

INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Political Science, V1501
Columbia University, Spring 2013

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Time: T/Th 10:10-11:25
Location: Schermerhorn 614

Teaching Assistants:

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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, how can we account for the differences between autocracies and democracies? 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 the following:

- *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 in your discussion section in the week of February 3rd.

- *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 are unable to do the exam because of you are sick, you must provide a note from your doctor. The exams will be held in class on:

- Tuesday, February 26th
- Tuesday, April 2nd
- Thursday, May 2nd

- *Written Assignment (10%):*

You will write a 4 to 5 page paper that uses the material we will cover this semester to make the case that a one institutional change will increase accountability, equity, or democratic stability in a specific country. The final paper will be due on May 10th. We will circulate a description of the assignment and a list of eligible countries on April 18th. You must clear your proposed paper topic with your TA by April 25th.

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.

Session 1 (22/1): Introduction

PART I. THE STATE, ORDER, AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Sessions 2 & 3 (24/1 & 29/1): 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 (31/1 & 5/2): 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.](#)

Case Studies, India

Case Studies, Nigeria

PART II. POLITICAL REGIMES - DEMOCRACY AND DICTATORSHIP

Sessions 6-8 (7/2, 12/2 & 14/2): 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

Session 9 & 10 (19/2 & 21/2): The Effect of Political Regimes

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

Principles, Ch. 11, Problems with Group Decision Making

Case Studies, China

Case Studies, United Kingdom

Session 11 (26/2): Exam 1

Sessions 12-14 (28/2, 5/3 & 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

[Triesman, Daniel. 2011. Rethinking Russia : Is Russia Cursed by Oil? *Journal of International Affairs* 63 \(2\):85-102](#)

PART III: POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS IN DEMOCRACIES

Sessions 15-16 (12/3 & 14/3): Parties and Elections I

Principles, Ch. 13, Elections and Electoral Systems

Principles, Ch. 14, Social Cleavages and Party Systems

Case Studies, Japan

Spring Break (19/3 & 21/3)

Sessions 17-18 (26/3 & 28/3): Parties and Elections II

[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.](#)

[Ichino, Nahomi, and Noah Nathan. 2012. Crossing the Line: Local Ethnic Geography and Voting in Ghana. *American Political Science Review*, forthcoming](#)

Session 19: Exam 2

Sessions 20-21 (4/4 & 9/4): 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 22 (11/4): Federalism and Decentralization

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

[O'Neill, Kathleen. 2003. Decentralization as an Electoral Strategy. *Comparative Political Studies* 36 \(9\):1068-1091.](#)

PART IV: POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIAL OUTCOMES

Sessions 23-24 (16/4 & 18/4): 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.](#)

[Fréchette, Guillaume R., Francois Maniquet, and Massimo Morelli. 2008. Incumbents' Interests and Gender Quotas. *American Journal of Political Science* 52:891-909.](#)

[Kitschelt, Herbert, and Steven Wilkinson. 2007. Citizen-Politician Linkages: An Introduction. In *Patrons, Clients, and Policies: Patterns of democratic accountability and political competition* edited by H. Kitschelt and S. Wilkinson. New York Cambridge University Press.](#)

[Ferraz, Claudio, and Fred Finan. 2011. Exposing Corrupt Politicians. *J-Pal Policy Briefcase*.](#)

Sessions 25-26 (23/4 & 25/4): Redistributive Politics and the Welfare State

Principles, Ch. 16, Consequences of Democratic Institutions, pp. 766-788

[Mares, Isabela, and Matthew Carnes. 2009. The Welfare State in Global Perspective In *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, edited by S. C. Stokes and C. Boix. Oxford: Oxford University Press.](#)

[Alesina, Alberto, and Edward Glaeser. 2004. *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe: A World of Difference*. New York: Oxford University Press, Chapter 6.](#)

[Díaz-Cayeros, Alberto , and Beatriz Magaloni. 2009. Aiding Latin America's Poor. *Journal of Democracy* 20 \(4\):36-49.](#)

Session 27 (30/4): Democratic Institutions and Stability

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

[Brancati, Dawn. 2004. Can Federalism Stabilize Iraq? *The Washington Quarterly* 27 \(2\):7-21.](#)

Session 28 (2/5): Exam 3