

SOSC 3520: UNDERSTANDING COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:00 – 13:20*

**Due to COVID-19, all classes will be conducted on Zoom until further notice.*

Instructor	Teaching Assistant
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Course Description

This course analyzes politics from a comparative perspective. The central theme is to demonstrate how political science understands and explains the variations of political phenomena across different countries. It explores five major topics, i.e., doing comparative politics, comparing political regimes, comparing government systems, comparing political behavior, and comparing political outcomes. Students will benefit with the knowledge, skills and attitude for analyzing the world of politics in a ‘politicized’ world.

Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be better equipped to:

1. (a) Describe the key methods, concepts and theories in comparative politics; and (b) explain the similarities and differences in political regimes, government systems, political behavior and political outcomes.
2. Apply concepts and theories in discussing issues in comparative politics.
3. Exercise independent and critical judgments in the study of politics.

Textbook (Reserved at HKUST Library)

[CGG] William Roberts Clark, Matt Golder & Sona Nadenichek Golder (2019) *Foundations of Comparative Politics*, Thousand Oaks, California: CQ Press.

Recommended e-Reading

Please refer to the reading list appended on pages 6-7 of this prospectus.

Class Schedule

Week/Date	Topic	Reading [CGG]	
THEME 1: DOING COMPARATIVE POLITICS			
1	Sep 8 (T)	Lecture 1: #Prologue <i>What is comparative politics?</i>	Chapter 1
	Sep 10 (H)	Lecture 2: #Approaches <i>How do we approach politics comparatively?</i>	[See Canvas]
2	Sep 15 (T)	Lecture 3: #Methods <i>What are the methodologies for comparative politics?</i>	Chapter 2
THEME 2: COMPARING POLITICAL REGIMES			
	Sep 17 (H)	Lecture 4: #Democracy <i>What is democracy? How do we define and measure democracy?</i>	[See Canvas]
3	Sep 22 (T)	Lecture 5: #Modernization <i>How does economic development explain democracy?</i>	Chapter 5

3	Sep 24 (H)	Lecture 6: #Culture <i>How does culture explain democracy?</i>	Chapter 6
4	Sep 29 (T)	Lecture 7: #Dictatorship <i>What is dictatorship? How do we classify dictatorial regimes?</i>	Chapter 8 (pp.155-178)
	Oct 1 (H)	Public Holiday – NO CLASS	
5	Oct 6 (T)	Lecture 8: #Selectorate <i>Why are some dictatorial regimes more durable than others?</i>	Chapter 8 (pp.178-194)
THEME 3: COMPARING GOVERNMENT SYSTEMS			
	Oct 8 (H)	Lecture 9: #Government <i>What is government? How does government work?</i>	Chapter 14 (pp.351-363)
6	Oct 13 (T)	Lecture 10: #Vetoes <i>What are agenda setters and veto players in government?</i>	[See Canvas]
	Oct 15 (H)	Lecture 11: #Systems <i>What are the different types of democratic systems?</i>	Chapter 10
7	Oct 20 (T)	Lecture 12: #Changes <i>Why are some democratic regimes more desirable than others?</i>	Chapter 14 (pp.379-390)
	Oct 22 (H)	Lecture 13: #Interlude <i>What are the key lessons learnt from Themes 1 to 3?</i>	No reading
8	Oct 27 (T) Oct 29 (H)	Consultation Meetings for Group Projects	No reading
THEME 4: COMPARING POLITICAL BEHAVIOR			
9	Nov 3 (T)	Lecture 14: #Parties <i>What are political parties and party systems?</i>	Chapter 12 (pp.289-307)
	Nov 5 (H)	Lecture 15: #Convergence <i>Why do some political parties converge on a left-right scale?</i>	[See Canvas]
10	Nov 10 (T)	Lecture 16: #Elections <i>What are the different types of electoral systems?</i>	Chapter 12 (pp.308-320)
	Nov 12 (H)	Lecture 17: #Tradeoffs <i>Why are some electoral systems more desirable than others?</i>	[See Canvas]
11	Nov 17 (T)	Lecture 18: #Groups <i>Why are some social groups more able to mobilize than others?</i>	[See Canvas]
THEME 5: COMPARING POLITICAL OUTCOMES			
	Nov 19 (H)	Lecture 19: #Conflict <i>What is ethnic conflict? Why is democracy able to manage conflicts in some plural societies but not in others?</i>	Chapter 14 (pp.370-378)
12	Nov 24 (T) Nov 26 (H)	Lectures 20 & 21: #Spending <i>What is public spending? Why do some countries spend more public funds than others?</i>	Chapter 14 (pp.366-369)
13	Dec 1 (T)	Poster Session for Group Projects	No reading
	Dec 3 (H)	Lecture 22: #Epilogue <i>What are the key lessons learnt from Themes 4 and 5?</i>	No reading

Requirements and Grading

- **Group project (30%)** – poster session (10%) + project report (20%)
- **Take-home Essay 1 (25%)**
- **Take-home Essay 2 (25%)**
- **Multiple-choice quizzes (20%)**
- **BONUS for participation (up to 5%)**

Group project

- The aim of the group project aligns with intended learning outcomes 1, 2 and 3.
- Students will work in **groups of four**. Each group will identify a phenomenon in real-world politics (e.g., revival of authoritarianism, reform of electoral systems, rise of far-right or populist parties, emergence of women's political representation, etc.), formulate a study question, and answer the question from a comparative perspective.
- The project should incorporate the **analysis of at least TWO country/jurisdiction cases** and apply relevant concepts and/or theories from lectures and readings.
- There are TWO deliverables:

(1) Poster Session	(2) Project Report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The digital poster contains an argument outline for the project report, which may include figures, tables and/or other illustrations. ○ Each group will submit their digital poster and video description (5-10 minutes) by 23:59, November 28 (Saturday), which will be shared on Canvas for preview. ○ During the poster session on December 1 (Tuesday), each group will deliver a 1-minute pitch on their poster, answer questions, and comment on the poster of another group. ○ After the poster session, students will receive feedback for preparing their project report. ○ This deliverable will be assessed in terms of (i) content; (ii) structure; (iii) style; and (iv) responses to questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The project report is an academic paper that elaborates on the argument outline on the poster. Each paper should be about 6,000-7,000 words, excluding references and appendices. ○ The project report is due at 23:59, December 16 (Wednesday). Marks will be deducted for late submission at 3% per day. Reports submitted 3 days after the deadline will NOT be graded. ○ To avoid free-riding, each group should attach detailed division of labor on the last page of the project report. The grade of each individual student may be adjusted based on the division and quality of labor. ○ Students are expected to use Harvard citation and referencing style. ○ All reports will be checked by anti-plagiarism software. For confirmed cases of plagiarism, severe sanctions – including but not limited to a failure grade – may be imposed. ○ This deliverable will be assessed in terms of (i) issue interpretation; (ii) quality of argument; (iii) quality of evidence; (iv) application of relevant concepts and theories; and (v) structure, clarity and language.

- The instructor (and TA) will meet with all groups to discuss their group projects on **October 27 & 29 (Tuesday & Thursday)** for consultation. Details will be announced in due course.

Take-home Essays 1 & 2

- The aim of the take-home essays aligns with intended learning outcomes 1, 2 and 3.
- Both essays are **open-book**. Students will be given **3 days** to complete each essay.
- The questions for Essay 1 – which include any topics in Themes 1, 2 and 3 only – will be released by the end of class on October 22. The submission deadline for Essay 1 is **23:59, October 25 (Sunday)**.
- The questions for Essay 2 – which include any topics in Themes 4 and 5 only – will be released by the end of class on December 3. The submission deadline for Essay 2 is **23:59, December 6 (Sunday)**.
- **Marks will be deducted for late submissions at 3% per day (or part of a day)**. Answers submitted 3 days after the deadlines will NOT be graded.
- **Students are expected to use Harvard citation and referencing style.**
- All answers will be checked by an anti-plagiarism software. **For confirmed cases of plagiarism, severe sanctions – including but not limited to a failure grade – may be imposed.**

Multiple-choice Quizzes

- The aim of the multiple-choice quizzes aligns with intended learning outcomes 1 and 3.
- There will be THREE open-book multiple-choice quizzes taking place on **October 6 (Tuesday), October 22 (Thursday) and December 3 (Thursday)**.
- For EACH quiz, there will be **10 questions** in total, accounting for 5% of the final grade. The time allowed for completion is **15 minutes**.
- **Each student will be responsible for proposing TWO multiple-choice questions based on the lecture topic(s) assigned.** The questions should be designed to assess the understanding of knowledge in the corresponding topic(s).
- For each question proposed, an answer key should be provided to explain why an option is correct and other options are wrong. The deadlines for submission of proposed questions are FOUR days before the quizzes, i.e., **23:59 on October 2 (Friday), October 18 (Sunday) and November 29 (Sunday)**. This task will account for 5% of the final grade.
- The questions for each quiz will be randomly selected, possibly with some necessary modifications by the instructor/TA.

Bonus

- A maximum of 5% bonus will be awarded to students who make an effort to contribute to discussions (including discussions on Zoom and Canvas).

Summary

Due date	Assessment item	Topics	Remarks
Oct 6 (in-class)	MC Quiz 1	Themes 1 & 2 only	Proposed questions due on Oct 2 (23:59)
Oct 22 (in-class)	MC Quiz 2	Theme 3 only	Proposed questions due on Oct 18 (23:59)
Oct 25 (23:59)	Take-home Essay 1	Themes 1, 2 & 3 only	Questions released on Oct 22 (end of class)
Nov 28 (23:59)	Digital Poster and Video Description	Any topic	N/A
Dec 1 (in-class)	Pitch, Q&A and Commentary	Various topics	N/A
Dec 3 (in-class)	MC Quiz 3	Themes 4 & 5 only	Proposed questions due on Nov 29 (23:59)
Dec 6 (23:59)	Take-home Essay 2	Themes 4 & 5 only	Questions released on Dec 3 (end of class)
Dec 16 (23:59)	Project Report	Any topic	N/A

Other Useful Texts (Reserved at HKUST Library)

- Andrea Kendall-Taylor, Natasha Lindstaedt & Erica Frantz (2019) *Democracies and Authoritarian Regimes*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Andrew Heywood (2019) *Politics* (5th edition), Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. [NB: The 4th edition (e-book) is also available [here](#)]
- Daniele Caramani (ed.) (2017) *Comparative Politics* (4th edition), Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- John McCormick (2019) *Cases in Comparative Government and Politics*, London: Red Globe Press.
- John T. Ishiyama (2012) *Comparative Politics: Principles of Democracy and Democratization*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell. [e-book]
- Mathew Y. H. Wong (2017) *Comparative Hong Kong Politics: A Guidebook for Students and Researchers*, Singapore: Springer Nature/Palgrave Macmillan. [e-book]
- Patrick H. O'Neil, Karl Fields & Don Share (2013) *Cases in Comparative Politics* (4th edition), New York: W. W. Norton & Co.
- Rod Hague, Martin Harrop & John McCormick (2019) *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction* (11th edition), London: Red Globe Press.
- Todd Landman (2008) *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics: An Introduction*, Abingdon, Oxon/New York: Routledge. [e-book]
- William R. Clark, Matt Golder & Sona N. Golder (2013) *Principles of Comparative Politics* (2nd edition), Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Course Communications

All announcements are made through the course website on Canvas (<https://canvas.ust.hk/>). For e-mail communications, students should allow at least 3 working days for a reply. **All e-mail enquiries regarding any of the assessment items above should be made at least 48 hours before their respective due dates.**

Class Rules

Students should show respect to every member in the class. They should NOT annotate, share screens, capture screenshots, record sound, take photos or videos, or play sound or videos without the prior permission of the instructor or TA. **They should NOT share the login details, course materials, lecture recordings, or information of class members with any parties outside the class.**

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and cheating are very serious offences. Students are reminded of the consequences for violating University's regulations governing academic integrity and honesty. For details of the regulations, please visit: <http://ugadmin.ust.hk/integrity/student-1.html>. For advice on avoiding plagiarism and copying, please visit: <http://libguides.ust.hk/writing/style-man>.

Quality Assurance

Students are welcome to offer comments and suggestions on the course. The principal concern of this course is students' learning, and therefore, the instructor may modify the schedule if this will facilitate their learning.

Appendix: Recommended e-Reading

THEME 1: DOING COMPARATIVE POLITICS	
Texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John T. Ishiyama (2012), chapter 1. [e-book] • Mathew Y. H. Wong (2017), chapters 1 & 2. [e-book] • Todd Landman (2008), chapters 1, 2 & 4. [e-book]
Journal articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Gerring (2004) What is a Case Study and What is it Good for? <i>The American Political Science Review</i> 98(2): 341-354.
THEME 2: COMPARING POLITICAL REGIMES	
Texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John T. Ishiyama (2012), chapters 2, 3 & 4. [e-book] • Mathew Y. H. Wong (2017), chapters 5 & 6. [e-book] • Todd Landman (2008), chapters 6 & 9. [e-book]
Journal articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beatriz Magaloni (2008) Credible Power-Sharing and the Longevity of Authoritarian Rule, <i>Comparative Political Studies</i> 41(4/5): 715-741. • Daron Acemoglu & James Robinson (2006) <i>Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy</i>, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. • Jennifer Gandhi & Adam Przeworski (2007) Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats, <i>Comparative Political Studies</i> 40(11): 1279-1301. • Jennifer Gandhi & Ellen Lust-Okar (2009) Elections Under Authoritarianism, <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> 12: 403-422. • Pippa Norris & Ronald Inglehart (2002) Islamic Culture and Democracy: Testing the ‘Clash of Civilizations’ Thesis, <i>Comparative Sociology</i> 1(3-4): 235-263. • Stephen Haber & Victor Menaldo (2011) Do Natural Resources Fuel Authoritarianism? A Reappraisal of the Resource Curse, <i>American Political Science Review</i> 105(1): 1-26.
THEME 3: COMPARING GOVERNMENT SYSTEMS	
Texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John T. Ishiyama (2012), chapters 8 & 9. [e-book] • Mathew Y. H. Wong (2017), chapter 7. [e-book]
Journal articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arend Lijphart (2012) <i>Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-six Countries</i>, New Haven: Yale University Press. • George Tsebelis (2000) Veto Players and Institutional Analysis, <i>Governance: An International Journal of Policy and Administration</i> 13(4): 441-474. • José Antonio Cheibub & Fernando Limongi (2002) Democratic Institutions and Regime Survival: Parliamentary and Presidential Democracies Reconsidered, <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> 5: 151-179. • José Antonio Cheibub & Svitlana Chernykh (2008) Constitutions and Democratic Performance in Semi-Presidential Democracies, <i>Japanese Journal of Political Science</i> 9(3): 269-303. • José Antonio Cheibub (2007) <i>Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, and Democracy</i>, New York: Cambridge University Press. • Juan J. Linz (1990) The Perils of Presidentialism, <i>Journal of Democracy</i> 1(1): 51-69. • Steffen Ganghof (2003) Promises and Pitfalls of Veto Player Analysis, <i>Swiss Political Science Review</i> 9(2): 1-25.
THEME 4: COMPARING POLITICAL BEHAVIOR	
Texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John T. Ishiyama (2012), chapter 7. [e-book] • Mathew Y. H. Wong (2017), chapters 8 & 9. [e-book] • Todd Landman (2008), chapters 7 & 8. [e-book]

Journal articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • André Blais (1991) The Debate over Electoral Systems, <i>International Political Science Review</i> 12(3): 239-260. • Anthony Downs (1957) An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy, 65(2): 135-150. • Cameron G. Thies & Schuyler Porche (2007) The Political Economy of Agricultural Protection, <i>The Journal of Politics</i> 69(1): 116-127. • Cas Mudde (2004) The Populist Zeitgeist, <i>Government and Opposition</i> 39(4): 541-563. • John M. Carey & Simon Hix (2011) The Electoral Sweet Spot: Low-Magnitude Proportional Electoral Systems 55(2): 383-397. • Lawrence Ezrow et al. (2010) Mean Voter Representation and Partisan Constituency Representation: Do Parties Respond to the Mean Voter Position or to Their Supporters? <i>Party Politics</i> 17(3): 275-301. • Matt Golder (2003) Explaining Variation in the Success of Extreme Right Parties in Western Europe, <i>Comparative Political Studies</i> 36(4): 432-466.
THEME 5: COMPARING POLITICAL OUTCOMES	
Texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathew Y. H. Wong (2017), chapter 12. [e-book] (<i>Optional</i>) • Todd Landman (2008), chapter 5. [e-book] (<i>Optional</i>)
Journal articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alberto Alesina & Edward L. Glaeser (2004) Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe: A World of Difference, Oxford: Oxford University Press, chapters 2 & 4. • André Blais, Donald Blake & Stéphane Dion (1993) Do Parties Make a Difference? Parties and the Size of Government in Liberal Democracies, <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 37(1): 40-62. • Arend Lijphart (2002) The Wave of Power-Sharing Democracy, in Andrew Reynolds (ed.) The Architecture of Democracy: Constitutional Design, Conflict Management, and Democracy, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.37-54. • Arend Lijphart (2004) Constitutional Design for Divided Societies, <i>Journal of Democracy</i> 15(2): 96-109. • Donald L. Horowitz (2002) Constitutional Design: Proposals Versus Processes, in Andrew Reynolds (ed.) The Architecture of Democracy: Constitutional Design, Conflict Management, and Democracy, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.15-36. • Ignacio Jurado & Sandra León (2017) Geography Matters: The Constitutional Effect of Electoral Systems on Social Spending, <i>British Journal of Political Science</i> 49: 81-103. • John D. Huber (2012) Measuring Ethnic Voting: Do Proportional Electoral Laws Politicize Ethnicity? <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 56(4): 986-1001. • Kanchan Chandra (2006) What is Ethnic Identity and Does it Matter? <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> 9: 397-424. • Torben Iversen & David Soskice (2006) Electoral Institutions and the Politics of Coalitions: Why Some Democracies Redistribute More than Others, <i>The American Political Science Review</i> 100(2): 165-181.