

Comparative Government of Western Countries
POLS 3360
Fall 2018
Online

Office hours: MW 1:00-2:30pm and by appointment
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Course Overview

Comparative politics is the process by which researchers test theories and hypotheses through the process of comparison across nations, time, policies, etc. This course provides for an introduction to the study of the comparative politics of western democracies. This course will begin with a discussion of basic comparative research design. Second, as this course is focused on western countries, and all of these countries are largely seen as democratic, we will explore substantive ideas within democratic governance, such as institutional design, political participation (both conventional and unconventional), and public policy.

The primary goals of this course are threefold. First, this course will attempt to encourage the development of an understanding of the comparative system of inquiry. Second, this course seeks to provide a broad knowledge of major theoretical approaches to the study of comparative democratic politics. Finally, this class will seek to provide for the development of critical and analytical thinking skills that can be applied not only to politics but also to other areas of study.

You will be required to read both material from a textbook as well as academic research. Additionally, you will be asked to discuss the material you have read in online discussion boards.

Expectations

It is important to remember that you are adults, and success at the collegiate level is dependent upon approaching your studies as a responsible adult. You will be expected to do all of the readings in a timely manner, keep up with lectures, and complete all assignments on time.

Course Goals

At the end of this course you will be able to:

- 1) Develop an understanding of the comparative method of inquiry

2) Identify important aspects of governmental structure and civil society in western developed democracies

3) Analyze the effects each of these aspects has on actual governance

And you will have developed:

1) A greater understanding of democratic politics

2) The ability to apply the comparative method of inquiry

2) Important critical and analytical thinking skills

Required Reading

Hague, R., M. Harrop, and J. McCormick. 2016. *Political Science: A Comparative Introduction*. Palgrave. 8th Edition.

Additional articles and book chapters will be required for this class. These articles will be provided via Blackboard.

Course Assignments

1. Exam 1	30 %
2. Exam 2	30 %
3. Constitution Paper	20 %
4. Discussion Participation	10%
5. Reaction Papers	10%

Grading: Grading will follow a standard scale: 89.5% or higher is an A, 79.5% to 89.49% is a B, 69.5% to 79.49% is a C, and 59.5% to 69.49% is a D.

In order to avoid myriad problems, I will NOT do any of the following:

1. Change grades unless a computational error is made
2. Reveal grades via e-mail or telephone
3. Give any extra credit opportunities other than those mentioned in the syllabus or by me in class
4. ***ACCEPT ANY LATE MATERIALS***
5. Allow any makeup exams, unless in extenuating circumstances

Exam grades will be posted on Blackboard, usually within 7 days of the exam.

If you do poorly on any of the assignments, I advise you to see me as soon as possible. It is your responsibility to seek my help if you need it.

It is important to note, I may provide a general curve on each exam. This is done in order to avoid curving the final grades which is again possible, however, unlikely.

Exams: Two exams will be given in this course. Both exams will consist of 20 multiple choice questions and two essays. You will be provided two sets of two essay questions (set A and set B). You will be required to answer one essay question from each set. The first exam will test over all course content from the first day of class until the date of the exam. You will have 1 hour and 15 minutes to complete the first exam. The second exam will test over all course content from the first class after the first exam until the date of the exam. You will have 2 hours to complete the second exam.

Each exam will be worth 30% of your overall grade, accounting for a total of 60% of your final grade combined.

Makeup exams will only be given in light of a university excused absence or at the discretion of the instructor. Inform me of your absence before or within 48 hours of the examination date, either in person or by e-mail. I will need specific, written documentation to verify the nature and legitimacy of your absence. You must present this documentation to me, in person, during my office hours (or make an appointment) and before the last week of classes. At that time, I will determine whether you are eligible to take a makeup exam. You will have one (1) hour and fifteen (15) minutes to complete the makeup exam, which consists of answering *one essay question*. ***All makeup exams will take place during the last week of classes. YOU MUST CONTACT ME BEFORE THE LAST WEEK OF CLASSES TO SCHEDULE A MAKEUP EXAM. MAKE UP EXAMS WILL NOT BE GIVEN FOR THE FINAL EXAM.***

Exam Preparation: The optimal way to succeed in this class is to attend class regularly, take good notes, and keep up with the readings. Your notes will alert you to the material that I think is most important, however, everything in the required readings is fair game.

Constitution Paper: You will be required to write a paper laying out a new constitution for Belgium in this course. The details of this project have been included as an additional document that can be accessed through Blackboard. This project will be worth 20% of your grade.

Reaction Papers: Twice during this semester, September 4 and October 4, you will be required to choose and read one of 2 pieces of scholarly literature from a list (labeled as that week's "Reaction readings"). On September 4, and October 4, respectively, you will be required to turn in reaction papers based on the pieces you chose to read. Each reaction paper should be 2 pages long, double-spaced with a 12pt Times New Roman font. It should present a brief synopsis of the literature and a critical reaction to the work. Each of these papers will be worth 5% of your final grade, combined accounting for the final 10% of your grade.

Extra Credit: Extra credit will not be given in this course.

Participation: As an important part of this class is online discussion, you will be expected to participate in these discussion boards on a regular basis. Failure to participate regularly will

August 22

Read for August 22:

HHM, Ch. 1, 5, and 6.

<http://svmiller.com/blog/2014/08/reading-a-regression-table-a-guide-for-students/>

<http://svmiller.com/blog/2014/09/taking-good-notes/>

<https://violentmetaphors.com/2013/08/25/how-to-read-and-understand-a-scientific-paper-2/>

August 24

Read for August 24:

Lijphart, A. 1971. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method." *The American Political Science Review* 65(3): 682-693. (available via Blackboard)

3. DEMOCRACY

August 28 – 30

Read for August 28:

HHM, Ch. 3

Read for August 30:

Dahl, R. 2005. "What Institutions Does Large-Scale Democracy Require?" *Political Science Quarterly*. 120(2): 187-197. (Available on Blackboard)

Lijphart, Arend. 1999. *Patterns of Democracy*. Yale University Press: New Haven, CT. (Ch. 1; available on Blackboard)

September 4

FIRST REACTION PAPER DUE

Read one of the two following papers and write a reaction paper:

Lipset, S.M. 1959. "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy." *American Political Science Review* 53(1): 69-105. (Available on Blackboard)

Alvarez, M., J.A. Cheibub, F. Limongi, and A. Przeworski. 1996. "Classifying Political Regimes." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 31(2): 3-36. (Available on Blackboard)

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

4. PRESIDENTIAL AND SEMI-PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEMS

September 6 – 13

Read for September 6:
HHM, Ch. 9 (pp. 145-150; 154-158)

Read for September 13:
Linz, J. 1990. "The Perils of Presidentialism." *Journal of Democracy* 1(1): 51-69. (Available via Blackboard)

Siaroff, A. 2003. "Comparative presidencies: The inadequacy of the presidential, semi-presidential and parliamentary distinction." *European Journal of Political Research* 42(3): 287-312. (Available via Blackboard)

5. PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEMS AND GOVERNMENT FORMATION

September 13 – 18

Read for September 13:
HHM, Ch. 8 & 9 (pp. 150-154)

Read for September 18:
Lijphart, Arend. 1999. *Patterns of Democracy*. Yale University Press: New Haven, CT. (Ch. 3; available on Blackboard)

Fortunato, D. and J. Adams. 2015. "How voters' perceptions of junior coalition partners depend on the prime minister's position." *European Journal of Political Research* 54(3): 601-621. (Available on Blackboard)

6. MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE

September 20 – 25

Read for September 20:
HHM, Ch. 11

Read for September 25:
Brancati, D. 2006. "Decentralization: Fueling the Fire or Dampening the Flames of Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism." *International Organization* 60(3): 651-685.

DEMOCRATIC FUNCTIONING

7. ELECTIONS AND ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

September 27 – October 2

Read for September 27:
HHM, Ch. 16

Read for October 2:
Karp, Jeffrey A. and Susan A. Banducci. 1999. "The Impact of Proportional Representation on Turnout: Evidence from New Zealand." *Australian Journal of Political Science* 34(3): 363-377. (Available via Blackboard)

Horowitz, D.L. 2003. "Electoral Systems: A Primer for Decision Makers." *Journal of Democracy* 14(4): 115-127.

October 4

SECOND REACTION PAPER DUE

Read one of the two following papers and write a reaction paper:

Blais, A. and R.K. Carty. 1991. "The Psychological Impact of Electoral Laws: Measuring Duverger's Elusive Factor." *British Journal of Political Science* 21(1): 79-93. (Available via Blackboard)

Alonso, S. and R. Ruiz-Rufino. 2007. "Political Representation and Ethnic Conflict in New Democracies." *European Journal of Political Research* 46(2): 237-267. (Available via Blackboard)

7. POLITICAL PARTIES AND PARTY SYSTEMS

October 9 – 16

Read for October 9:
HHM, Ch. 15

Read for October 11:
Riker, William H. 1982. "The Two-Party System and Duverger's Law: An Essay on the History of Political Science." *The American Political Science Review* 76(4): 753-766. (Available via Blackboard)

Read for October 16:

Adams, J. 2001. "A Theory of Spatial Competition with Biased Voters: Party Policies Viewed Temporally and Comparatively." *British Journal of Political Science* 31(1): 121-158.

Adams, J., M. Clark, L. Ezrow, G. Glasgow. 2006. "Are Niche Parties Fundamentally Different from Mainstream Parties? The Causes and the Electoral Consequences of Western European Parties' Policy Shifts, 1976–1998." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(3): 513-529. (Available via Blackboard)

October 18

Study/Consultation Day

OCTOBER 23: MIDTERM EXAM ONLINE

DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS AND STABILITY

8. ECONOMIC EXPLANATIONS

October 25 – October 30

Read for October 25:
HHM, Ch. 4

Read for October 30:
Boix, C. 2003. *Democracy and Redistribution*. Chs. 1 and 2 (available on Blackboard)

Acemoglu, D, and J.A. Robinson. 2001. "A Theory of Political Transitions." *American Economic Review* 91(4): 938-963.

9. POLITICAL CULTURE

November 1 – 8

Read for November 1:
HHM, Ch. 12

Read for November 6:
Inglehart, Ronald. 1988. "The Renaissance of Political Culture." *The American Political Science Review* 84(4): 1203-1230. (available on Jstor)

Putnam, R.D. 1995. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." *Journal of Democracy* 6(1): 65-78.

Read for November 8

Jackman, R.W. and R.A. Miller. 1996. "A Renaissance of Political Culture?" *American Journal of Political Science* 40(3): 632-659.

10. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

November 13 – 27

Read for November 13:
HHM, Ch. 13

Read for November 15:
Kaase, M. 1999. "Interpersonal trust, political trust and non-institutionalised political participation in Western Europe." *West European Politics* 22(3): 1-21. (Available on Blackboard)

Crepaz, M.M.L., K.B. Jazayeri, and J. Polk. 2016. "What's Trust Got to Do With It? The Effects of In-Group and Out-Group Trust on Conventional and Unconventional Political Participation." *Social Science Quarterly* doi: 10.1111/ssqu.12271. (Available on Blackboard)

Read for November 27
Krishna, A. 2002. "Enhancing Political Participation in Democracies: What is the Role of Social Capital?" *Comparative Political Studies* 35(4): 437-460. (Available on Blackboard)

November 29

Final Paper Due

December 4

Consultation Day

December 6: FINAL EXAM WILL BE AVAILABLE AT 12:00AM ON DECEMBER 6 AND WILL CLOSE AT 11:59PM ON THE SAME DAY