

# POLC-2300 Introduction to Comparative Politics

Tulane University  
Center for Inter-American Policy & Research  
Richardson Building  
New Orleans, LA 70112

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Not intended as a definitive version

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**Class meetings:** MWF 8:00-8:50.

**Location:** Stanley Thomas Hall 302.

**Office Hours:** Make an appointment [here](#).

**Class Website and Materials:** [Canvas](#).

## *Overview and Objectives*

What does the state have so special that makes it so effective to organize us politically? Why are some societies more violent than others? What can we learn by comparing different electoral systems? Is religion (or another form of 'culture') responsible for explaining democratic failures? Do diverse societies 'do better' than cohesive societies? What can we learn by 'comparing' countries, elections, events, economies or political leaders? These and other questions are still subject of great debate in comparative politics. This [undergraduate-level course](#) is intended as an introduction to comparative politics. The papers and chapters will draw from what call 'the core' that defines our subfield. Comparative politics is both a *substantive* as well as a *methodological* area of research. That is, we are not only interested in *what* is happening/has happened, but also in *how* we learn and define those things. You will quickly realize that 'concepts' are fundamental. For example, we are still debating what a 'democracy' is since we don't agree on what are the constitutive elements that define what a 'democracy' is. Well, we will spend some time talking about some cases and also discussing some important methodological issues. You will quickly realize that comparative politics is quite a *flexible* subfield. Any country is of interest for us. Single-cases as well as regional approaches (i.e. 'Africa,' 'Latin America,' etc.) are acceptable. A number of methodologies and approaches are possible. Any time period and (almost any) topic are interesting for us: from the rise of Babylonian state to the exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union. And such, we comparativists borrow from sociology, economics, history, political theory, among others.

I hope this course catches your attention, in the hope you continue taking more comparative politics courses. Most of all, I hope you see what a diverse world, practices (informal and formal) we have.

## *Course Learning Objectives*

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Acquire an understanding of the main comparative politics theories and topics.
- Use the comparative method and analysis in the political science literature.
- Consume 'critically' the comparative politics literature.

## *Requirements*

In this course we will cover the key concepts and theoretical debates in a very large sub-field in political science. Students will be expected to complete the required readings each day, attend the lectures, par-

participate in class discussions and take careful notes. When reading the class materials, you should locate the main argument, strengths, weaknesses, and other issues that are of concern. As you read through the material, think about the following questions: *What is the cause and what is the effect? What makes the theory 'move,' is it individuals? institutions? (ir)rationality? Does/do the author/s have a strong research design/methodology to support the paper's argument?*

Please note that no computers, phones, or any other electronic devices may be used in lecture for any reason—no exceptions.

### *Evaluation*

1. **One in-class midterm exam, March 2:** 25 %.
2. **An essay of 6-8 pages in length:** 25%. Topics will be assigned by me. The essay is due in hard copy at the beginning of class, and no later than 8.15 am on March 23. Turning it in before the due date is OK, but not afterwards. There will not be exceptions or extensions. No electronic copies of any kind will be accepted.
3. **One cumulative in-class final exam, April 4:** 35 %.
4. **Participation, attendance and pop-up quizzes:** 15 %.

### *Grading*

This course will be grade according to the following scale: A:  $\geq 93$ , A-: 90-92, B+: 87-89, B: 83-86, B-: 80-82, C+: 77-79, C: 73-76, C-: 70-72, D+: 67-69, D: 63-66, D-: 60-62, and F:  $\leq 59$ .

### *Disputing Grades*

I am happy to go over any exam or paper with you to help you to improve. Request for re-grading, though, must be done in writing. Please refer to my [re-grading policy](#).

### *Academic Integrity*

In accordance with Tulane University policy on Academic Integrity, you are expected to fully comply with the school's [policies](#).

### *Students with Disabilities*

Students with disabilities who require accommodation should check with the [Goldman Center for Student Accessibility](#).

### *Absence from Exams*

There will be no make-up exams unless you have a *documented* medical emergency. If at all possible, I need to be notified before the exam of your inability to take it. Absence from an exam because of travel plans will not be excused. Make travel plans accordingly.

## Office Hours

I have an open-doors policy, feel free to stop by my office at any time. However, you might want to minimize the risks that I am not there. I advise you then to schedule time with me using my automatic scheduler. I think fixed office hours do not work because ... well, they are fixed. I prefer flexibility. Hence, you can see me any day/time that's available during the week. Do not send me a reminder as I will receive an alert: If the time spot is available, I am happy to see you there. Please follow this [link](#).

## Schedule

### 1. Introduction

#### January 17

- Overview of syllabus, course requirements, and introduction to the course

### 2. Comparative Politics as a Methodology/Subfield

#### January 19: 'Scratching the Surface'

- Arend Lijphart. Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method. *American Political Science Review*, 65(3), 682-693. doi:10.2307/1955513. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/american-political-science-review/article/comparative-politics-and-the-comparative-A326138E114805EF7E1B72F60EBD4295>.
- Gerardo Munck and Richard Snyder. Debating the Direction of Comparative Politics: An Analysis of Leading Journals. *Comparative Political Studies*, 40(1):5-31, 2007.

#### January 22: 'An Important Debate'

- James Mahoney. Debating the State of Comparative Politics: Views From Qualitative Research. *Comparative Political Studies*, 40(1):32-38, 2007. doi: 10.1177/0010414006294816. URL: <http://cps.sagepub.com/cgi/doi/10.1177/0010414006294816>.
- Barbara Geddes. How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics. *Political Analysis*, 2(1):131-150, 1990.

#### January 24: 'Two Important Concepts'

- Giovanni Capoccia and Daniel Kelemen. The Study of Critical Junctures Theory, Narrative, and Counterfactuals in Historical Institutionalism. *World Politics*, 59(April):341-369, 2007.
- Gerardo Munck and Jay Verkuilen. Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices. *Comparative Political Studies*, 35(1):5-34, 2002.

#### January 26: 'Gaining Perspective, Why Do We Compare?'

- [Why Nations Fails](#), by James Robinson.

### 3. The State

#### January 29: 'The Origins: Theory and Empirics'

- Mancur Olson. Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development. *The American Political Science Review*, 87(3): 567-576, 1993. DOI: 10.2307/2938736. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2938736>.
- 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.

#### January 31: 'Beyond Europe'

- Miguel Angel Centeno. Blood and Debt: War and Taxation in Nineteenth-Century Latin America. *American Journal of Sociology*, 102(6):1565-1605, 1997.

- Francis Fukuyama. Reflections on Chinese Governance. *Journal of Chinese Governance*, 1(3):379-391, 2016. doi: 10.1080/23812346.2016.1212522. URL: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23812346.2016.1212522>

#### **February 2: 'Gaining Perspective, What Does Hobbes Have to Say?'**

#### **February 5: 'The Structural Power of the State'**

- Michael Mann. The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results. *European Journal of Sociology*, 25(2): 109-136, 1984. DOI: 10.1017/S0003975600004239.
- Dan Slater. Can Leviathan be Democratic? Competitive Elections, Robust Mass Politics, and State Infrastructural Power. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 43(3-4): 252-272, 2008. DOI: 10.1007/s12116-008-9026-8. <http://link.springer.com/10.1007/s12116-008-9026-8>.

### **4. Political Regimes: A Typology**

#### **February 7: Pre-Modern and Contemporaneous Comparative Exercises**

- Aristotle. [The Politics](#). Book III (7-8).
- Arend Lijphart. [Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries](#). Yale University Press, 2nd edition, 2012. Chapters 1-3.

#### **February 9 to February 14: Mardi Gras Break, see you February 16**

#### **February 16: Hybrid Regimes (1)**

- Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way. The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism. *Journal of Democracy*, 13(2):51-65, 2002. doi: 10.1353/jod.2002.0026.
- In class movie (1): 'Herod's Law' (Mexico, 1999)

#### **February 19: Hybrid Regimes (2)**

- In class movie (2): 'Herod's Law' (Mexico, 1999)

#### **February 21: Concepts, A Methodological Addendum**

- Giovanni Sartori. Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics. *The American Political Science Review*, 64(4):1033-1053, 1970.
- David Collier and Steven Levitsky. Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Politics. *World Politics*, 49(April):430-451, 1997.

### **5. Political Regimes: Why do we care?**

- Daron Acemoglu, Suresh Naidu, Pascual Restrepo, and James Robinson. Democracy Does Cause Growth. Technical report, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, MA, URL: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w20004.pdf>.
- Michael Ross. Is Democracy Good for the Poor? *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(4):860-874, 2006. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-5907.2006.00220.x. URL: <http://doi.wiley.com/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2006.00220.x>.

### **6. Political Regimes: Different Determinants and Explanations**

- Seymour Martin Lipset. Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy. *The American Political Science Review*, 53(1):69-105, 1959.
- Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson. Why Did The West Extend The Franchise? Democracy, Inequality, and Growth in Historical Perspective. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 115(4):1167-1199, 2000. doi: 10.1162/003355300555042.
- Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi. Modernization: Theories and Facts. *World Politics*, 49(2):155-183, 1997.

- Guillermo O'Donnell. *Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics*. Univ of California Intl, 1973. Pages TBA.
- Joseph Wright, Erica Frantz, Barbara Geddes. Oil and Autocratic Regime Survival. (2013):1-20, sep 2013. <http://www.journals.cambridge.org/abstractS0007123413000252>. British Journal of Political Science, doi: 10.1017/S0007123413000252.

## 7. Political Violence

- Fearon, James D., and David D. Laitin. 2003. Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War. *American Political Science Review* 97 (1):75-90.
- Wilkinson, Steven I. 2004. *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Chapters 1 and 2.

## 8. Parties and Elections

- Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan. *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*. Free Press, 1967. Pages TBA.
- Carles Boix. Setting the Rules of the Game: The Choice of Electoral Systems in Advanced Democracies. *The American Political Science Review*, 93(3):609-624, 1999. ISSN 1556-5068. doi: 10.2139/ssrn.159213. URL: <http://www.ssrn.com/abstract=159213>.
- Arend Lijphart. The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws, 1945-85. *The American Political Science Review*, 84(2):481-496, 1990.

## 9. Parties and Elections: Some issues

- Herbert Kitschelt. Linkages between Citizens and Politicians in Democratic Polities. *Comparative Political Studies*, 33(6-7):845-879, sep 2000. ISSN 0010-4140. doi: 10.1177/001041400003300607. URL: <http://cps.sagepub.com/cgi/doi/10.1177/001041400003300607>.
- Javier Auyero. The Logic of Clientelism in Argentina: An Ethnographic Account. *Latin American Research Review*, 35(3):55-81, 2000. URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2692042>.
- Ezequiel Gonzalez-Ocantos, Chad Kiewiet de Jonge, and David Nickerson. The Conditionality of Vote-Buying Norms: Experimental Evidence from Latin America. *American Journal of Political Science*, 58(1):197-211, 2014. doi: 10.1111/ajps.12047. URL: <http://doi.wiley.com/10.1111/ajps.12047>.
- Brian Min and Miriam Golden. Electoral Cycles in Electricity Losses in India. *Energy Policy*, 65:619-625, 2014. doi: 10.1016/j.enpol.2013.09.060. URL: <http://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S0301421513009841>.
- Richard Lau, Parina Patel, Dalia Fahmy, and Robert Kaufman. Correct Voting Across Thirty-Three Democracies: A Preliminary Analysis. *British Journal of Political Science*, 44(02):239-259, 2013. doi: 10.1017/S0007123412000610. URL: <http://www.journals.cambridge.org/abstractS0007123412000610>.

## 10. Democracy and Autocracy: Transition and Survival

- Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson. A Theory of Political Transitions. *American Economic Review*, 91(4):938-963, 2001. doi: 10.1257/Aer.91.4.938.
- Carles Boix and Susan Stokes. Endogenous Democratization. *World Politics*, 55 (4):517-549, 2003.
- Ben Ansell and David Samuels. Inequality and Democratization: A Contractarian Approach. *Comparative Political Studies*, 43(12):1543-1574, 2010. doi: 10.1177/0010414010376915. URL: <http://cps.sagepub.com/cgi/doi/10.1177/0010414010376915>.

- Stephan Haggard and Robert Kaufman. Inequality and Regime Change: Democratic Transitions and the Stability of Democratic Rule. *American Political Science Review*, 106(03):495-516, 2012. doi: 10.1017/S0003055412000287. URL: <http://www.journals.cambridge.org/abstractS0003055412000287>.
- Milan Svolik. Authoritarian Reversals and Democratic Consolidation. *American Political Science Review*, 102(2):153-168, 2008. doi: 10.1017/S0003055408080143. URL: <http://www.journals.cambridge.org/abstractS0003055408080143>.
- Beatriz Magaloni. Credible Power-Sharing and the Longevity of Authoritarian Rule. *Comparative Political Studies*, 41(4-5):715-741, 2008. doi: 10.1177/0010414007313124. URL: <http://cps.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/41/4-5/715>.

#### 11. Development and Colonialism

- John Gallup, Jeffrey Sachs, and Andrew Mellinger. Geography and Economic Development. Technical report, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, MA, 1998. URL: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w6849.pdf>.
- Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson. Reversal Fortune: Geography and Institutions in the Making of the Modern World Income Distribution. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 117(4):1231-1294, 2002.
- Kenneth Sokoloff and Stanley Engerman. History Lessons: Institutions, Factor Endowments, and Paths of Development in the New World. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 14(3):217-232, 2000. doi: 10.1257/jep.14.3.217. URL: <http://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/abs/10.1257/jep.14.3.217>.
- Matthew Lange, James Mahoney, and Matthias vom Hau. Colonialism and Development: A Comparative Analysis of Spanish and British Colonies. *American Journal of Sociology*, 111(5):1412-1462, 2006. doi: 10.1086/499510. URL: <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/499510>.

#### 12. Ideas v. Structure v. Psychology

- Ana De La O and Jonathan Rodden. Does Religion Distract the Poor?: Income and Issue Voting Around the World. *Comparative Political Studies*, 41(4-5):437-476, 2008. doi: 10.1177/0010414007313114. URL: <http://cps.sagepub.com/cgi/doi/10.1177/0010414007313114>.
- David Laitin. National Revivals and Violence. *European Journal of Sociology*, 36(01):3, 1995. doi: 10.1017/S0003975600007098. URL: <http://www.journals.cambridge.org/abstractS0003975600007098>.
- David Stasavage. Representation and Consent: Why They Arose in Europe and Not Elsewhere. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 19(1):145-162, 2016. doi: 10.1146/annurev-polisci-043014-105648. URL: <http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev-polisci-043014-105648><http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev-polisci-043014-105648>.
- Gian Vittorio, Claudio Barbaranelli, and Philip Zimbardo. Profiles Personality and Political Parties. *Political Psychology*, 20(1):175-197, 1999.