

Comparative Government of Western Countries

POLS 3360

Fall 2016

TR 10:50am – 12:05pm

Ross Hall 211

Office hours: MW 10-11:50am 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 the 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.

This class will be both lecture and seminar style. You will be required to read both material from a textbook as well as academic research. In general, we will start each section with a lecture on the textbook reading, with remaining days being seminar styles discussion of academic literatures. You will also be asked to engage in a semester long group project in which you are asked to

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. While there will be no formal mechanism to ensure your attendance in class, you are expected to be in class. As this is an upper level course that covers a large amount of unfamiliar material, attendance will serve to improve your grade. Further, you will be expected to do all of the readings (both textbook and other readings) by the below enumerated dates.

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. Research Paper	30 %
4. 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. The second exam will test over all course content from the first class after the first exam until the date of the exam. Each exam will be worth 30% of your overall grade, accounting for a total of 60% of your final grade combined.

PLEASE NOTE: IF YOU ARRIVE TO AN EXAM AFTER THE FIRST EXAM IS TURNED IN YOU WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO TAKE THE EXAM, NOR WILL YOU BE ALLOWED TO TAKE A MAKEUP.

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.

Group Project: You will each be expected to complete a group project in which you will be writing a new constitution for Belgium. This project will require you to work outside of class as a group, and will also require independent research regarding Belgium. Details of this project are provided in the Constitution Writing Group Assignment Description provided as an appendix to this syllabus. The Constitution Writing Group Assignment Description is also available via Blackboard. This project will be worth 30% of your grade.

Reaction Papers: Twice during this semester, January 26 and April 11, 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 January 26, and April 11, 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.

Attendance: Attendance is expected, but not required for this class. However, you are required to be in attendance on the day (April 25) of the group project "referendum," and you are required to cast a ballot in this "referendum." **Failure to attend class on this day, and/or failure to cast a ballot in the referendum will result in the immediate lose of 6 points on your final grade.** For all other class days, it is important to keep in mind that you are adults, and as adults, you are solely responsible for how well you perform in this class. While attendance is only mandatory on one day of the year, attending class regularly will undoubtedly improve your course performance.

Communications: If you have any questions about the class, please see me during my office hours. If you cannot make my office hours, please schedule an appointment to see me. You are more than welcome to e-mail me as well.

Dropping Courses: Please visit the website of UALR Student Records (<http://ualr.edu/records/drop-class/>) for information concerning drops, withdrawals, and other administrative information.

Students with Disabilities: Your success in this class is important to me, and it is the policy and practice of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to create inclusive learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have a documented disability (or need to have a disability documented), and need an accommodation, please contact me privately as soon as possible, so that we can discuss with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) how to meet your specific needs and the requirements of the course. The DRC offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process among you, your instructor(s) and the DRC. Thus, if you have a disability, please contact me and/or the DRC, at 501-569-3143 (V/TTY) or 501-683-7629 (VP). For more information, please visit the DRC website at www.ualr.edu/disability.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty, which includes, but is not limited to cheating on an exam, unauthorized collaboration on an assignment, and plagiarism, is taken very seriously in this course. Students who commit such actions will be reported to the Dean of Students and will receive an F for the course. If you have any questions about whether an action is considered to be academically dishonest, please see me or read the complete description of the UALR policy on academic dishonesty, which is available in the student handbook at www.ualr.edu/www/handbook/student_rights.html.

Course Materials and Copyright Statement: The handouts used in this course are copyrighted. “Handouts” refers to all materials generated for this class, which include but are not limited to presentation slides, syllabi, quizzes, exams, in-class materials review sheets, and additional problem sets. Because these are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy, in any manner, including through photographs, the handouts, unless I expressly grant permission.

Course Schedule (All Dates Subject to Change)

1. INTRODUCTION

January 10

No Reading to Be Completed for this Day

GROUP CONSTITUTION PROJECT: You will be randomly assigned to a group with a nationality.

2. WHAT IS COMPARATIVE POLITICS AND HOW TO STUDY IT

January 12 – 17

Read for January 12:
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/>

Read for January 17:
Lijphart, A. 1971. “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method.” *The American Political Science Review* 65(3): 682-693. (available via Blackboard)

3. DEMOCRACY

January 19 – 26

Read for January 19:
HHM, Ch. 3

Read for January 24:
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)

Stimson, J.A., M.B. Mackuen, and R.S. Erikson. 1995. "Dynamic Representation." *American Political Science Review* 89(3): 543-565.

JANUARY 26

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)

4. AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES AND DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS

January 31 – February 7

Read for January 31:
HHM, Ch. 4

Read for February 2:
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.

5. POLITICAL CULTURE

February 9 – 14

Read for February 9:
HHM, Ch. 12

Read for February 14:
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.

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

6. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

February 16 – 23

Read for February 16:
HHM, Ch. 13

Read for February 21:
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)

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)

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)

February 28

Review

MARCH 2: MIDTERM EXAM IN CLASS

7. MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE

March 7 – March 9

Read for March 7:
HHM, Ch. 11

Read for March 9:
Brancati, D. 2006. "Decentralization: Fueling the Fire or Dampening the Flames of Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism." *International Organization* 60(3): 651-685.

8. PRESIDENTIAL AND SEMI-PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEMS

March 14 – 21

Read for March 14:
HHM, Ch. 9 (pp. 145-150; 154-158)

Read for March 16:

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)

Tsebelis, G. 1995. "Decision Making in Political Systems: Veto Players in Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, Multicameralism and Multipartyism." *British Journal of Political Science* 25(3): 289-325.

9. PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEMS AND GOVERNMENT FORMATION

March 23 – March 30

Read for March 23:

HHM, Ch. 8 & 9 (pp. 150-154)

Read for March 28:

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)

Adams, J., L. Ezrow, and C. Wlezien. 2015. "The Company You Keep: How Voters Infer Party Positions on European Integration from Governing Coalition Arrangements." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(4): 811-823.

10. ELECTIONS AND ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

April 4 – 11

Read for April 4:

HHM, Ch. 16

Read for April 6:

Mainwaring, S. 1991. "Politicians, Parties, and Electoral Systems: Brazil in Comparative Perspective." *Comparative Politics* 24(1): 21-43. (Available via Blackboard)

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.

APRIL 11

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)

11. POLITICAL PARTIES AND PARTY SYSTEMS

April 13 – 20

Read for April 13:
HHM, Ch. 15

Read for April 18:
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)

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)

12. PRESENTATION AND REFERENDUM

April 25

**Presentation Day and Referendum
(ATTENDANCE IN CLASS IS MANDATORY)**

April 27

Review

MAY 4: FINAL EXAM AT 10:30AM