

UCLA
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

POLITICAL SCIENCE 50: INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

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Tues/Thurs: 8-9:15am
Broad 2160E
Office Hours: Thurs 10am-12pm

Comparative politics is the field within political science that tries to explain why countries vary in their domestic political institutions, the political behavior of their leaders and citizens, their levels and rates of development, and their public policies. In this course, we will focus on three main questions that have long been central to research in comparative politics: How do democratic countries vary in their political institutions and why do these differences matter? Why are some countries democracies and others dictatorships and what are the consequences? And how does “globalization”—the increasing integration of economies and intermingling of cultures—affect politics and people’s wellbeing? The goal is not just to acquaint you with these questions and the debates that surround them but also to help you begin to develop the tools to reach your own reasoned conclusions about them.

To do this, you will need some fundamental vocabulary and some basic social science research tools. The “vocabulary” part includes an understanding of what social science is all about, what political scientists mean precisely by the terms they use (e.g., development, democracy, proportional representation, bureaucracy), and the kinds of institutions that major countries (and some minor ones) in all parts of the world now have or have had recently.

This course approaches Comparative Politics from the perspective of how political scientists actually conduct research in this field. Thus, the course is not simply a journalistic commentary on current events or a survey of the politics and institutions of three or four foreign countries. It is a course focused on using theory and evidence to identify and try to account for broad patterns in political behavior and outcomes in the countries of the world.

Finally, this is an *introductory course*. It is designed to teach you concepts, approaches and, more broadly, methods of reasoning and analysis that should be applicable to any upper division Political Science course (as well as any analytically-oriented job) that you take in the future. That said, because there is so much to cover, *it is also a very demanding course*—indeed more demanding than most upper division political science courses. You will not leave the course as an expert in the politics of a particular country or countries, or in the complexities of a particular political institution or substantive topic. But you should leave with a set of analytical tools and theoretical understandings that you can use to further examine the political systems of any country anywhere. The goal is not to give you all the answers, but to expose you to many of the right questions.

REQUIREMENTS:

The course is taught in two lectures each week, on Tuesday and Thursday from 8:00-9:15am in 2160E Broad Hall. Attendance at lectures is mandatory.

The course requires one short analytic paper, an in-class midterm, and a comprehensive final examination. It also requires attendance at, and active participation in, section discussions. Your section participation grade will be assessed by your teaching assistant on the basis of your active, constructive participation. Mere attendance in section, if passive or unproductive, will yield no points for this portion of your course grade.

Course grades will be calculated as follows:

- in-class midterm exam 25 percent
- short analytic paper 20 percent
- final exam 40 percent
- section participation 15 percent

Note that the final exam for the course is scheduled for Wednesday, December 13 from 3-6pm. All students must take the exam at this date/time. If you know that you have a conflict with this date/time, then you should not enroll in the course.

There is a single required text for the course: Clark, Golder and Golder, *Principles of Comparative Politics, 3rd Edition* (CQ Press 2017)), which is available at the UCLA Bookstore. All additional readings are posted on the course web page (UCLA log in required) and are available for your own use.

UCLA is committed to providing help to students with disabilities. If you wish to request an accommodation due to a suspected or documented disability, please inform either Professor Posner or your TA and contact the Center for Accessible Education (CAE) at A-255 Murphy Hall, (310) 825-1501, www.osd.ucla.edu.

UCLA Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) also provides mental health care and resources for all registered students, including short-term individual and/or group treatment, urgent services and referrals when needed. Counselors are available by phone 24/7 at (310) 825-0768. Learn more at <http://www.counseling.ucla.edu>.

LECTURE TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Part I: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Sept 28: *Introduction to the Course: What Comparative Politics is All About*

Clark, Golder and Golder, ch 1 (only pp. 2-8 and 13-14).

Fareed Zakaria, "Asian Values," *Foreign Policy* (November/December 2002), pp. 38-39.

Oct 3: *If Every Country is Unique, How Do We Compare?*

Clark, Golder and Golder, ch. 2 (entire).

David Plotz, "Greens Peace," *New York Times Magazine*, 4 June 2000.

Thomas Friedman, "Big Mac I," *New York Times*, 8 December 1996.

Part II: Democratic Political Institutions

Oct 5: *Presidents vs. Prime Ministers*

Clark, Golder and Golder, ch. 12 (only pp. 453-458) and ch 16 (only pp. 762-780).

"Prime Minister's Question Time," in John McCormick, *Comparative Politics in Transition* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1998), p. 53.

Oct 10: *Electoral Systems*

Clark, Golder and Golder, ch. 13 (only pp. 534-577) and ch. 16 (only pp. 738-758).

"Unclear Result in Britain Puts Focus on Electoral Rules," *New York Times*, 7 May 2010.

Oct 12: *Political Parties, Party Systems, and Social Cleavages*

Clark, Golder and Golder, ch. 14 (entire).

Oct 17: *Institutional Veto Points and Federalism*

Clark, Golder and Golder, ch. 15 (entire) and ch. 16 (only pp. 759-762).

Oct 19: *Public Policies and Policy Implementation*

Clark, Golder and Golder, ch. 16 (only pp. 726-738).

Kenneth Shepsle and Mark Boncheck, "Principal-Agent Relationships," in *Analyzing Politics* (New York: WW Norton, 1997), pp. 360-70.

Jeffrey Goldberg, "Learning How to be King," *New York Times Magazine*, 6 February 2000.

Oct 24: *Government Formation*

Clark, Golder and Golder, ch. 12 (only pp. 458-511).

Oct 26: **In-class Midterm Exam**

Part III: Democracy and Dictatorship

Oct 31: *The Economic Determinants of Democracy*

Clark, Golder and Golder, ch 5 (only pp. 147-150) and ch. 6 (entire).

Nov 2: *The Social Structural and Cultural Determinants of Democracy*

Clark, Golder and Golder, ch. 7 (entire).

Nov 7 and 9: *Democratic Transitions*

Clark, Golder and Golder, chs. 3 and 8 (both entire).

Nov 14: *Democracy or Dictatorship: Does it Make a Difference?*

Clark, Golder and Golder, ch. 9 (entire).

Nov 16: *Democratic Decay*

Roberto Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk, "The Signs of Deconsolidation," *Journal of Democracy*, January 2017, pp. 5-15.

Jay Ulfelder, "Daniel Ortega Shows Us How to Dismantle a Democracy, 21st Century Style," blog post, 20 November 2011.

Javier Corrales, "Hugo Boss," *Foreign Policy*, 19 February 2006.

David Ost, "Regime Change in Poland, Carried Out from Within," *The Nation*, 8 January 2016.

Steven A. Cook, "How Erdogan Made Turkey Authoritarian Again," *The Atlantic*, 21 July 2016.

Part IV: Globalization

Nov 21: *What is Globalization?*

Patrick O'Neil, "Globalization and the Future of Comparative Politics," in *Essentials of Comparative Politics, 5th edition* (New York: WW Norton, 2015), pp. 343-371.

Neil Irwin, "How A Rising Dollar is Creating Trouble for Emerging Economies," *New York Times*, 16 March 2015.

Nov 23: **Thanksgiving – No Class**

Nov 28: *Globalization, Development and Inequality*

Branko Milanovic, "Global Income Inequality by the Numbers: in History and Now: An Overview," World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 6259 (November 2012).

"For Richer, For Poorer," *The Economist*, 13 October 2012.

"Crony Tigers, Divided Dragons: Why Asia, Too, is Becoming Increasingly Unequal," *The Economist*, 13 October 2012.

"Lessons from Palampur: More Inequality in an Indian Village is Balanced by Greater Mobility," *The Economist*, 13 October 2012.

"Gini Back in the Bottle: An Unequal Continent is Becoming Less So," *The Economist*, 13 October 2012.

"Revisiting Ricardo: Why Globalization is Not Reducing Inequality within Developing Nations," *The Economist*, 23 August 2014.

Nov 30: **No Class; Short Analytic Paper Due**

Dec 5: *How Does Globalization Affect Domestic Politics?*

Dani Rodrik, "Sense and Nonsense in the Globalization Debate," *Foreign Policy*, Summer 1997.

N. Gregory Mankiw, "Why Voters Don't Buy it When Economists Say Global Trade is Good," *New York Times*, 29 July 2016.

Roger Lowenstein, "The Immigration Equation," *New York Times Magazine*, 9 July 2006.

Dec 7: *Wrap Up*