

INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS
Political Science, V1501
Columbia University, Spring 2016

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Time: M/W 10:10-11:25
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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 desirable social outcomes such as 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 second week of class.

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 February 1st.

- *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 were unable to take the exam. The exams will be held in class on:

- Monday, February 22nd
- Monday, April 4th
- Monday, May 2nd

- *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 11th. We will circulate a description of the assignment and a list of eligible countries on April 11th. You must clear your proposed paper topic with your TA by April 18th.

If you have a concern about a grade you've received 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 (20/1): Introduction

Sessions 2 & 3 (25/9 & 27/9): 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 (1/2 & 3/2): 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 (8/2 & 10/2): Describing Political Regimes

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

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

Case Studies, Russia

Case Studies, Mexico, pp. 236-244

Case Studies, China, pp. 366-393

Session 8 & 9 (15/2 & 17/2): The Effect of Political Regimes

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

Case Studies, India, pp. 225-230

Session 10 (22/2): Exam 1

Session 11 (24/2): No Class

Sessions 12-14 (29/2, 2/3 & 7/3): 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 15-18 (9/3, 21/3 & 23/30): Parties, Elections, and Political Behavior**

Principles, Ch. 13, Elections and Electoral Systems

Principles, Ch. 14, Social Cleavages and Party Systems

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).

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.

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

Case Studies, Germany, pp. 98-111

Case Studies, United Kingdom, pp. 49-71

(14/3 & 16/3): University Holiday**Session 18-19 (28/3 & 30/3): : 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 (4/4): Exam 2

Session 21 (6/4): Federalism and Decentralization

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

Case Studies, India, pp. 208-209

Case Studies, Germany, pp. 98-111

Case Studies, Russia, pp. 290-292

PART IV: POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIAL OUTCOMES**Sessions 22 & 23 (11/4 & 13/4): 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 (25/4, 20/4 & 18/4): 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.

Estévez-Abé, Margarita , Torben, Iversen, and David Soskice. 2013. "Social Protection and the Formation of Skills: A Reinterpretation of the Welfare State." in *Essential Readings in Comparative Politics*, edited by P. H. O'Neil and R. Rogowski. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 450-466

Session 27 (27/4): Democratic Institutions and Stability

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

Session 28 (2/5): Exam 3