

Introduction to Comparative Politics
CPO2002
Spring 2017
Florida State University
HCB 102
M, W, F 11:15-12:05

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Course Description

This course introduces students to the scientific study of comparative politics. The course will focus on cross-national comparisons with the goal of explaining some of the systematic relationships that exist between social, economic, and political variables around the world. The course will NOT be an in-depth study of several countries. The cases under study for the course will be all countries in the world. The course covers how comparative politics is studied as a science. We will study comparative politics from the perspective that any derived hypotheses ought to be falsifiable and put to the test with data.

In the first part of the course, we will examine what we mean by the 'scientific study' of comparative politics. We will ask questions such as (i) What is comparative political science? (ii) What is science? and (iii) What is politics? The second part of the course compares democracies and dictatorships. We will ask questions such as (i) What is the state? (ii) Why are some states democratic but others authoritarian? (iii) What do we mean by democracy and how can we measure it? (iv) How can we explain transitions to democracy? (v) Why do some dictatorships have elections, parties, and parliaments? and (vi) Do democratic states systematically produce different outcomes such as higher economic growth, better health, and more education than dictatorships? The final part of the course focuses primarily on democracies and examines the different institutional forms that they can take. We will ask questions such as (i) What are the differences between parliamentary and presidential democracies? (ii) What are the different types of governments and how do they form? (iii) What is a minority government and why do they exist? (iv) How do different countries elect their representatives and does it matter? (v) Why do some countries have many parties while others have few? (vi) Why is policy change difficult and incremental in some countries but not in others? (vii) How do institutions affect government accountability, representation, and stability? and (viii) Are some forms of democracy more stable than others?

The course will provide you with simple methodological tools for analyzing these questions. For example, you will learn to solve logic problems, employ simple game-theoretic models, and interpret regression results. No prior knowledge is required; all that is required is an open mind and a willingness to learn. The student is thus forewarned. If the scientific and mathematical approach to comparative politics is not preferred by the student, he or she should consider not continuing in the course. The following book is required reading and are available for purchase in the bookstore:

Clark, William, Matt Golder & Sona Golder. 2013. *Principles in Comparative Politics*. 2nd ed. Washington D.C.: CQ Press.

This book has been ordered and will be available at the university bookstore.

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- utilize the methodological tools of political science to solve logic problems, employ simple game-theoretic models, and interpret statistical results.
- compare democracies and dictatorship, recognizing how authoritarian states transition to democracies.
- appraise the form and function of institutions present in democratic states.

Moreover, as a Liberal Studies Social Sciences Course, students will also meet the goals of two Social Sciences competencies:

- Competency 1: critically examine, interpret, and explain how personal, political, cultural, economic, and social experiences and/or structures shape the past and/or the present.
- Competency 2: employ appropriate social scientific and/or historical methods and technology in the selection and appraisal of data, and use these data to assess causal arguments, and analyze assertions and evidence.

Grading Policy

Final grades will be assessed through various measures of your performance in the course. The final grade is intended to reflect your abilities in each of the major areas of the course:

Exam #1	25%
Exam #2	25%
Exam #3 (Final Exam)	25%
Liberal Studies Assignments	15%
Attendance/Participation	10%

Examinations

There will be three-class exams, equally weighted. The dates are scheduled in the syllabus. The examinations include any material covered in the course since the last exam. The University has scheduled this class' final exam for **Thursday May 4th from 12:30-2:30**. The University may change this time and date; it is the student's responsibility to check on exam schedules during the week of finals.

Liberal Studies Components

The Social Science Liberal Studies requirements suggest that students will become: *critical appraisers of theories and the facts that support them*.

1. Competency 1 will be assessed with Liberal Studies (LS) assignment 1 in the syllabus.
2. Competency 2 will be assessed with Liberal Studies (LS) assignment 2 in the syllabus.

Class Participation/Attendance

Students are expected to attend class and actively participate in class discussions and exercises. Class participation will be assessed as follows: As long as you are prepared for class, contribute to discussion when called upon, and complete all Blackboard quizzes, you will receive 100% for participation. However, should you be unprepared (or absent) when called upon, you will be marked down. All students begin with a 100% for class participation and each time that you are ill-prepared/absent, you will lose 2.2% points (there are 45 class meetings, $45 * 2.2 \approx 100$). Missed classes, Blackboard quizzes and/or poor participation will affect this part of your grade. Occasionally, class attendance sheets will be passed out during class. Also Blackboard quizzes/homeworks will be assigned throughout the class. Missing class, not completing a Blackboard quiz, or completing a quiz with a grade of 69.99% or lower will result in losing 2.2% points. If any student is determined to be misrepresenting either their or someone else's attendance in class, all students involved in such misrepresentation shall receive a zero for the semester participation and attendance grade. As with a standard employment contract, each student has a maximum number of personal days. Each student will have three absences from the class with no need for an excuse. Additional absences from class *due to any reason* will result in losing 2.2%

points per absence. To be clear, just like a job, students will not be able to miss class beyond their 5 personal days *for any reason* without penalty. The penalties are relatively small (2.2% points) but try not to let them add up.

Administrative Policy

Student Responsibilities

Students are responsible for planning ahead by checking the Syllabus for upcoming readings and assignments. Students are responsible for all assigned readings. NOT ALL READING MATERIAL WILL BE COVERED IN CLASS. Therefore it is imperative that students complete all readings and integrate them into the course as applicable. In addition, all students are responsible to contribute to a positive learning environment for fellow students. The instructor retains the right to ask a student to leave the classroom if the student is negatively contributing to the learning environment. *Cellular phones, beepers and pagers* going off in class are distractions that contribute negatively to the class setting – be sure to turn off your electronic devices at the beginning of each class period.

Extra-Credit Work

Under no circumstances will extra credit work be permitted.

Late Work

All assignments are to be turned in on the announced due date. Late assignments will not be accepted without legitimate excuses. The instructor retains the right to determine legitimate excuses.

Exams

Students are expected to be present for all exams at the beginning of the exam period. For exams occurring during the regular semester, students will be allotted the entire class period for the exam. For final exams, students will be allotted the entire final exam period that the University has appropriated. A ten-minute grace period will apply for the beginning of all exam periods. After the initial ten minutes have expired, students will be penalized 10 points for arriving late for an exam. Absences or late arrivals for exams will only be excused for participation in formally sanctioned University events, or extraordinary events if they are accompanied by sufficient (i.e. Health Services Excuse Forms) documentation within **two** calendar days of the absence or late arrival. The instructor reserves the right to determine what constitutes an extraordinary circumstance as well as what shall be considered “sufficient documentation.” If they have been excused for their absence, students will have **five** working days to make up a missed exam. If there are extraordinary circumstances, which would prevent the student from making up the exam in five working days, the instructor must be informed of this fact prior to the expiration of the five day period. The instructor reserves the right to administer makeup exams of any format (multiple choice, short answer, essay), which may not necessarily correspond to the original exam’s format. If a student misses an exam and does not have an excused absence, the student will receive a zero for the exam.

Assignment of Letter Grades

Final course letter grades will be assigned based upon the scales shown below:

A	94-100	C	74-76.9
A-	90-93.9	C-	70-73.9
B+	87-89.9	D+	67-69.9
B	84-86.9	D	64-66.9
B-	80-83.9	D-	60-63.9
C+	77-79.9	F	59.9 and below

Incomplete Grades

No incomplete grades will be given unless there is an agreement between the instructor and the student PRIOR TO the end of the course. The instructor retains the right to determine legitimate reasons for an incomplete grade.

University Attendance Policy: Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

Academic Dishonesty

All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless the instructor clearly states that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly and properly cited. Students are responsible for policing themselves with respect to plagiarism. Any student engaging in academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, academic misrepresentation, etc.) will receive a zero for the relevant assignment and will be reported to the proper university officials for further action.

Academic Honor Policy: The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "...be honest and truthful and... [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://dof.fsu.edu/honorpolicy.htm>.)

Syllabus Change Policy Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

Students with Disabilities

If you anticipate needing any type of an academic accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please discuss this with the instructor within the first week of class. Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations should:

1. Register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC)
2. Bring a letter to the instructor from the SDRC indicating you need academic accommodations. This should be done within the first week of class.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. If a student's accommodations change during the semester, the student will present an updated official letter from the SDRC outlining the specific modifications.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center
874 Traditions Way
108 Student Services Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
sdrc@admin.fsu.edu
<http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

Course Schedule

This schedule is the rough plan for the course. Depending upon progress, subjects may shift a bit in a given week. But exam dates will not be moved.

Week 1: January 9-13 – Attendance. Introduction to course. What is comparative politics?
CGG. Preface, Ch. 1.

*****No class, Wed. Jan 11th*****

Week 2: January 16-20 – What is science? Mill's Methods, Induction versus deduction.
Logical fallacies. CGG Ch. 2.

*****No class, Mon. Jan 16th, MLK day*****

Week 3: January 23-27 – What is politics? Exit, voice and loyalty game. CGG Ch. 3.

Week 4: January 30-February 1-3 – What is the state? Contractarian and predatory views of the state. CGG Ch. 4.

Week 5: February 6-10 – Measuring democracy and dictatorship. Economic explanations for democracy and dictatorship. CGG Ch. 5-6.

Week 6: February 13-17 – Cultural explanations for democracy. CGG Ch. 7.
Exam #1 Friday, February 17

Week 7: February 20-24 – Transitions to democracy. CGG Ch. 8.
Liberal Studies (LS) assignment 1 Blackboard Quiz

Week 8: February 27-March 1-3 – Does democracy make a difference? Selectorate theory.
CGG Ch. 9.

Week 9: March 6-10 – Varieties of dictatorship. CGG Ch. 10.

Week 10: March 20-24 – Problems with Group Decision Making CGG Ch. 11.

Week 11: March 27-31 – Parliamentary, presidential, and mixed regimes. CGG Ch. 12.
Exam #2 Friday, March 31

Week 11: April 3-7 – Elections and electoral systems. CGG Ch. 12.

Week 12: April 10-14 – Social cleavages and party systems. CGG Ch. 13.
Liberal Studies (LS) assignment 2 Blackboard Quiz

Week 13: April 17-21 – Federalism, bicameralism, judicial review. Veto players. CGG
Ch. 14.

Week 14: April 24-28 – Varieties of democracy, democratic representation, and economic performance. CGG Ch. 15.

Final Exam: Thursday (May 4) 12:30-2:30pm