODUCTION

Welcome to PoliSci 50!

Comparative politics is the field within political science that tries to understand how and why countries vary in their domestic political institutions, the political behavior of their leaders and citizens, their levels and rates of development, and their public policies. It is a vast field, and a 10-week intro course can only scratch the surface. In this course, we will focus on two main questions that have long been central to research in comparative politics. First, why are some countries democracies and others dictatorships, and what are the consequences of regime type for the welfare of citizens? Second, how do democracies vary in their political institutions and why do these differences matter?

Our goal in this course is not just to acquaint you with these questions and the debates that surround them but also to help you begin to develop the tools to reach your own reasoned conclusions about them. To understand and evaluate these debates, you will need some fundamental vocabulary. This includes an understanding of what **social science** is all about:

what precisely do political scientists mean by the terms they use, how do they move from abstract concepts to concrete measurements, and how do they build and test their theories? Throughout, we will challenge you to link current and historical events to the larger questions of comparative politics that the course addresses.

We also ask of you an understanding of ***what comparative political science is not***: (a) it is not a continuation of high school “civics” or “social studies” courses; (b) it is not a travelogue—a descriptive meandering through the political landscapes of two or three or a dozen countries; (c) it is not journalistic commentary on current events, although it will help you to understand current events; (d) it is not the study of war or diplomacy; and (e) it is not mere opinion, no matter how well expressed. It is a field focused on using theory and evidence to identify and try to explain broad patterns in political behavior and outcomes in the countries of the world.

Finally, *this is an introductory course*, designed to teach you concepts and approaches that should be applicable to any upper division comparative political science courses that you might take in the future. That said, because there is so much to cover, *it is also a very demanding course*, indeed more demanding than most upper division courses that focus more deeply on much narrower topics. You will not finish this course as an expert in the politics of other countries, or in the complexities of a particular political institution or substantive topic. But you should leave with a set of tools that you can use to examine the political systems and processes of any country anywhere. We won’t give you most of the answers, but we will teach you many of the important questions, as well as a starter course in how to go about answering them.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students completing PS 50 will be expected to:

- understand the comparative method, and the importance of case selection
- evaluate the logic of causal arguments critically, and know what sorts of evidence might be assessed to test arguments
- discuss critically the relationships between political and economic development
- assess the arguments and evidence concerning the notion of “democratic decay”
- evaluate the tradeoffs inherent in the design of political institutions, as well as policies
- think “outside the box” of the nation-state, considering both sub-national and supra-national contexts and influences

TAKING PS 50 in Fall 2024

In this section, I'll describe how we plan to run PS 50 this term, and particularly the mix of live, in-person engagement and remote and/or asynchronous modalities.

- All required **course lectures** will be delivered through pre-recorded videos. The videos for each week's lectures will be made available on the Friday afternoon of the week prior (so, for example the lectures for Tue Oct 8 and Thu Oct 10 will be posted on the afternoon of Friday Oct 4, as will the relevant reading quizzes and lecture quizzes). I first adopted this asynchronous approach to lectures as an emergency response to the Covid-caused campus closure, but the feedback I received from students was that they much prefer pre-recorded videos to traditional in-person delivery of lectures. Asynchronous delivery means that you can watch them at your leisure and can pause as often as you wish, whether to take notes, go back and hear something again, or simply take breaks). Once posted, the videos will remain available as reference materials for papers and exams later in the course.
 - The posting of pre-recorded lectures also should press home that how much you get out of a lecture is completely up to you. The videos, like the readings, are resources to assist learning, but the decision about how much effort and focus you put into taking notes and extracting understanding from those resources is on you. To encourage you to keep up, the short **lecture quizzes** will disappear on the morning of the day the lecture is scheduled in the course syllabus (for example, the LQ for the Oct 10 lecture will disappear at 9am on Oct 10).
- Each Thursday (other than Week 9, due to Thanksgiving) we will meet in Bunche 2209A at 9:30am for an open discussion of a specified topic that builds on the lecture and reading materials for the week. These "Thursday Live" sessions will be mandatory and are fair game for exams and paper assignments. For most, no additional preparation will be required – just do the week's readings and watch the week's lecture recordings, and then show up and participate.
 - Except for the Midterm Exam in Week 5, we will **not plan to meet in person** on Tuesdays. Instead, I'll hold extra office hours during the scheduled Tuesday lecture time. There will be readings, recorded lectures, and quizzes to watch before Tuesday lecture times, but no in-person Tuesday meetings for Weeks 1-4 or 6-10.
 - However, **we expect you to leave that Tuesday class-time slot open** (that is, do not enroll in another class at that time or schedule some other regular commitment). It often happens that we must adjust on the fly – due to a weather event, campus disruption, or other unforeseen circumstance. In such cases, it will be extremely convenient to have an alternative meeting time when we know everyone will be available.
- My **office hours** (4 hours each week) will be held via Zoom (see the link to Zoom Room on Home page of the course website). We have found in the last couple of years that appointments work best, to save you having to wait indefinitely in the waiting room, so

we'll do that again this quarter (schedule via [Calendly](#)).

- Each TA will hold two office hours each week. See page 2 (above) for details.
- The TA-led **discussion sections** will be in person, in the places and times indicated by the Schedule of Classes. The most important difference between these and the Thursday Live sessions will be that the discussion sections will be in much smaller groups, where real conversations are possible. In the discussions, your TA will focus on helping you to link the week's readings to the lectures, and to dive deeper into concepts raised in both.
 - Discussion sections and Thursday Live sessions will **NOT** be recorded.
 - You must attend the discussion section in which you are enrolled unless you have prior written permission from all TAs affected by your request to attend a different section in any given week. You may be told "no," and you may not be admitted if you just show up for a section other than your own.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

If you find yourself having difficulties (health-related or otherwise) that affect your performance in the class, please contact me, a TA, or any of the several offices on campus whose sole purpose is to help students facing challenges. *See the list of student resources below or linked near the bottom of the homepage of the course website.* We're all dedicated to helping you thrive in PS 50 and at UCLA, but we can't anticipate everything, so clear and timely communication is key.

- For concerns specific to the class, please contact one of us. We look forward to meeting with you. Interacting with hard-working, curious students is the best part of our jobs.
- For questions about the PoliSci major or enrollment issues, please visit with the Student Affairs Officers in the [Political Science Undergraduate Counseling office](#).
- The [Undergraduate Writing Center](#) offers UCLA undergraduates free, one-on-one feedback and support on their writing. The UWC is staffed by Peer Learning Facilitators (PLFs), fellow students who understand the challenges of writing at UCLA. [UWC email](#).
- Contact the [Center for Academic Advising in the College](#) for help with academic concerns.
- If you are having other difficulties and need to speak with a therapist or counselor, you can contact [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#).
- [UCLA RISE Center](#): The RISE (Resilience In Your Student Experience) Center is a holistic wellness hub that provides an array of programs, classes, trainings, and self-directed resources to foster and support resilience, connection, and well-being. Services are free of cost to students and are led by a team of healing practitioners, mental health experts,

prevention educators, wellness advisors, and student ambassadors. RISE champions best practices around equipping students with social-emotional skills, embracing difference and diversity, and elevating the concept of "mental health" as an everyday habit.

- UCLA is committed to providing help to students with disabilities. If you wish to request an accommodation due to a suspected or documented disability, please contact the [Center for Accessible Education \(CAE\)](#) at A-255 Murphy Hall, (310) 825-1501. The intake process can take a few weeks, so we encourage you to visit CAE as soon as possible.
- [UCLA's Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion \(EDI\)](#) mission to lead and advance strategies for enhancing equity, diversity, and inclusion, protecting civil rights and upholding dignity for all at UCLA includes supporting our disability community.
- **UCLA CARE Program** <https://careprogram.ucla.edu/>
 - UCLA CARE (Campus Assault Resources & Education) provides a safe place for survivors of sexual violence to get confidential support.
- **UCLA Basic Needs Program:** <https://basicneeds.ucla.edu/>
 - The UCLA Basic Needs Program helps students facing food and housing insecurity.
- **The student IT page:** <https://www.digitaltoolkit.ucla.edu/students> Software downloads can be reached here: <https://www.it.ucla.edu/it-support-center/software-downloads>

Title IX

Advocacy and Confidential Services

Please note that Title IX prohibits gender discrimination, including sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. If you have experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence, you can receive confidential support and advocacy at the CARE Advocacy Office for Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, 205 Covell Commons, Los Angeles, CA, 90095, care@careprogram.ucla.edu, (310) 206-2465. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) provides confidential counseling to all students and can be reached 24/7 at (310) 825-0768.

Reporting and Non-confidential Services

As your course instructors, the TAs and I are required under the UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment to inform the Title IX Coordinator should we become aware that you or any other student has experienced sexual violence or sexual harassment. In addition, you can also report sexual violence or sexual harassment directly to the University's Title IX Coordinator, 2255 Murphy Hall, titleix@equity.ucla.edu, (310) 206-3417. The coordinator is committed to maintaining anonymity of victims and so are we. Reports to law enforcement can be made to UCPD at (310) 825-1491.

COURSE POLICIES

- Under FERPA, you have a right to know how you're doing in the course, but **it is a violation of university policy to discuss grades or any private information via email.** Any discussion of your performance in PS 50 must take place in person or in private Zoom meetings.
- Grade appeals are permissible if you believe that an error was made. You must send a PDF, (< 250 words - proofread), explaining your claim. Any appeal must be submitted within one week of receiving the grade. Upon re-grading, it is possible that your score might go down.
- TA-led discussion sections are **mandatory**. On-time attendance and active, constructive participation are required. If you miss a class, your participation points will not be reduced if you provide documentation to support your excuse for missing class. We will determine whether your "excuse" is acceptable and may assign an alternative task.
 - The standard university allowances for excused absences are for personal illness or some sort of family crisis. If one of these applies, we will excuse the absence if you provide documentation that we deem sufficient. If you're not sure what would constitute "sufficient" backup, please ask.
 - In the past (especially during the gradual emergence from Covid-19 restrictions) there have been some legitimate questions about the practicality of requiring a doctor's note. Sometimes, we feel ill enough that we deem it to be the responsible thing to rest or at least self-isolate, but not ill enough to warrant a trip to the doctor (some things really do pass quickly). Obviously, we want you to use your best judgment, but you can also appreciate that just telling students they can "call in sick" without any outside verification is a policy that can be abused. Most importantly, we really want you to attend discussion sections - they're the #1 active learning opportunity each week.
 - In an effort to find a happy medium, here is the Discussion Section attendance policy:
 1. If you are absent and provide us with a doctor's note, we can either give you an alternate assignment so that you can earn participation points for the day OR we can just excuse your absence that week and not count that week in the calculation of your participation score.
 2. If you are absent and do not provide a doctor's note or other sufficient excuse, you may still do the alternate assignment for credit, but the option of simply excusing the absence and dropping the day from the calculation will not be available.
 3. Contact your TA about your absence as soon as possible. If you know about it ahead of time (e.g., if you fall ill the day before your section), let your TA know before the section that will be missed. If it's a last-minute thing (maybe you aren't feeling great, hope it will pass in time for you to attend, but decide at the last minute that it's best to stay home), then contact your TA as soon as you decide, even if that's right at the start of the section and your TA might not see your email for a few hours).
 4. The alternate assignments will require you to write a short essay as prompted by your TA that will be expected to take up to 45 minutes to complete (the length of time that you would have been in Section).

5. **The alternate-assignment route may be used only once during the quarter.** Any additional absences, if not excused by a doctor's note, will count as zero participation points for the week.

- **No electronic devices are permitted in in-person sessions, even for note taking.** No laptops, tablets, cell phones, or recording devices. If you have them with you, please turn them off and stow them out of reach. As the course lectures are all pre-recorded, you can take notes on those however you'd like, of course. The in-person sessions will not be lectures, but conversations, so you can jot down notes with pen and paper, but the emphasis is on active (not distracted) listening and contributing to the conversation.

COMMUNICATION, HOMEWORK SUBMISSIONS, TEXTBOOK

The **course website** will be the hub for everything in the course.

- All readings other than the Samuels e-textbook (see next page) will be posted in the appropriate Modules of the course website.
- All lectures will be pre-recorded and posted in the relevant "Module" folders. They will not be downloadable, and recording the lectures on your own device is a violation of copyright and the UCLA Student Conduct code and is strictly prohibited.
- All quizzes and paper prompts will be posted in those same Module folders.
- **IT-related problems** should be reported immediately by clicking on the **"Help"** button at the bottom of the blue ribbon at the left edge of the course website.
- **All assignments will have firm due dates.** For Quizzes and Exams, there will be **no exceptions.** If you miss those deadlines, you may not submit them late. For the "Theory-Meets-Data" assignments, late submissions will be accepted but penalized at the rate of *20% per day (and prorated for partial days - weekend days count).*

Paper submissions

- All written work must be submitted electronically, as PDFs. **All grading will be blind, so it is imperative that you do not include anything on the PDF (or in its filename) that would identify you.** No name, TA, or section, or UID. The website will know that it's yours because you'll have to log in to submit it. After all assignments have been graded, we'll "de-anonymize" the submissions so that we can assign the scores accurately.
- Submissions will be processed through plagiarism-detection software, so you must write everything in your own words. Please review the [UCLA Guide to Academic Integrity](#) as well as the [UCLA Library guide on how to avoid plagiarism](#). Any student suspected of academic dishonesty will be referred to the Dean of Students immediately and without exception. Sanctions are at the Dean's discretion and can entail anything up to and including expulsion from UCLA. While we're on the general subject of academic integrity, please review the [UCLA Student Conduct Code](#) as well.

- Unless otherwise noted in the prompt for an assignment, use of ChatGPT or any similar AI-type shortcuts is prohibited. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students.
- All submissions must be polished. We won't grade you on the perfection of your writing *per se*, but if it is obvious that you did not bother to run a spell-check and grammar-check, or if you don't follow the assignment-specific instructions, or if your writing is not clear (if we have a hard time figuring out what you mean), points will be deducted.

Always remember that the goal of writing is to communicate clearly, not to impress. Short, declarative sentences and simple (but precise) language are always better than convoluted run-on sentences littered with SAT-prep extravagances.

- Prose, not poetry. Hemingway, not Faulkner. "Use," never "utilize."
- Avoid clichés, euphemisms, abbreviations and contractions, hyperbole, slang.

Do not submit your first draft of an assignment, even a very short assignment. For the bigger papers, we strongly encourage all students to make appointments with the [Undergraduate Writing Center](#) for help polishing your drafts.

READINGS

- **Textbook: David J. Samuels, *Comparative Politics*, 2nd edition. New York: Pearson.**

This course is part of the UCLA Inclusive Access program. Your course materials are being automatically provided to you, digitally, through Bruin Learn by the first day of class or upon enrollment. The materials are being provided at a reduced and competitive price. You will receive email from the UCLA Store (UCLA Store <no-reply>@verbasoftware.com) with program details and cost sent directly to your email address on file with the Registrar. It is your responsibility to read all communication coming from the bookstore. Check your spam folder if not received.

Everyone enrolled in this course is automatically a participant to start and will have access to the materials through the 2nd week of class. Those remaining in the program after Week 2 will be billed for the materials directly to their BruinBill account and will continue to have access to the course materials. If you do not wish to participate in Inclusive Access, you must opt-out by the Week-2-Friday deadline, or you will be billed. Those who opt-out will lose access to the digital materials and will be responsible for obtaining the materials on their own.

Do not pay for your materials through the publisher's website unless you are opting out of Inclusive Access. All Inclusive Access course materials will be billed to your BruinBill account.

Any questions regarding the Inclusive Access program can be directed to inclusiveaccess@asucla.ucla.edu.

- The required readings other than the Samuels book in the relevant weekly module folders on the course website. Some weeks have more reading than others. **Plan ahead.**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

In addition to an in-class final exam and reading and lecture quizzes, students will be graded on participation in Discussion Section and a series of homework assignments focused on data presentation and analysis. The goal of all assignments is **active learning** by student-driven integration of course materials and lectures with real-world data and events.

All homework assignments will be “open book, open notes, open internet, open discussions with classmates,” but each student must produce their own work. The goal is never to oblige you to memorize facts or trivia. It is to help you to assimilate concepts and arguments and to learn how to identify questions, formulate ideas about answers to those questions, and then track down and analyze the data you would need to test your ideas. Understanding, not memorization.

The breakdown of assignments is as follows. Details for each assignment come after the table.

Mastering Course Materials: Readings & Lectures (27%)	
• Reading quizzes 1-7 (drop lowest) & Lecture quizzes 1-7 (drop lowest) + Optional Midterm MC (Oct 28)	12 %
• → <i>Weight of MC part of exam will be reduced by RQ & LQ points earned (see below for details)</i>	
• Reading quizzes 8-16 (drop lowest) and Lecture quizzes 8-16 (drop lowest) + Optional Final MC (Dec 11)	15 %
• → <i>Weight of MC part of exam will be reduced by RQ & LQ points earned (see below for details)</i>	
Class Participation (15%)	
• On-time and full-time attendance (and attentiveness) in Discussion Sections	3 %
• <u>Active, constructive</u> participation in Discussion Sections	12 %
Theory meets data homework projects/essays (28%)	
• Paper 1: Development & Democracy (due Saturday Oct 12, noon)	10 %
• Paper 2: Recent Elections (due Saturday Nov 16, 4pm)	18 %
In-class essay exams (30%)	
• Midterm Exam (Tue Oct 29, 9:30-10:45am)	10 %
• Final Exam (Thu Dec 12, 8-11am)	20 %

Reading quizzes (13 X 1% each – there are 15, but we’ll drop your lowest score before the midterm and your lowest score after the midterm)

- Students will be expected to **complete the required reading before the day for which it is assigned**. To encourage you to read the material carefully and on time, each day’s reading will be accompanied by a short online quiz. These will be posted in the Weekly Modules on the course website and will be available at 5pm Friday the week before the relevant lectures. Each quiz will remain available until 9am the morning of the relevant lecture (as scheduled in the syllabus). **Once the window closes, you will not be able to take the quiz at all.**

- The quizzes are meant to be low stakes. You may have the course readings open while you take them. Each quiz will consist of a mix of 5-8 multiple choice and true/false questions. Unfortunately, CANVAS doesn't allow the option of giving students a second or third guess on a question for partial credit, so it's just one shot per question.
- The quizzes will be timed. Once you start, you'll have just a few minutes to finish (it varies by quiz). So, you'll need to do the reading before starting the quiz.
- The score that you receive on the quiz will count toward your grade in the course in a much-flattened way: If you get 75% or better, you will receive full credit. If you score between 50% and 75%, you will receive half credit. If you score below 50% or don't take the quiz at all, you will receive no credit.
- Whatever score you get, as long as the quiz window remains open, you may attempt a reading quiz a second time, and the better score from your two tries will count. On a retake, the material covered will be the same, but most or all of the questions will vary.
- When you open each quiz, before you start, you'll see a reminder warning about which WiFi systems should not be used (mostly relevant to students taking the quiz on campus). If you use public WiFi (non-secured via dual authentication login) you do so at your own risk. The main risk is that the connection will freeze because too many people are trying to use it at the same time. If it freezes, your countdown clock keeps ticking, and you'll be out of luck. If your quiz crashes, you may not make it up.

Lecture quizzes (14 X 1% each – there are 16, but we'll drop your lowest score before the midterm and your lowest score after the midterm)

- The one drawback of pre-recorded lectures is that we can't have real-time interaction. So, it is important that you take notes while you watch the lecture videos, for three purposes. First, these notes will help you to articulate questions that we hope you'll bring to Thursday Live sessions, discussions sections, or office hours. Don't fool yourself into thinking you can just watch a 30+ minute video (or two or three of them) passively and retain much of what you've seen. This is especially true if you pursue the false economies of watching at faster-than-normal speed or trying to "multitask" by doing something else at the same time. Note-taking is your friend.
- Second, your notes will help you to pass the lecture quizzes. Both lecture quizzes for a given week will be posted on the Friday afternoon of the week prior and each must be completed by 9 am on the day for which the lecture is scheduled (so Tuesday LQs by Tuesday 9 am and Thursday LQs by Thursday 9 am). If you haven't taken them by the deadlines, you'll be out of luck. They'll be timed (4 minutes to answer 3 multiple choice or T/F questions), and you'll have one chance to score 2 or better to 'pass.'
- Third, your notes can be a valuable study tool before exams.

Exams

- The Midterm Exam will include a required portion and an optional portion.
 - The required portion will be an in-class essay exam on Tuesday 10/29. All you need to bring is two ballpoint pens (blue or black) and your BruinCard photo ID. It will be worth 10% of the course grade.
 - The optional portion will be online on the prior evening (i.e., Mon Oct 28). Its value for the course will be up to 12%, the same as the total value of all RQs and LQs over weeks 1-4, and will be, in the following sense, a substitute for those quizzes.
 - If you prefer, you can skip all the RQs and LQs and just take the exam. In that case, the exam will make up the full 12% of the course grade and the quizzes won't count at all.
 - Or you can take all of the RQs and LQs and skip the optional part of the midterm exam. If you get full points on all quizzes (many students do) then the optional part of the exam will not be worth any points and there's no reason to take it.
 - Finally, if you take the RQs and LQs, but don't get full points on all of them, then you may take the exam, and the weight assigned to the exam will be 12% minus however many points you earned on quizzes.
 - *For example, for the first part of the course, there are 7 RQs and 7 LQs. We'll drop your lowest score in each category, so there are 12 points available there. Let's say you earn full points on 5 of those, half points on 6 more, and no points on the last 1. In that case, you'll have earned 8 out of a possible 12 pts. Then, if you choose to take the optional part of the midterm and get a perfect score, you'll earn back the 4 pts that you missed on the quizzes. If you take the midterm and score 75% on it, you'll get back 3 of the 4 points. And so on.*
 - Thus, the optional part of the midterm is a "do-over" opportunity to make up the points you didn't earn on the quizzes. You can't hurt your score in the course by taking it, and the more quiz points you missed, the more you can make up.
- The Final Exam will include the same sort of required and optional portions. The optional part will focus on the material covered in Weeks 5-10, but the required, in-class essay part will cover the entire course and be worth 20% of the course grade.
- **Our STRONG recommendation** is that you keep up by taking every RQ and LQ in its assigned window. Passing a short quiz immediately after you've done the relevant reading or watched the relevant lecture videos is easier and better for learning the material and participating well in Discussion Sections than trying to binge-read and binge-watch before the exam and then get tested on everything all at once. Still, the exams are there as an option, and as a possible "do-over" in case you try the recommended quiz path but miss some points along the way.

Section Participation (15% of total grade)

- TA-led discussion sections play an important role in this course. They may be among the only small group learning environments that you experience at UCLA, especially if you choose a hugely popular major such as PoliSci (2,000 majors and 30 faculty = big classes). So, we hope you take great advantage of these more intimate, informal learning opportunities. To encourage this, fully 15% of the course grade will be assessed, solely by your Teaching Assistant, based on your active, constructive participation in Discussion Section. Even perfect (and attentive) attendance will earn you only 1/5th of the participation points if you do not participate actively and productively.
- Speaking and writing force us to activate our understanding of course material in ways that quiet contemplation cannot. Active learning deepens that understanding and makes it less likely that it will fall out of our brains the minute we focus on something else. Most importantly, making honest, high-effort mistakes is the key to learning, and the discussion sections are safe places to try, sometimes fail, but then try again. Learning political science, just like learning a sport or a musical instrument or a new language, requires practice. “Practice” implies activity, not just passive absorption.

Papers, a.k.a. Theory-meets-data problem sets (10% + 18% = 28% of final grade)

- These are the major “deliverables” for the course. These will require some research on your part to answer questions that we pose about patterns and relationships in the real world. So, these are not so much long-form “papers” as they are a series of short answers to very specific questions. We’ll provide details as we approach each one.
- You’ll have roughly one week to submit your assignments after the prompt is posted. You may ask me or the TAs clarifying questions if necessary, and it’s OK to discuss the assignments with classmates as you prepare to write your answers, but you must do your own individual work, you may not use ChatGPT or any similar program *unless instructed otherwise in the prompt*, and you may not share your work with classmates once you’ve started writing. If we suspect that students have worked together on the writeups, we will report as much to the Dean of Students.

DETAILED SCHEDULE, DISCUSSION QUESTIONS, REQUIRED READINGS, & ONLINE RESOURCES

[Week 0](#) [Week 1](#) [Week 2](#) [Week 3](#) [Week 4](#) [Week 5](#) [Week 6](#) [Week 7](#) [Week 8](#) [Week 9](#) [Week 10](#) [Finals Week](#)

Week 0: Course Introduction

by Thu 09/26 9 am Reading

- **This Syllabus**
- **Course Website**

Week 1: The *Comparative* part of CP + The *Politics* part of CP

by Tue 10/01 9 am Reading

- **Samuels** Ch 1

9 am Reading Quiz 1 (RQ1)

9 am Watch both (2) videos of **Lecture 1: “Why, How, and What we Compare”**

9 am Lecture Quiz 1 (LQ1)

by Thu 10/03 9 am Readings

- **Samuels** Ch 2, Ch 9 (sections 9.1 through 9.3)

9 am RQ2

9 am Watch both (2) videos of **Lecture 2: “What do we want out of government?”**

9 am LQ2

on Thu 10/03 at 9:30 am **Thursday Live: Thinking like a social scientist**

by your Disc Sect time Reading

- “A Question of Freedom” *The Economist* Mar 8, 2003
- “Creating the Coronopticon” *The Economist* Mar 28, 2020

- Discussion questions:
 1. What is a case? What is a variable?
 2. What is the difference between correlation and causation? What is the role of theory?
 3. What are the tradeoffs between quantitative studies and qualitative case studies?

 4. Why do we need government? How much government is too much?
 5. What is the difference between “state” and “nation” and “government”?
 6. What conditions facilitate, hinder, or reverse state-building and nation-building?
 7. Does globalization threaten the nation-state?
- Online resources
 - Spurious Correlations <http://tylervigen.com/old-version.html>
 - Quality of Government (QoG) www.qog.pol.gu.se

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Week 2: Democracy & Development + How to Measure Democracy

- | | | | |
|-----------|---------------------|---------|--|
| <u>on</u> | Tue 10/08 | 9 am | <u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Samuels, Ch 11 ○ "The Road to Riches," <i>The Economist</i>, Dec 31, 1999 |
| | | 9 am | RQ3 |
| | | 9 am | Watch all three (3) videos of Lecture 3: "Democracy & Development" |
| | | 9 am | LQ3 |
| | | | |
| <u>by</u> | Thu 10/10 | 9 am | <u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Samuels Ch 3, 4 |
| | | 9 am | RQ4 |
| | | 9 am | Watch all three (3) videos of Lecture 4: "How to Measure Democracy" |
| | | 9 am | LQ4 |
| | | | |
| <u>on</u> | Thu 10/10 | 9:30 am | Thursday Live: Democratic-looking institutions in Authoritarian Regimes |
| | | | |
| <u>by</u> | your Disc Sect time | | <u>Reading</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "Poverty and Property Rights: No Title." <i>The Economist</i>, Mar 31, 2001 ○ "The End of the Road" <i>The Economist</i>, Sep 21, 2024 |

- Discussion questions:
 1. Are free & fair elections sufficient to call a place a democracy?
 2. Is there a causal relationship between democracy and economic development?
 3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of late development?
- Online resources
 - OECD Statistics <http://stats.oecd.org/>
 - Quality of Government (QoG) www.qog.pol.gu.se
 - UNDP Human Development Report data: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/>

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Week 3: *The Square* + Transitions to Democracy

by Tue 10/15

Watch the documentary *The Square* (~ 2hrs)

- [Netflix](#)
- [Amazon Prime](#)
- [Kanopy](#) (free via UCLA Library if you use VPN)

by Thu 10/17

9 am

Readings

- **Samuels**, Ch 5

9 am

RQ5

9 am

Watch all three (3) videos of **Lecture 5: "Transitions to Democracy"**

9 am

LQ5

on Thu 10/17

9:30 am

Thursday Live: The Arab Spring

- by your Disc Sect time Reading
 - Eisenstadt, LeVan, & Maboudi. "Crafting a new constitution doesn't necessarily lead to democracy. Here's what does." *Monkey Cage*, *Washington Post*, Aug 19, 2015.

- by Fri 10/18 4 pm **Submit Theory-Meets-Data Assignment #1**

- Discussion questions:
 1. What is a hybrid regime? Competitive authoritarianism? Electoral autocracy?
 2. What are the different types of authoritarian regimes?

 3. What explains variation in the likelihood that an autocracy will fail?
 4. Most failed autocracies are replaced by new autocracies. Why do some see a transition to democracy?
 5. Why do countries democratize in waves?
- Online resources
 - CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/>
 - Freedom House www.freedomhouse.org
 - Polity <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html>
 - Polity User Manual <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html>
 - Varieties of Democracy (VDem) <https://www.v-dem.net/>
 - Gapminder <https://www.gapminder.org/tools/>

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Week 4: Globalization + Democratic Decay

by Tue 10/22 9 am Readings

- **Samuels**, Ch 13

9 am RQ6

9 am **In lieu of Lecture #6**, Watch the Documentary *Commanding Heights: The Battle for the Global Economy* Episode 3 (~2hrs)

9 am LQ6

by Thu 10/24 9 am Readings

- Levitsky & Ziblatt (2018) *How Democracies Die*: pp 1-10.

9 am RQ7

9 am **In lieu of Lecture #7**, Watch three short videos:

- (1) Fareed Zakaria on Illiberal Democracies (5 minutes)
- (2) "Interview w/ Levitsky" (24 minutes)
- (3) ["Can Brazil Survive Bolsonaro?" The Economist](#) (14 minutes)

9 am LQ7

on Thu 10/24 at 9:30 am **Thursday Live: Globalization, Populism & Democratic Backsliding**

by your Disc Sect time Reading

- "After decades of triumph..." *The Economist*, June 14, 2018
- "Madison's nightmare" *The Economist* Jan 16, 2021

- Discussion questions:
 1. What is Globalization? How do we measure its political, economic, and cultural components?
 2. What are the benefits and drawbacks of globalization?
 3. How does globalization affect the domestic politics of advanced democracies?

 4. What are the dangers of "too much" democracy in a country? Is that possible?
 5. Is support for democracy falling? How would we measure this?
 6. Is "illiberal democracy" an oxymoron?
 7. Why is "populism" a bad thing?
 8. What are democratic norms? Why aren't they rules? Why might they weaken?
- Online resources
 - Freedom House www.freedomhouse.org
 - Polity <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html>
 - Polity User Manual <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html>
 - Varieties of Democracy (VDem) <https://www.v-dem.net/>
 - Gapminder <https://www.gapminder.org/tools/>

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Week 5: Midterm Exam + Visions of Democracy

on Mon 10/28 11:59pm **Optional online portion of Midterm Exam**

on Tue 10/29 at 9:30 am **MIDTERM EXAM – covering materials through Week 4**

by Thu 10/31	9 am	<u>Readings</u>
		▪ Lijphart 2012. <i>Patterns of Democracy</i> 2e, chs 1-3 (1-40)
	9 am	RQ8
	9 am	Watch both (2) videos of Lecture 8: “Visions of Democracy”
	9 am	LQ8

No Thursday Live session this week

by your Disc Sect time No additional reading – just be prepared to discuss “Visions”

- Discussion question:
 1. What are the tradeoffs between the majoritarian and consensus visions of democracy?
 2. Is a hybrid/intermediate blend of majoritarian and consensus elements better or worse than a pure type?
 3. Which vision does the USA fit?
- Online resources
 - Varieties of Democracy (VDem) <https://www.v-dem.net/>
 - Constitute: The World's Constitutions <https://www.constituteproject.org/>

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Week 6: Electoral Systems and their Political Consequences

by Tue 11/05

9 am

Readings

- **CGG**, Ch 11 (261-287)

9 am RQ9

RQ9

9 am

Watch videos 1-3 of **Lecture 9: "Electoral Systems I"**

9 am

LQ9

by Thu 11/07

9 am

Readings

- **CGG** Ch 12 (289-298, 308-319)
- Recommended: Samuels ch 9 section 4 (pp 236-243)

9 am RQ10

RQ10

9 am

Watch videos 4-6 of **Lecture 10: “Electoral Systems II”**

9 am

LQ10

on Thu 11/07

9:30 am

Thursday Live: Voter Turnout

by your Disc Sect time

Reading

- “How to rig an election.” *The Economist*, Apr 25, 2002
- “With different rules...” *The Economist*, Dec 28, 2015

- Discussion questions:
 1. What is the difference between malapportionment and gerrymandering? Is either ever a good thing?
 2. Is the U.S. electoral college inherently unfair? If so, to whom, and why?
 3. Why are PR rules better for representation of women and minorities?
 4. Women are the majority nearly everywhere. So why has there never been a successful “women’s party” anywhere?
 5. If the USA were to switch to PR, (how) would the party system change?
 6. Is the ideological basis of party competition changing in Western Democracies? If so, how and why?
- Online resources
 - Electoral Integrity Project www.electoralintegrityproject.com
 - Adam Carr’s Election Archive <http://psephos.adam-carr.net/>
 - Election World www.electionworld.org
 - International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) <https://www.ifes.org/>
 - Political parties www.gksoft.com/govt/en/parties.html

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Week 8: Legislatures + Federalism

by Tue 11/19

9 am

Readings

- **CGG**, Ch 13 (332-339)
- Kreppel "Legislatures"

9 am RQ13

9 am Watch both videos (2) of **Lecture 13: "Legislatures"**

9 am LQ13

by Thu 11/21

9 am

Readings

- **CGG**, Ch 13 (322-332)

9 am RQ14

9 am Watch both videos (2) of **Lecture 14: "Federalism & Devolution"**

9 am LQ14

on Thu 11/21

9:30 am

Thursday Live: Direct Democracy

by your Disc Sect time

Readings

- "Italy Senate Votes to Surrender Powers in Victory for Renzi" Bloomberg.pdf
- "Why Britain's House of Lords sought to amend the Brexit bill" *The Economist* Mar 15, 2017 (1 pp)
- "How much is enough?" *Economist*, Nov 8, 2008
- "Devolution & Nationalism: Let England Shake" *Economist*, Sep 27, 2014

- Discussion questions:

1. Is strong bicameralism inherently anti-democratic?
2. Is strong bicameralism incompatible with parliamentarism?
3. Does decentralization improve or weaken governance?
4. Is federalism a stable equilibrium? What about devolution?

- Online resources

- Parliaments online: <http://www.gksoft.com/govt/en/parliaments.html>
- ParlGov <http://parlgov.org>
- Inter-parliamentary Union <https://data.ipu.org/>
- CIA World Fact-book: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/>
- Constitute: The World's Constitutions <https://www.constituteproject.org/>
- IDEA Handbook <https://www.idea.int/our-work/what-we-do/constitution-building>
- The Forum of Federations <http://www.forumfed.org>

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Week 9: Judiciaries + Thanksgiving Holiday

on Tue 11/26

9 am

Readings

- Lijphart 2012, Ch 12 (204-225)
- Hamilton, Alexander. *Federalist #78* Annotated Version from *Documents of Freedom*, The Bill of Rights Institute

9 am RQ15

9 am Watch both (3) videos of **Lecture 15: "Judiciaries"**

9 am LQ15

on Thu 11/28

Thanksgiving Holiday

No Discussion Sections this week – Happy Thanksgiving!

- Discussion questions:
 1. Why do courts play such different roles in different countries?
 2. Who guards the guardians?

- Online resources
 - <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp>

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Week 10: Culture & Comparative Politics + Conclusions

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|-----------|---------------------|---------|--|
| <u>by</u> | Tue 12/03 | 9 am | <u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Samuels, Ch 6, 7 |
| | | 9 am | RQ16 |
| | | 9 am | Watch all three (3) videos of Lecture 16: “Culture & Comparative Politics” |
| | | 9 am | LQ16 |
| | | | |
| <u>by</u> | Thu 12/05 | 9 am | Watch Lecture 17: “Conclusions”
No LQ. This is the start of your preparation for the Final Exam. |
| | | | |
| <u>on</u> | Thu 12/05 | 9:30 am | Thursday Live: Democracy in Plural Societies |
| | | | |
| <u>by</u> | your Disc Sect time | | <u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Democracy, Freedom, Justice, Law...What’s all this?” ▪ “Is democracy a Western idea?” ▪ “The Man in the Baghdad Café” |

Discussion questions:

1. What does culture even mean in a globalized world?
 2. Are there cultural prerequisites for democracy?
 3. Is multiculturalism bad for democracy?
 4. What are the virtues and dangers of “cultural explanations” in political science?
 5. Is ethnic federalism a solution to ethnic conflict, or will it make things worse?
- Online resources
 - Freedom House www.freedomhouse.org/; Polity <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html>; Polity User Manual <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html>; Varieties of Democracy (VDem) <https://www.v-dem.net/>

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Finals Week

- on Thu 12/12 8 am **Final Exam (in-person)**