

POL 002: Introduction to Comparative Politics

University of California, Davis

Summer Session I, 2018

Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays

2:10-3:50pm

Room: Kerr Hall 293

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 12-2pm (and by appointment)

Course Description

The study of politics can generally be divided into four broad sub-fields: American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations and Political Theory. Of these four, Comparative Politics has the least helpful name. What makes it different from International Relations? Is it just an extension of American Politics research to a global context? Comparative Politics does have much in common with both fields (sorry political theory!), but it stands on its own as well.

This course is not really an in-depth introduction to the entire subfield of Comparative Politics – that is simply too much to ask in a single quarter. If this class piques your interest, you are highly encouraged to seek out additional upper division Comparative Politics courses which will provide more detailed explorations of specific topics in the sub-field. Instead, this class will attempt to provide a broad overview of the main concepts and research areas that dominate Comparative Politics. Each week will focus on a different topic, and will feature readings, lecture, and discussion that will unpack why that topic is important to the study of Comparative Politics.

Substantively, this class will address the interplay between the two main branches of Comparative Politics: institutions and behavior. The institutional approach to Comparative Politics examines how variation in institutions across countries (or other politically relevant units) shape political outcomes, incentives, and policy. While institutions provide the framework within which political actors operate, the behavioral approach allows us to understand how and why those actors behave the way they do within those constraints. Understanding both approaches is critical for a holistic view of Comparative Politics.

Because we are lucky enough to have a relatively small class, there will be in-class discussion. Participation and class attendance will be a large portion of your grade, and you cannot expect to succeed without reading all the assigned material. With that being said, this is an introduction course, and there is no expectation that you have taken any previous political science courses. Do not be shy to speak up, even if you are not certain about something. There is no penalty for engaging in debate or questioning what I am telling you – in fact both are heavily encouraged!

One final note – this course is meant to be fun! While the material in this class will take a broad perspective on Comparative politics, our discussions should be extremely relevant to recent political events. If there is something happening in the news that is relevant to our class, I will be sure to allocate time to discuss it. Elections, changes in government, institutional reform, and policy debates are all fair game!

Class Expectations

Online Access

All readings and documents for this course can be accessed through the Canvas website or via hyperlinks in the syllabus schedule. I will occasionally send messages and make announcements via Canvas, so make sure you have email notifications for Canvas messages activated.

Email

I welcome questions and comments, either by email or by Canvas message. When you email me, you should compose your email as you would any piece of professional correspondence.

Specifically:

- Begin the email with a salutation (e.g. “Dear Isaac,”).
- Use complete sentences, correct spelling and correct punctuation. Be courteous and respectful.
- Sign off with “Sincerely,” or “Best,” or the equivalent, and below this line write your name.

I will respond to your emails as quickly as possible, but please do not expect a quick response to email sent on weekends or after 5pm on any day.

Lecture Slides

Slides will be used in class on most days. Slides will be posted to Canvas following the class session.

Desk Name Tag (yes, really)

As mentioned earlier, this will be a discussion-oriented class. Toward that aim, I ask that you place a “desk name tag” on the desk in front of you in class each day. Although attendance will not be taken every day, showing up to class with your desk name tag will greatly affect your participation grade. The best way to make this name tag is to take an 8½ x 11 inch piece of construction paper or lightweight cardboard, fold it in half lengthwise (so it’s now 4¼ x 11 inches), and write your name on one side so that your name is upright when you put the folded piece of paper like a tent on the desk in front of you. Please write your full name (**FIRST AND LAST**—using whatever name you prefer to be called as your first name) in **LARGE, VERY DARK, BOLD** letters.

Laptops and Other Electronics

Numerous studies confirm that students who take notes by hand retain more information over time. It is also far less distracting to others when there is not constant typing and visual distraction going on during a lecture/discussion. As such, laptops, tablets, smartphones and other electronic devices are not allowed in class.

If you have a documented learning disability that is helped by typing your notes, feel free to talk with me and I will be happy to consider an exception. Furthermore, if you would strongly prefer to take notes during lecture with a laptop, you may write me an email letting me know, and we can discuss the matter individually. If permission is granted in such a case, laptops will still not be allowed during discussion. Any laptops approved for use in-class must be placed in airplane mode and not used for web surfing during class.

Finally, please silence and put away your phones. If I see you texting I will feel no shame about asking you to put your phone away. If there is an emergency, please step out of the classroom to deal with your phone.

Required Text

There is NO required textbook for this course. You may access all readings through the Canvas portal for this class or via hyperlinks in the syllabus.

Grading

Grading for this course will be calculated as follows:

Participation	15%
Quizzes (best 5 out of 6)	25%
Analytic Essay	40%
Reading Briefs (x2)	20%
Total:	100%

All grading items listed above are detailed in the sections that follow.

Participation

Your participation grade will be based on the overall effort you put into the class, including the effort you put into your assignments, your attendance in class (and having a desk tag!), and your participation in discussions. Come to class, participate in class discussions, earn a good participation grade, and get more out of the class. It's a win-win. You are also encouraged to bring up news stories, relevant examples, and "dank" Comparative Politics memes.

Quizzes

6 short answer/multiple choice quizzes will be administered over the course of the quarter. You are required to complete a minimum of 5 quizzes, worth five points each. Quizzes will take place on the beginning of discussion days. If you take all 6 quizzes, your lowest scoring quiz will be dropped. Since you may miss or drop one quiz, no make-up quizzes will be offered. Quizzes will be graded out of 5 points.

Everything is fair game! Quizzes and exams may cover two kinds of information:

- 1) Material from the assigned readings, even if we do not discuss it in class.
- 2) Material discussed in class, even if it is not covered in the readings.

Analytic Essay

You are required to submit an analytic essay for this class. Make sure to use 12-point font, one-inch margins, double-spacing, and proper citation format (see section below). Additionally, please number each page. The essay should be 5-6 pages long (not including the bibliography). You must submit the essay in PDF format.

Essays will be graded on content (evidence provided), analysis (claims drawn about the evidence provided), structure (clarity of thesis and logical “flow” of the essay), and mechanics (grammar, punctuation use, sentence and paragraph composition, etc.). The following elements are part of an A paper:

1. **A clear thesis** presented in the first paragraph and argued throughout. Include “In this essay I will argue that...” or something similar.
2. **Evidence to support your thesis** in the form of facts, ideas from existing research, and thoughtful, balanced analysis.
3. **Clear structure**, including an introduction, a conclusion, and reasonably sized body paragraphs. Each body paragraph should start with a topic sentence that introduces that paragraph.
4. **A bibliography** with a complete list of your sources. Some guidelines:
 - Include a **minimum of six (6)** sources.
 - Use at least **three (3) academic sources**.
 - At least one of your three academic sources must be from outside the class (meaning that it is not on the syllabus).
 - Lectures may be cited, but do **not** count towards your required sources.
5. **Appropriate and sparing use of quotes**. Quotes do not speak for themselves. They should always be preceded by context and followed by analysis of that quote.
6. **Clear writing** with few grammatical errors.

For the essay, choose from one of the three provided prompts.

Analytic Essay

Prompt Option 1: Imagine that Puerto Rico is granted independence from the United States and becomes its own country. You are called to advise Puerto Rico's transitional government on whether it should adopt a presidential, semi-presidential, or parliamentary system. What would you suggest and why?

- *Explain why whichever system you choose would be appropriate for a new (but peaceful) democracy.*
- *Be sure to address the potential shortcomings of whichever system you recommend.*
- *Address the pros of the system types you do not select – and say why yours is better!*
- *You do NOT need to discuss the details of Puerto Rican politics.*

Prompt Option 2: Suppose you are called by President Trump for advice on a new electoral system for the country's congressional elections in 2018. How might you advise him and why?

- *Be precise about the kind of system you are suggesting*
- *Be sure to discuss the pros and cons of the new system compared to the current one.*
- *Be sure to discuss why this proposed system is preferable to other possible systems.*
- *Do NOT focus your paper on proposing a new presidential electoral system (though you may suggest such a change). This prompt is about the legislature (Congress).*
- *Be clear about each chamber of Congress, and how the system you are suggesting affects each*

Prompt Option 3: Select a fully democratic country with multiple national elections since 2000. How has that country's electoral system (and perhaps electoral rules) affected its party system?

- *This is a very broad prompt. Feel free to focus on specific policy areas or one particular election.*
- *Be sure to point to SPECIFIC examples where the electoral system or changes in the electoral rules caused the parties to engage in certain behavior.*
- *Some examples: 2+ parties merging, parties splitting, parties forming pre-electoral coalitions (or trying and failing to do so), certain parties calling for electoral reform and others opposing it, etc.*
- *Be careful not to use the electoral system to explain vast swathes of policy – other factors may matter more!*

Citations and Bibliographies

I am not a stickler for a particular citation format. What does matter is that you cite every source you reference and include a bibliography at the end of every paper you submit that references outside sources. You may use in-text parenthetical citations (e.g. [APSR style](#)) or footnotes (e.g. [Chicago style](#)), but you MUST be consistent and use citations every time you refer to an outside source rather than your own opinion.

Reading Briefs

In order to promote a seminar environment, you are required to complete two (2) one-page briefs on assigned readings for fellow students, and use these briefs to stimulate classroom discussion on the readings on discussion days. Make sure to use 12-point font, one-inch margins, and double-spacing. These briefs should include the author's main point(s) and 2-3 pertinent questions to guide discussion. These briefs are not intended to test your knowledge of the material, but rather to facilitate class discussion. You are not expected to have any prior knowledge about the subjects contained in the readings. You do not have to have an answer to the discussion questions you pose.

Sign-ups for briefs will occur during the first week, to ensure that student briefs are distributed throughout the quarter. At least one of the briefs you select must be for academic work (not a news article or op-ed). You may not sign up for two reading briefs on the same day. Reading briefs are due on Canvas by the start of class on the day the reading is assigned. You may use the following link to sign up for your preferred two briefs: <http://signup.com/go/GwBOTbQ>. You must submit the reading briefs in PDF format.

Late Submissions

Do not wait until the night before it is due to begin to work on an assignment. Life is complicated and full of unexpected surprises. Plan for uncertainty by managing your time efficiently. Even if your work is not complete because something unexpected interfered, submit what you have accomplished prior to the emergency. After-the-fact extensions will be granted only under extreme circumstances, and at my sole discretion.

If you know in advance that you will miss an assignment deadline, you may submit a partially completed assignment early — and then appeal for an extension.

Analytic essays submitted late will have 10% deducted from their final score for every day they are late. This penalty begins immediately following the day and time the assignment is due, and will not be prorated. Late essays will not be accepted after the scheduled final exam date.

Grade Appeals

If you are not satisfied with the grade you receive on an assignment or quiz, please take the following steps:

- 1) Review any comments/feedback I have provided.
- 2) If you still have questions, come to my office hours or contact me by email.
- 3) If you still believe the grade you received is in error, submit a one-paragraph written request for a regrade by email. If the request is approved, your work will receive a completely new evaluation by me. Your score may increase, decrease, or stay the same.

Disabilities

UC Davis encourages qualified students with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities and is committed to the policy that all people shall have equal access to programs, facilities, and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. I am strongly committed to this policy. If you feel you may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact the Student Disability Center at (530) 752-3184 as soon as possible to identify and document your needs. Additionally, it is your responsibility to contact me privately at the beginning of the quarter (i.e., within the first week) so we can discuss how to accommodate your needs. Do not wait until an assignment deadline or exam to inform me of a learning disability.

Academic Dishonesty

All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless otherwise specified by me. Any reference materials used to prepare an assignment must be cited. The following document contains specific guidelines for avoiding plagiarism: <http://sja.ucdavis.edu/files/plagiarism.pdf>. In general, you must cite the person at the end of the sentence in which you use another person's idea. When you use a specific phrase, you must put that phrase in quotation marks and cite the original author at the end of the sentence in which you use the phrase. If you wish to submit a piece of writing that you have used in another class, you must receive my permission before doing so.

Sexual Harassment and Assault Resources

UC Davis is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment. Title IX and our school policy prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, which regards sexual misconduct — including harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. We understand that sexual violence can undermine students' academic success and we encourage students who have experienced some form of sexual misconduct to talk to someone about their experience, so they can get the support they need.

Confidential support and academic advocacy can be found with several campus resources, including CARE (Center for Advocacy, Resources and Education) at (530) 752-3299 and Counseling Services at (530) 752-2349. More information here:

http://sexualviolence.ucdavis.edu/docs/sexual_violence_support_brochure_jul15.pdf

Weekly Assignments and Topics

The list below indicates reading assignments, quiz days, and the due date for the analytic essay. All journal articles and other readings will be available on Canvas or linked below. You should do each day's readings before that day's class. I'll generally keep us on schedule, but note that discussions and lectures may bleed over from one class to the next.

Date	Topic	Readings Due	Other Work Due
Week 1			
Mon, Jun 25	Course Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus 	
Tues, Jun 26	Introducing Comparative Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lave, Charles and March, James G. 1975. <i>An Introduction to Models in the Social Sciences</i>, chapters 1 & 2 • O'Neil, Patrick. 2012. <i>Essentials of Comparative Politics</i>, chapter 1 	Sign-ups for reading briefs due by start of class
Wed, Jun 27	Presidentialism and Parliamentarism I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shugart, Matthew. 2006. "Comparative Executive-Legislative Relations." <i>The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions</i>. • McElroy, Justin. 2017. "Timeline: the B.C. Election that took 52 days." <i>CBC News</i>. http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/timeline-the-b-c-election-that-took-52-days-1.4184196 <p><i>Optional, in case you're interested:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheibub, J. A., & Limongi, F. (2002). Democratic Institutions and Regime Survival: Parliamentary and Presidential Democracies Reconsidered. <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i>, 5(1), 151–179. 	
Thurs, Jun 28	DISCUSSION DAY		QUIZ 1

Week 2			
Mon, Jul 2	Presidentialism and Parliamentarism II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pillalamarri, Akhilesh. 2016. “American Needs A Parliament.” <i>The National Interest</i>. http://nationalinterest.org/feature/america-needs-parliament-17220 • Mainwaring, S., & Shugart, M. S. (1997). Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy: A Critical Appraisal. <i>Comparative Politics</i>, 29(4), 449–471. <p>Optional, in case you’re interested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horowitz, Donald L. 1990. “Comparing Democratic Systems.” <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, Vol. 1, Issue 4, 73-79. 	
Tues, Jul 3	Legislative Organization I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laver, Michael. 2008 “Legislatures and Parliaments in Comparative Context.” <i>The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions</i>. <p>Optional, in case you’re interested:</p> <p>Heller, W. B. (2007). Divided Politics: Bicameralism, Parties, and Policy in Democratic Legislatures. <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i>, 10(1), 245–269.</p>	
Wed, Jul 4	INDEPENDENCE DAY – NO CLASS!		
Thurs, Jul 5	DISCUSSION DAY		QUIZ 2
Week 3			
Mon, Jul 9	Legislative Organization II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carey, J. M. (2003). Discipline, Accountability, and Legislative Voting in Latin America. <i>Comparative Politics</i>, 35(2), 191–211. 	

Tues, Jul 10	Electoral Systems I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electoral Systems Factsheet. 2017. Government of Canada. • Electoral Systems 101, FairVote: http://www.fairvote.org/electoral_systems#research_electoralsystems101 • Electoral Systems Around the World, FairVote: http://www.fairvote.org/electoral_systems#research_electoralsystems_world • Gallagher, M., & Mitchell, P. (2018). Dimensions of Variation in Electoral Systems. <i>The Oxford Handbook of Electoral Systems</i>, 23. <p>Optional, in case you're interested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norris, Pippa. "Choosing electoral systems: proportional, majoritarian and mixed systems." <i>International Political Science Review</i> 18, no. 3 (1997): 297-312. 	
Wed, Jul 11	Electoral Systems II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grofman, B. (2016). Perspectives on the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems. <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i>, 19(1), 523–540. • Drutman, Lee. 2017. "The Case for Proportional Voting." <i>National Affairs</i>. http://www.nationalaffairs.com/publications/detail/the-case-for-proportional-voting <p>Optional, in case you're interested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carey, J. M., & Shugart, M. S. (1995). Incentives to Cultivate a Personal Vote: a Rank Ordering of Electoral Formulas. <i>Electoral Studies</i>, 14(4), 417–439. 	
Thurs, Jul 12	DISCUSSION DAY		QUIZ 3
Week 4			

Mon, Jul 16	Party Systems I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kitschelt, Herbert. 2009. "Party Systems." <i>The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics</i>. Oxford University Press. 	
Tues, Jul 17	Party Systems II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uslander, Eric M. and Zittel, Thomas. 2008 "Comparative Legislative Behavior" in <i>The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions</i>. 	
Wed, Jul 18	Country Case: The United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liptak, Adam. 2013. "Smaller States Find Outsize Clout Growing in Senate." <i>The New York Times</i>. Weigel, David. 2016. "How do other countries elect presidents without an electoral college? Pretty easily." <i>The Washington Post</i>. Desilver, Drew. 2016. "Trump's victory another example of how Electoral College wins are bigger than popular vote ones." <i>Pew Research Center</i>. http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/12/20/why-electoral-college-landslides-are-easier-to-win-than-popular-vote-ones/ 	
Thurs, Jul 19	DISCUSSION DAY		QUIZ 4
Week 5			

Mon, Jul 23	Country Case: Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johnston, Richard. (2014). Canada is polarizing -- and it's because of the parties. <i>The Washington Post</i>. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/02/18/canada-is-polarizing-and-its-because-of-the-parties/ • Flinders, M. (2010). Explaining Majoritarian Modification: The Politics of Electoral Reform in the United Kingdom and British Columbia. <i>International Political Science Review</i>, 31(1), 41–58. <p><i>Optional, in case you're interested:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leduc, L., Clarke, H. D., Pammett, J. H., & Jenson, J. (1984). Partisan Instability in Canada: Evidence from a New Panel Study. <i>The American Political Science Review</i>, 78(2), 470–484. 	
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Tues, Jul 24	Country Case: UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lundberg, T. C. (2018). “Electoral Systems in Context: UK.” <i>The Oxford Handbook of Electoral Systems</i> • “Tactical voting: how to make your vote count in the 2017 election.” <i>The Guardian</i> https://www.theguardian.com/politics/ng-interactive/2017/jun/02/tactical-voting-guide-how-to-make-your-vote-count-in-the-2017-election • “How Britain Voted,” <i>The New York Times</i>. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/06/08/world/europe/british-general-election-results-analysis.html?_r=0 • Cutts, David and Haughton, Tim. 2017. “Five things we just learned from the U.K. elections.” <i>The Washington Post</i>. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/06/09/five-things-we-just-learned-from-the-u-k-elections/ <p>Optional, in case you’re interested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benedetto, G., & Hix, S. (2007). The Rejected, the Ejected, and the Dejected: Explaining Government Rebels in the 2001-2005 British House of Commons. <i>Comparative Political Studies</i>, 40(7), 755–781. 	
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Wed, Jul 25	Representation & Mass-elite Linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adams, J. (2012). Causes and Electoral Consequences of Party Policy Shifts in Multiparty Elections: Theoretical Results and Empirical Evidence. <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i>, 15(1), 401–419. <p><i>Optional, in case you're interested:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adams, J., Ezrow, L., & Somer-Topcu, Z. (2011). Is Anybody Listening? Evidence That Voters Do Not Respond to European Parties' Policy Statements During Elections. <i>American Journal of Political Science</i>, 55(2), 370–382. 	
Thurs, Jun 26	DISCUSSION DAY		QUIZ 5
Week 6			
Mon, Jul 30	Democratization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geddes, Barbara. 1999. "What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?" <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i>, 2, no. 1: 115-144. 	
Tues, Jul 31	Country Case: Chile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Siavelis, P. M. (2010). <i>President and Congress in Postauthoritarian Chile: Institutional Constraints to Democratic Consolidation</i>. Penn State Press. Chapter 1. <p><i>Optional, in case you're interested:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carey, J. M., & Siavelis, P. M. (2005). Insurance for Good Losers and the Survival of Chile's Concertación. <i>Latin American Politics and Society</i>, 47(2), 1–22. Carey, John M. "Malapportionment and ideological bias in Chilean electoral districts." <i>Latin American Politics and Society</i> 58, no. 3 (2016): 123-133. 	
Wed, Aug 1	DISCUSSION DAY & PAPER CONSULTATION		QUIZ 6
Thurs, Aug 2	Comparative Politics Jeopardy and Potluck!		Analytic Essay due by noon