



PS240B Winter 2022 Field Seminar in Comparative Politics

<https://bruinlearn.ucla.edu/courses/78619>

Thursday 2:00–4:50

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Lachlan's Office Hours: 3:00-5:00pm PST Tuesdays. Please email Lachlan if you need to schedule a different time. Signup via <https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/ttyzr>. His office hours will be held via Zoom at <https://ucla.zoom.us/j/4896253638>.

Dan's Office Hours: 1:00-3:00pm PST Wednesdays. Please email Dan if you need to schedule a different time. His office hours will be held via Zoom at <https://ucla.zoom.us/j/93538497945>.

Course Description: PS 240B is the second half of a two-course sequence designed to introduce graduate students to comparative politics. We survey a broad range of different literatures. Sometimes topics flow naturally from one week to the next, but not always. Comparative politics is a vast field. In some ways, it touches on every aspect of political science, and it overlaps with economics, sociology, and anthropology, as well as other disciplines. We cannot make this course comprehensive, and even the coverage of the topics we have chosen to address leaves out important and/or influential readings. We hope that these short introductions will whet your appetites for deeper study.

This will be a demanding course. The reading list for each week is relatively heavy, and we expect every student to be prepared to discuss any reading when called upon. You may need to read some items more than once to be able to do that. Your goal should be to come to class prepared to summarize the main point of each item assigned as well as to be able to present a brief and accurate review of the approach, argument, and evidence — all in two to three minutes. If it takes you longer than that, you have not mastered the material.

We have uploaded scanned copies of all of the course readings to the course website, with the exception of the book we will read in its entirety during the sixth week of the quarter. You should make arrangements to purchase this book in advance.

We encourage you to first skim each reading to get a sense of the themes it covers, and then jot down the questions you hope the reading will be able to answer for you. Next, read the introduction and conclusion. This is normally enough to get a sense of the big picture. Are the claims surprising? Do you believe them? Can you think of examples — places in the world, or historical events — that do not seem consistent with the logic of the argument? Next ask yourself what types of evidence or arguments you would need to be convinced of the results. Now read through the whole text, checking how the arguments used support the claims of the author. It is rare to find a piece of writing that you agree with entirely. So, as you come across issues that you are not convinced by, write them down and bring them along to class for discussion. Also note when you are pleasantly surprised, or when the author produces a convincing argument that you had not thought of. In all cases, whenever possible you are encouraged to download the data the author(s) used, replicate all or some results, and use that as an exercise to probe and test the arguments you bring to class. If the author(s) filed a pre-analysis plan (PAP), look it up and compare what is presented in the paper with what was described in the PAP. Finally, try to

articulate succinctly what you know now that you did not know before you read the piece. Often a quick summary can draw attention to strong features you were not conscious of, or make you realize that what you were impressed by is not so impressive after all. Is the theory internally consistent? Is it consistent with past literature and findings? Is it novel or surprising? Are elements that are excluded or simplified plausibly unimportant for the outcomes? Is the theory general or specific? Are there more general theories on which the author(s) might have drawn or to which the paper might have contributed?

Course Prerequisites: The course is designed for Ph.D. students in Political Science. Others can attend only with the instructors' permission.

Course Objectives: At the completion of this course, you will:

1. Be familiar with many major questions in the field of comparative politics;
2. Become familiar with the range of approaches and methods employed;
3. Have a good idea of what outstanding research looks like;
4. Be familiar with important recent studies of comparative politics;
5. Acquire a base of readings that will allow you to conduct independent research.

Readings: The reading load is relatively heavy. Readings use examples from countries around the world, crossing the distinction between rich, industrialized and poorer, less industrialized countries.

Requirements: Evaluation for the course will consist of three parts. First, all students will be expected to participate actively in every class meeting, including but not limited to the "cold-call" oral summaries of the readings described above. Second, all students must choose three weeks to write short, two page critical reviews on a single reading for the week (on which more below). Third, there will be an end-of-quarter, day-long written examination. You will have 9 hours to complete the exam, which will be open book. The date of the exam will be set at the beginning of the quarter after consultation with students in an effort to avoid conflicts. Whereas the exam at the end of fall quarter covered material from 240A only; the exam at the end of winter quarter will cover material in both 240A and 240B. The comprehensive exam at the end of 240B will also serve as a qualifying exam for students for whom comparative politics is their first or second field. Together, in-class performance and response papers will count for 25 percent of your grade, and the other 75 percent will be based on your performance on the exam.

Response papers

Your papers should be two pages and include the following information about the reading in a narrative form (rather than as a list of answers):

- What is the research question?
- What is the theoretical argument?
- What is (are) the proposed causal mechanism(s)?
- What is the unit of analysis?
- Who are the actors and what are their goals, constraints, information, and resources?
- What is the evidence and causal identification strategy that is provided? How convincing is the evidence?
- Why is the argument important? Why do you think we assigned the piece?
- What is one major critique of the argument? How might one improve on the piece?

The reviews are to be posted to the discussion forum on the course website AND sent by email to both instructors by **5pm** the day preceding the class meeting (i.e., Wednesday night) on which the topic will be discussed. You will be expected to read all of the response papers composed by other students each week and be prepared to discuss them in class. We will generally not be sending individual feedback on the papers unless there is an issue. Instead, we will be using them to draw upon and inform our

discussion (and to weigh in your course grade).

Course Policies:

- We will be following UCLA's COVID protocols: <https://covid-19.ucla.edu/ucla-covid-protocols/>
- Please keep your mask on at all times during class meetings and maintain social distancing, within the limits of what is possible in our seminar room.
- Please plan to attend all class meetings, except in cases of illness or COVID-19 related absences. If you have any symptoms of illness, test positive for COVID-19, or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19, please do not come to class. Alert the instructors at the earliest possible time so that we may make arrangements to have the class recorded. There will be no penalty for missing class for this reason.
- Please join class meetings each week already having read assigned material.
- Please have written notes summarizing each assigned reading and be prepared to discuss every assigned reading.
- We recommend printing out a copy of each reading and have it on hand during class, if you have access to a printer. Please do *not* access an electronic version during class, if at all possible.

As a student and a member of the University community, you are expected to demonstrate integrity in all of your academic endeavors. Accordingly, all work you do will be held to the highest ethical and professional standards.

Please carefully review the university guidelines regarding academic integrity. They are available at <https://deanofstudents.ucla.edu/academic-integrity>.

Week One, January 6: Methods and Inference in Comparative Politics

King, Gary, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press: ch. 1.

Gerber, Alan S. and Donald P. Green. 2012. *Field Experiments: Design, Analysis, and Interpretation*. WW Norton: ch. 1.

Gerring, John. 2004. "What is a Case Study and What is it Good For?" *American Political Science Review* 98(2): 341-354.

Elster, Jon. 1998. "A Plea for Mechanisms." In Hedström, Peter and Richard Swedberg, eds., *Social Mechanisms: An Analytical Approach to Social Theory*. Cambridge University Press: ch. 3.

Dunning, Thad, Guy Grossman, Macartan Humphreys, Susan D. Hyde, Craig McIntosh, and Gareth Nellis, eds. 2019. *Information, Accountability, and Cumulative Learning*. Cambridge University Press: ch. 2.

Stevens, Jacqueline. 2012. "Political Scientists are Lousy Forecasters." *New York Times*, 23 June.

Week Two, January 13: News and Social Media

Chen, Yuyu, and David Y. Yang. 2019. "The Impact of Media Censorship: 1984 or Brave New World?" *American Economic Review* 109(6): 2294-2332.

Bail, Christopher A., et al. 2018. "Exposure to Opposing Views on Social Media Can Increase Political Polarization." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115(37): 9216-9221.

Hobbs, William R., and Margaret E. Roberts. 2018. "How Sudden Censorship Can Increase Access to Information." *American Political Science Review* 112(3): 621-636.

Wong, Audrye. 2021. "Divide to Conquer? How Authoritarian Regimes Use Wedge Narratives To Marginalize Diaspora Communities." Unpublished manuscript

Pan, Jennifer, and Alexandra A. Siegel. 2020. "How Saudi Crackdowns Fail to Silence Online Dissent." *American Political Science Review* 114(1): 109-125.

Week Three, January 20: Accountability and Responsiveness

Przeworski, Adam, Susan Stokes, and Bernard Manin. 1999. *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*. New York: Cambridge University Press, ch. 1.

Ashworth, Scott. 2012. "Electoral Accountability: Recent Theoretical and Empirical Work." *Annual Review of Political Science* 15: 183-201.

Ofosu, George Kwaku. 2019. "Do Fairer Elections Increase the Responsiveness of Politicians?" *American Political Science Review*. 113(4): 963-979.

Grossman, Guy, and Kristin Michelitch. 2018. "Information Dissemination, Competitive Pressure, and Politician Performance between Elections: A Field Experiment in Uganda." *American Political Science Review* 112(2): 280-301.

Raffler, Pia, Daniel N. Posner, and Doug Parkerson. 2021. "Can Citizen Pressure Be Induced to Improve Public Service Provision?" Working Paper.

Week Four, January 27: Distributive Politics

Golden, Miriam, and Brian Min. 2013. "Distributive Politics Around the World." *Annual Review of Political Science* 16:73-99.

Cox, Gary W. 2012. "Swing Voters, Core Voters, and Distributive Politics." In Shapiro, Ian, Susan Stokes, Elisabeth Wood, and Alexander S. Kirshner, eds. *Political Representation*. Cambridge University Press: 342-357.

Stokes, Susan C., Thad Dunning, Marcelo Nazareno and Valeria Brusco. 2013. *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism: The Puzzle of Distributive Politics*. Cambridge University Press: ch. 2.

Burgess, Robin, Remi Jedwab, Edward Miguel, Ameet Morjaria, and Gerard Padro i Miquel. 2015. "The Value of Democracy: Evidence from Road Building in Kenya." *American Economic Review* 105(6): 1817-1851.

Diaz-Cayeros, Alberto, Federico Estévez, and Beatriz Magaloni. 2016. *The Political Logic of Poverty Relief: Electoral Strategies and Social Policy in Mexico*. Cambridge University Press: chs 3-4.

Week Five, February 3: Corruption

Fisman, Raymond and Miriam Golden. 2017. *Corruption: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press: chs. 2-3 and 7-8.

Olken, Benjamin. 2007. "Monitoring Corruption: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia." *Journal of Political Economy* 115 (April): 200-49.

Fisman, Raymond. 2001. "Estimating the Value of Political Connections." *American Economic Review* 91(4): 1095-102.

Ferraz, Claudio and Frederico Finan. 2008. "Exposing Corrupt Politicians: The Effects of Brazil's Publicly Released Audits on Electoral Outcomes." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 123(2): 703- 745.

Week Six, February 10: The Decline and Rise of Democracy

Stasavage, David. 2020. *The Decline and Rise of Democracy: A Global History from Antiquity to Today*. Princeton University Press.

Week Seven, February 17: Democratic Breakdowns

Bermeo, Nancy. 2016. "On Democratic Backsliding." *Journal of Democracy* 27(1): 5-19.

Waldner, David and Ellen Lust. 2018. "Unwelcome Change: Coming to Terms with Democratic Backsliding." *Annual Review of Political Science*, 21:93-113.

Levitsky, Steven and Daniel Ziblatt. 2017. "How a Democracy Dies." *The New Republic*, 7 December.

Gandhi, Jennifer and Elvin Ong. 2019. "Committed or Conditional Democrats? Opposition Dynamics in Electoral Autocracies." *American Journal of Political Science* 63(4): 948-963.

Berman, Sheri. 1997. "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic." *World Politics* 49(3): 401-429.

Week Eight, February 24: Authoritarian Regimes

Svolik, Milan. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. Cambridge University Press: chs. 1 and 3.

King, Gary, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts. 2013. "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression." *American Political Science Review* 107(2): 326-343.

Ong, Lynette H. 2018. "Thugs and Outsourcing of State Repression in China." *The China Journal* 80(1): 94-110.

Guriev, Sergei M. and Daniel Treisman. 2019. "Informational Autocrats." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 33(4): 100-127.

Kuran, Timur. 1991. "Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989." *World Politics* 44(1): 7-48.

Applebaum, Anne. 2021. "The Bad Guys Are Winning" *The Atlantic*. November 15.

Week Nine, March 3: Inequality

Scheve, Kenneth, and David Stasavage. 2009. "Institutions, Partisanship, and Inequality in the Long Run." *World Politics* 61(2): 215-53.

Piketty, Thomas, and Emmanuel Saez. 2014. "Inequality in the Long Run." *Science* 344(6186): 838-843.

Alvaredo, Facundo, Lucas Chancel, Thomas Piketty, Emmanuel Saez, and Gabriel Zucman. 2018. "The Elephant Curve of Global Inequality and Growth." *AEA Papers and Proceedings* 108: 103-108.

Gimpelson, Vladimir, and Daniel Treisman. 2018. "Misperceiving Inequality." *Economics & Politics* 30(1): 27-54.

Sands, Melissa, and Daniel de Kadt. 2020. "Local Exposure to Inequality Raises Support of People of Low Wealth for Taxing the Wealthy." *Nature* 586: 257-261

Yonzan, Nishant, Christoph Lakner, and Daniel Gerszon Mahler. 2021. "[Is COVID-19 Increasing Global Inequality?](#)" World Bank Data Blog, 7 October.

Week Ten, March 10: Natural Resources and Environmental Politics

Ostrom, Elinor. 1991. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge University Press: chs. 1-3.

Ross, Michael. 2001. "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" *World Politics* 53(3):325-361.

Blair, Graeme, Darin Christensen, and Aaron Rudkin. 2021. "Do Commodity Price Shocks Cause Armed Conflict? Evidence from a Meta-Analysis of Natural Experiments." *American Political Science Review* 115(2): 709-716.

Carleton, Tamma, and Solomon Hsiang. 2016. "Social and Economic Impacts of Climate." *Science* 353(6304): 1112-1127.

Aklin, Michaël and Matto Mildemberger. 2020. "Prisoners of the Wrong Dilemma: Why Distributive Conflict, Not Collective Action, Characterizes the Politics of Climate Change." *Global Environmental Politics* 20(4): 4-27.