

FOUNDATIONS OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS
Government 20 (Fall 2022)

This version: August 30, 2022

TIME: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:30-11:30 AM

LOCATION: Jefferson 250 (17 Oxford Street, Cambridge, MA)

Professor Yuhua Wang

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Email: yuhuawang@fas.harvard.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday 1:30-2:30 PM and Thursday 1:30-2:30 PM (sign-up slots are available: <https://calendly.com/yuhuawang/30min>) or by appointment

Teaching Fellows:

Daniel Lowery (Head TF): dlowery@g.harvard.edu

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Course website: <https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/107698>

This course introduces students to major theories and concepts in comparative politics, as well as the basic tools of comparative analysis. It explores competing theoretical approaches (Modernization, Marxist, social, cultural, institutionalist, and history-centered) to three major phenomena in world politics: (1) economic development; (2) democratization; and (3) political order. It also explores debates about the role of political institutions, states and state-building, and civil society in shaping political outcomes. These theoretical debates are examined through an analysis of cases from across the globe, including Africa, Asia, Europe, South America, and the Middle East. The final week examines the United States in comparative perspective.

Course Format

Lectures: Lectures will be held every Tuesday and Thursday (10:30-11:30)

Discussion Sections: All students must attend a weekly hour-long discussion section, run by a Government 20 Teaching Fellow. Students will be assigned to a section during the first week of the semester. Section attendance is mandatory.

Course Requirements

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| • Section participation | 20% |
| • Four (unannounced) reading quizzes | 20% |
| • In-class midterm exam (IDs and one essay): October 18 | 25% |
| • Take-home final paper (12-15 pages): due December 15 2 PM | 35% |

Final Paper: The final assignment of this course is a final paper (12-15 double-spaced pages, 12 pt. Times New Roman font), due on December 15 at 2 PM. We will provide a list of topics right after the midterm for you to choose. We encourage you to start working on this paper early and talk to your TF and the writing fellow throughout the writing process.

Late Policy: All late exams will be marked down a third of a grade (ex. A to A-) for each day following the due date. Teaching Fellows are not responsible for submission errors or corrupted/unreadable electronic files. *Any unreadable assignment submitted will be marked late and dated to when a readable version is received.* We understand that students may confront unexpected health or logistical difficulties due to COVID-19. If circumstances make it difficult for you to complete an assignment on time, contact your Teaching Fellow. If possible, do so in advance of the deadline (cases for extensions are weaker when made the day of or after the deadline). We will be as flexible as possible in providing extra time to do those who need it.

Grade Scale: Final grades for the course will be determined as follows: A (100-94); A- (93-90); B+ (89-87); B (86-83); B- (82-80); C+ (79-77); C (76-73); C- (72-70).

Grade Disputes: If you have any questions regarding your grade on an assignment, you must first contact your TF. You have one week to submit a formal grievance. However, you must wait a full 24 hours after receiving your grade to submit a grievance. If you remain dissatisfied after the TF reconsiders your grade, they will forward your grievance to the Professor for consideration. Please be advised that this can result in your grade being raised or lowered and the Professor's decision is final.

Academic Integrity Policy: Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on the same topic as a classmate. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. You must also adhere to standard citation practices in this discipline and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work. If you received any help with your writing (feedback on drafts, etc.), you must also acknowledge this assistance.

Schedule

Lecture 1: Thursday, September 1

Introduction: What Is Comparative Politics and Why Should You Care?

David Samuels, *Comparative Politics* (Pearson, 2013), pp. 4-25.

Lecture 2: Tuesday, September 6

Are We Going to Denmark? Modernization Theory

Lerner, Daniel, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (New York: The Free Press, 1958), chs. 1-2 (pp. 19-75).

Lipset, Seymour Martin, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1960), ch. 2.

Recommended

Williams, Eric. *Capitalism and Slavery*. UNC Press Books, 1944.

- *A reminder of how slavery contributed to capitalist development (a point that was neglected by Modernization theorists)*

Lecture 3: Thursday, September 8

Do You Want to Live in the Soviet Union? Different Paths to Modernity

Huntington, Samuel, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 1-92.

Recommended

Moore, Barrington, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), chs. 7-9 (pp. 413-483).

- Three paths of modernization (liberal democracy, fascism, and communism)

Lecture 4: Tuesday, September 13

Why Are There Rats in New York's Subway? The Advantages of Backwardness

Gerschenkron, Alexander, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp.5-30.

Johnson, Chalmers, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982), pp. 3-34.

Recommended

Alice Amsden, *Asia's Next Giant: South Korea and Late Industrialization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 3-18 and 79-85.

- A case study of South Korea

Lecture 5: Thursday, September 15

This lecture will be asynchronous: a video will be recorded and uploaded on Canvas, and you can watch it any time before September 20.

Are We Trapped in Geography?

Diamond, Jared. *Guns, Germs and Steel*. (Norton, 1999), Chapter 10, pp. 176-191.

Jeff Herbst. *States and Power in Africa*. Princeton University Press, 2000, Chapters 1 and 5.

Lecture 6: Tuesday, September 20

How Did We Become Rich? Institutional Foundations of Economic Development

Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2012), pp. 7-63; 70-83.

Recommended

Dell, Melissa. "The Persistent Effects of Peru's Mining Mita." *Econometrica* 78.6 (2010): 1863-1903.

- Why bad institutions persist

Lecture 7: Thursday, September 22

What Distinguishes a Wink from a Twitch? Culture

Michalopoulos, Stelios, and Melanie Meng Xue. "Folklore." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 136, no. 4 (2021): 1993-2046.

Avner Greif. "Reputation and coalitions in medieval trade: evidence on the Maghribi traders." *The Journal of Economic History* 49.4 (1989): 857-882.

Lecture 8: Tuesday, September 27

What Is Democracy and Why Do We Love It?

Dahl, Robert, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), Chapters 1-3.

Lecture 9: Thursday, September 29

Where Has James II Gone? Democratization

North, Douglass C., and Barry R. Weingast, "Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth Century England," *Journal of Economic History* 49.4 (December 1989): 803-832.

Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Chapter 2, pp. 15-47.

Recommended

Teele, Dawn Langan. *Forging the Franchise: The Political Origins of the Women's Vote*. (Princeton University Press, 2018), chs. 1-2.

- A reminder that women didn't have suffrage in early waves of democratization

Stasavage, David. *The Decline and Rise of Democracy*. (Princeton University Press, 2020), Chapter 10.

- A reminder that suffrage in early America was restricted to white men

Lecture 10: Tuesday, October 4

Why Is Over Half of the World's Population Still Living Under Authoritarian Rule?

Nathan, A. J. (2003). China's Changing of the Guard: Authoritarian Resilience. *Journal of Democracy*, 14(1), 6-17.

Michael Ross, “Does Oil Hinder Democracy?” *World Politics* 53, No. 3: 325-361.

Recommended

Geddes, Barbara, “What Do We Know about Democratization after Twenty Years?” *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1999): 115-144.

- Different types of authoritarian regimes (military, single-party, and personalist)

Lecture 11: Thursday, October 6

What Do Kings and Bandits Have in Common? The Origin of the State

Mancur Olson. “The Criminal Metaphor,” in *Power and Prosperity*. Basic Books, 2000, pp. 3–24.

Robert L. Carneiro. “A theory of the origin of the state.” *Science* 169.3947 (1970): 733–738.

Recommended

Lisa Blaydes and Eric Chaney. “The feudal revolution and europe’s rise: Political divergence of the christian west and the muslim world before 1500 ce.” *American Political Science Review* 107.1 (2013): 16–34.

- Why “stationary bandits” emerged in Europe (but not in the Middle East)

Lecture 12: Tuesday, October 11

Why Do Rich States Tax So Much? State Capacity

Dincecco, Mark. “Fiscal centralization, limited government, and public revenues in Europe, 1650–1913.” *The Journal of Economic History* (2009): 48–103.

Pavithra Suryanarayan, and Steven White, “Slavery, Reconstruction, and Bureaucratic Capacity in the American South,” *American Political Science Review* 115, No. 2 (May 2021): 568-584.

Lecture 13: Thursday, October 13

Are There Positive Effects of War?

Dincecco, Mark, and Yuhua Wang. “Violent conflict and political development over the long run: China versus Europe.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 21 (2017).

Lisa Blaydes and Christopher Paik. "The impact of Holy Land Crusades on state formation: war mobilization, trade integration, and political development in medieval Europe." *International Organization* 70.3 (2016): 551–586.

Recommended

Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime." In Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds. *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 169-191.

- The classic argument about "war making the state"

Tuesday, October 18: In Class Midterm Exam

Lecture 14: Thursday, October 20

Why Do Three Monks Have No Water to Drink? Collective Action

Olson, Mancur. *The Rise and Decline of Nations*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), Chapter 2, pp. 17-35.

Recommended

Ostrom, Elinor. *Governing the commons: The evolution of institutions for collective action*. (Cambridge university press, 1990), Chapter 1.

- An application of collection action problems

Lecture 15: Tuesday, October 25

Why Don't You Want to Bowl Alone? Civil Society and Accountability

Putnam, Robert, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton University Press, 1993), Chapters 4-6, pp. 83-185.

Recommended

Berman, Sheri, "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic" *World Politics* 49 (1997): 401-439.

- A reminder of the "dark side" of social capital

Lecture 16: Thursday, October 27

Why Do You Vote Even If It Doesn't Make a Difference? The Curious Case of Voting

Aldrich, John. "Rational Choice and Turnout," *American Journal of Political Science*, 37, (1993): 246-78.

Kate Baldwin. "Why vote with the chief? Political connections and public goods provision in Zambia." *American Journal of Political Science* 57.4 (2013): 794-809.

Lecture 17: Tuesday, November 1

How Do You Know Everyone in the World? The Power of Networks

Kadushin, Charles. *Understanding Social Networks* (Oxford university press, 2012), Chapter 5, pp. 56-73.

Yuhua Wang. "Blood Is Thicker Than Water: Elite Kinship Networks and State Building in Imperial China." *American Political Science Review* 116.3 (2022): 896-910.

Lecture 18: Thursday, November 3

Why Are Gas Stations Often Next to Each Other? The Formation of Political Parties

Downs, Anthony, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper Collins, 1957), chapters 7-8 (pp. 96-141).

Kedar, Orit. "When moderate voters prefer extreme parties: Policy balancing in parliamentary elections." *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 2 (2005): 185-199.

Lecture 19: Tuesday, November 8

Why Do We Hate Each Other? Ethnic Politics

Posner, Daniel, "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi," *American Political Science Review* 98.4 (November 2004): 529-545.

Chandra, Kanchan. *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed: Patronage and Ethnic Head Counts in India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 1-81.

Lecture 20: Thursday, November 10

Why Is the World So Violent? Conflict and Civil War

Fearon, James, and David Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 97.1 (2003): 75-90.

Varshney, Ashutosh, "Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society: India and Beyond." *World Politics* 53 (April 2001): 362-98.

Lecture 21: Tuesday, November 15

Where Is Robin Hood When We Need Him? The Politics of the Welfare State

Meltzer, Allan H., and Scott. F. Richard, "A Rational Theory of the Size of Government," *Journal of Political Economy* 89 (1981): 914-17. **[Read only first 3 pages.]**

Alberto Alesina and Edward L. Glaeser, *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe: A World of Difference* (Oxford University Press, 2004), Pp. 1-2; 77-166; 177-216.

Lecture 22: Thursday, November 17

Should We Blame China for the Rise of Populism?

Broz, J. Lawrence, Jeffry Frieden, and Stephen Weymouth. "Populism in place: the economic geography of the globalization backlash." *International Organization* 75, no. 2 (2021): 464-494.

Recommended

Rudra, Nita, "Globalization and the decline of the welfare state in less-developed countries." *International Organization* 56.2 (2002): 411-44.

- How labor strength mediates the effects of globalization

Lecture 23: Tuesday, November 22

Is There Anything New Under the Sun? History Matters

Nunn, Nathan. "The historical roots of economic development." *Science* 367, no. 6485 (2020): eaaz9986.

Charnysh, Volha. "Diversity, institutions, and economic outcomes: Post-WWII displacement in Poland." *American Political Science Review* 113, no. 2 (2019): 423-441.

No Class on November 24 (Thanksgiving Break)

Lecture 24: Tuesday, November 29

Is the United States Exceptional? U.S. Democracy in Comparative Perspective

Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die* (Crown, 2018), pp. 1-10; 97-175.

Lee Drutman, *Breaking the Two-Party Doom Loop* (Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 1-9; 175-195; 206-231, 236-238.

Recommended

Kathleen Thelen, "The American Precariat: U.S. Capitalism in Comparative Perspective." *Perspectives on Politics* 17, No. 1 (2019), pp. 5-27.

- On American economy and its political implications

Lecture 25: Thursday, December 1

Review: Knowing How the World Works before Saving It