

Introduction to Comparative Politics - Summer 2018 (Version 1.2)

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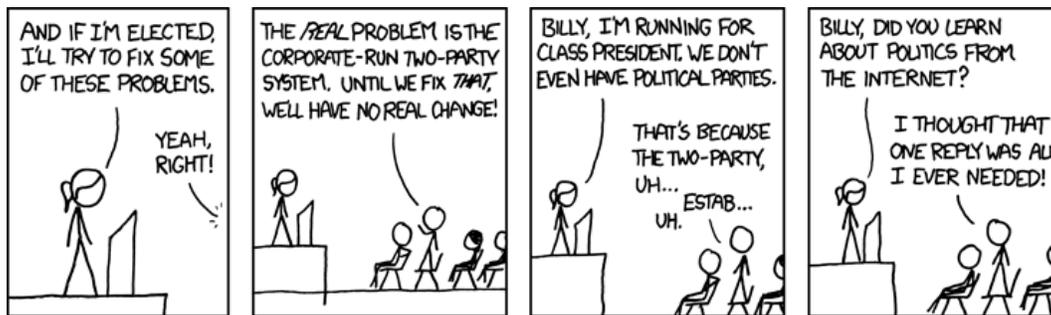
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Schedule: 10AM-12PM: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday.

Office Hours: 12:15PM - 1:15PM: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday.

Location: 1628 CHEM

Course website: On Canvas.



Course Overview

Welcome to Introduction to Comparative Politics! But while we're on the subject; what is comparative politics?

Broadly speaking, comparative politics is the subdiscipline of political science that focuses on politics *within* a country (contrasted with the study of politics between countries, which is usually referred to as "international relations"). So this could include things like democratization, civil conflict, economic development, elections, and more. The "comparative" part comes from the fact that studying "domestic" characteristics within countries often requires a comparison with other countries; for instance, how could we possibly understand which factors in a country are most conducive to faster economic development without comparing countries that developed quickly with those that did not?

The course will largely follow the textbook "Principles of Comparative Politics" by Clark, Golder, and Golder, with some supplemental materials throughout. Some of the content will make use of technical tools that have become commonplace in political science research - especially statistics and game theory - but anything you need to know in order to succeed in the course will be introduced along the way. There are no prerequisites for the course, but a general interest in and awareness of politics around the world would be a help!

Course Grading Breakdown

15% - Participation.

30% - Weekly Assignments (6% each).

30% - Paper Project (due July 31).

25% - Final Test (August 17).

Participation

You will be graded based on attendance and active participation in class. However, you have four “free” absences that you can allocate throughout the term as you see fit! Beyond these four you can chat with me if there are extenuating circumstances that require you to miss class.

Assignments

There will be short assignments throughout the term, usually posted each Friday on that week’s content and due the following Tuesday. These assignments will consist of both short answer and multiple choice questions. There will be five total.

Paper Project

There will be one short essay for this class, assigned near the midpoint of the course, and due July 31. In it, you will be asked to pick a contentious policy issue, and then either explain why a particular policy was chosen, or advocate for a particular policy position. Either way, your paper should reference course content, and should be approximately 1,500-2,000 words long.

Final Test

There will be one test for this course, during the exam period. The questions on this will look a fair bit like those from the assignments (might some of them even be the same?!).

Late Policy

You have seven free late days to allocate across assignments or the final paper! So, for example, you could submit the final paper seven days late, or each of the assignments one day late and the final paper two days late. However, if you run out of late days, it is unlikely you will be granted any other extensions or accommodation, whatever the reason, so you should use these judiciously.

Books

There is one required textbook:

- Principles of Comparative Politics, by Clark, Golder, and Golder (CGG in the syllabus)

Course Schedule

Week 1: Intro Week/What is Political “Science”?

- June 27: Course Overview/Goals
 - Krugman - “Two Cheers for Formalism”
 - Silver - The Media Has a Probability Problem
- June 28

- CGG Ch. 1

- June 29

- CGG Ch. 2

Week 2: Exit, Voice, and Loyalty

- July 3

- Class Cancelled

- July 4

- Independence Day: No Class

- July 5

- CGG Ch. 3

- July 6

- First assignment out.

Week 3: Defining and Measuring the State

- July 10

- CGG Ch. 4

- July 11

- No readings.

- July 12

- CGG Ch.5

- July 13

- Second assignment out

Week 4: Determinants of Democracy and Dictatorship

- July 17

- CGG Ch. 6

- July 18

- No Readings

- July 19

- CGG Ch. 7

- July 20
 - Third assignment out

Week 5: Economic Development

- July 24: Ethics and Economic Development
 - Peter Singer - “The Life You Can Save” excerpts
 - Milanovic - “The higher the inequality, the more likely we are to move away from democracy”
 - Freund - Deconstructing Branko Milanovic’s Elephant Chart
- July 25: Theories of Development I
 - Acemoglu and Robinson - “Why Nations Fail” excerpts.
 - The Guardian - “Is the World Really Better than Ever”
- July 26: Theories of Development II
 - Diamond - “What Makes Nations Rich or Poor?”
 - Acemoglu and Robinson - Reply to Peter Diamond
 - Bill Gates - Review of Why Nations Fail
 - Acemoglu and Robinson - Reply to Bill Gates
- July 27: Immigration Economics
 - Borjas - “The Wage Impact of the Marieltos: A Reappraisal”
 - The Economist - “A New Paper Rekindles a Tiresome Debate on Immigration and Wages”
 - Lewis - “How Immigration Affects Workers: Two Wrong Models and a Right One”
 - Interview With Michael Clemens
 - No assignment this week.

Week 6: Democratic Transitions and Dictatorships

- July 31
 - CGG Ch. 8
 - *Paper due.*
- August 1
 - No readings.
- August 2
 - CGG Ch. 10
- August 3

- Fourth assignment out.

Week 7: Democracies and Elections

- August 7
 - CGG Ch. 12
- August 8
 - No readings.
- August 9
 - CGG Ch. 13
- August 10
 - Fifth assignment out.

Week 8: Social Cleavages and Party Systems

- August 14
 - CGG. Ch. 14
- Friday August 17, 4PM-6PM
 - *Final Test.*