

SOSC 3520: UNDERSTANDING COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Wednesdays & Fridays, 13:30 – 14:50, Room 6602 (lifts 31-32)

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 political actors, and comparing political institutions. Students will benefit with the knowledge, skills, and attitude for analyzing the world of politics.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

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

- (a) Describe the key methods, concepts, and theories in comparative politics; and
(b) Explain the similarities and differences in political regimes, actors, and institutions.
- Apply concepts and theories in discussing issues in comparative politics.
- Exercise independent and critical judgments in the study of politics.

Class Schedule

Date(s)	Class(es)	Theme	Topic(s)
Sep 2, Sep 7, Sep 9	1-3	I – Doing Comparative Politics	Orientation; Comparative Approaches; Comparative Methods
Sep 14, Sep 16, Sep 21, Sep 23, Sep 28, Sep 30, Oct 5, Oct 7	4-11	II – Comparing Political Regimes	Democracy; Economic Explanations; Cultural Explanations; Dictatorship and Political Consequences
Oct 12	12	(N/A)	Mid-term Revision
Oct 14, Oct 19, Oct 21, Oct 26, Oct 28	13-17	III – Comparing Political Actors	Political Parties; Interest Groups
Nov 2, Nov 4, Nov 9, Nov 11, Nov 16, Nov 18, Nov 23	18-24	IV – Comparing Political Institutions	Government Systems; Democratic Systems and Political Consequences; Electoral Systems and Political Consequences
Nov 25	25	(N/A)	Group Projects – Discussions
Nov 30	26		Final Revision

Note: Class schedule and topics may be adjusted to facilitate students' learning.

Assessment and Grading

Deliverable / Weighting	Requirements
Digital Poster and Video Presentation (group-based)	20% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will identify a phenomenon in real-world politics (e.g., revival of authoritarianism, reform of electoral systems, rise of far-right or populist parties, etc.), formulate a study question, and answer the question from a comparative

<p><i>This deliverable aims to help students consolidate the key concepts and/or theories learnt through analyzing real-world cases, which aligns with ILOs #1(a), #1(b), #2 and #3.</i></p>		<p>perspective. The analysis should incorporate at least TWO country/jurisdiction cases and apply relevant concepts and/or theories from classes and readings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will design a digital poster AND prepare a video presentation in no more than 15 minutes to illustrate their poster. They will share the poster and video presentation for peer review as well as respond to a peer review in 2 minutes. • The poster and video presentation should be submitted by 23:59, Nov 19 (Sat). Responses to peer review will take place on Nov 25 (Fri). • All posters and video presentations will be assessed based on content, organization, and style.
<p>Peer Review (group-based)</p> <p><i>This deliverable aims to help students develop critical thinking skills by reviewing their peers' video presentation, which aligns with ILOs #2 and #3.</i></p>	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will critically review the digital poster and video presentation of a peer group as assigned. • They will deliver a verbal review in 3 minutes and complete a review form with written comments and suggestions. • The verbal review will take place on Nov 25 (Fri). The review form should be submitted by 23:59, Nov 29 (Tue). • All peer reviews will be assessed based on content only.
<p>Take-home Essays 1 & 2</p> <p><i>This deliverable aims to enable students to describe, explain and apply the key lessons learnt from classes and readings, which aligns with ILOs #1(a), #1(b), #2 and #3.</i></p>	60% (30% each)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both essays are open-book assignments. • Essay 1 covers the topics of Themes I and II. Essay 2 covers the topics of Themes III and IV. • For each essay, student will answer, in 4 days, one of the prescribed questions in 1,000-1,200 words, excluding endnotes and appendices. • The questions of Essay 1 will be released by 15:00, Oct 12 (Wed). The questions of Essay 2 will be released by 15:00, Nov 30 (Wed). • Students should submit Essay 1 by 23:59, Oct 16 (Sun) and Essay 2 by 23:59, Dec 4 (Sun). • All essays will be assessed based on content, organization, and style.
<p>Quizzes × 3</p> <p><i>This deliverable aims to help students consolidate the key lessons learnt from classes and readings, which aligns with ILOs #1(a), #1(b) and #2.</i></p>	15% (5% each)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All three quizzes are open-book assessments. Each quiz contains some simple tasks, such as MC, true or false, and/or short questions. For each quiz, the syllabus includes all materials already discussed in classes. • Students will complete the quizzes on Canvas in 20 minutes. • Quiz 1 will take place on Sep 28 (Wed), Quiz 2 on Oct 28 (Fri), and Quiz 3 on Nov 30 (Wed). • No 'make-up' quizzes will be arranged except for medical or family emergency. The format of the 'make-up' quizzes may be different.

* **Attendance and Participation Bonus:** A maximum of 5 points will be awarded to students who contribute actively to class discussions. Attendance will be taken on an ad hoc basis.

** **Penalty:** For late submission, no submission or no show, mark penalty will apply. For confirmed cases of plagiarism, severe sanctions will be imposed.

Important Dates

Date / Time	Task	Date / Time	Task
Sep 18 / 23:59	Confirm grouping	Nov 25 / in class	Verbal reviews and responses
Sep 28 / in class	Quiz 1	Nov 29 / 23:59	Submit review form
Oct 16 / 23:59	Submit Take-home Essay 1	Nov 30 / in class	Quiz 3
Oct 28 / in class	Quiz 2	Dec 4 / 23:59	Submit Take-home Essay 2
Nov 19 / 23:59	Submit digital poster and video presentation		

Course Reading

Textbook (Reserved at HKUST Library)

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

Useful References (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 (2020) *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]
- 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]

Reading List

Class(es)	Topic	Required Reading
1	Orientation	[CGG], chapter 1
2	Comparative Approaches	[CGG], chapter 2
3	Comparative Methods	*See Canvas
4	Democracy	*See Canvas
5-6	Economic Explanations for Democracy	[CGG], chapter 5

7-8	Cultural Explanations for Democracy	[CGG], chapter 6
9-11	Dictatorship and Political Consequences	[CGG], chapter 8
12	Mid-term Revision	*No reading
13-15	Political Parties	[CGG], chapter 12 (pp.289-307)
16-17	Interest Groups	*See Canvas
18-19	Government Systems	[CGG], chapter 14 (pp.351-363)
20-21	Democratic Systems and Political Consequences	[CGG], chapters 10 & 14 (pp.379-390)
22-24	Electoral Systems and Political Consequences	[CGG], chapters 12 (pp.308-320) & 14 (pp.366-378)
25	Group Projects – Discussions	*No reading
26	Final Revision	*No reading

Course Administration

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 assessments above should be made at least 48 hours before their respective due dates.**

Class Rules

Students should avoid using mobile phones except for class activities. **Video/sound recording is NOT allowed.** If there is a genuine need for video/sound recording, students must seek permission from the instructor before the session begins.

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.

Last revised: August 29, 2022

Appendix: Recommended e-Reading

THEME I: DOING COMPARATIVE POLITICS	
Texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John T. Ishiyama (2012), chapter 1. [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 II: COMPARING POLITICAL REGIMES	
Texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John T. Ishiyama (2012), chapters 2, 3 & 4. [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 (2005) Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, 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 (2008) Islamic Culture and Democracy: Testing the ‘Clash of Civilizations’ Thesis, <i>New Frontiers in Comparative Sociology</i> 109: 221-250. • 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 III: COMPARING POLITICAL ACTORS	
Texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John T. Ishiyama (2012), chapter 7. [e-book] • Todd Landman (2008), chapter 8. [e-book]
Journal articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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.

THEME IV: COMPARING POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS	
Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John T. Ishiyama (2012), chapters 8 & 9. [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. • Arend Lijphart (2012) Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-six Countries, New Haven: Yale University Press.

- George Tsebelis (2000) [Veto Players and Institutional Analysis](#), *Governance: An International Journal of Policy and Administration* 13(4): 441-474.
- John D. Huber (2012) [Measuring Ethnic Voting: Do Proportional Electoral Laws Politicize Ethnicity?](#) *American Journal of Political Science* 56(4): 986-1001.
- John M. Carey & Simon Hix (2011) [The Electoral Sweet Spot: Low-Magnitude Proportional Electoral Systems](#) 55(2): 383-397.
- José Antonio Cheibub & Fernando Limongi (2002) [Democratic Institutions and Regime Survival: Parliamentary and Presidential Democracies Reconsidered](#), *Annual Review of Political Science* 5: 151-179.
- José Antonio Cheibub & Svitlana Chernykh (2008) [Constitutions and Democratic Performance in Semi-Presidential Democracies](#), *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 9(3): 269-303.
- Juan J. Linz (1990) [The Perils of Presidentialism](#), *Journal of Democracy* 1(1): 51-69.
- Ignacio Jurado & Sandra León (2017) [Geography Matters: The Constitutional Effect of Electoral Systems on Social Spending](#), *British Journal of Political Science* 49: 81-103.
- Matt Golder (2003) [Explaining Variation in the Success of Extreme Right Parties in Western Europe](#), *Comparative Political Studies* 36(4): 432-466.
- Steffen Ganghof (2003) [Promises and Pitfalls of Veto Player Analysis](#), *Swiss Political Science Review* 9(2): 1-25.
- Torben Iversen & David Soskice (2006) [Electoral Institutions and the Politics of Coalitions: Why Some Democracies Redistribute More than Others](#), *The American Political Science Review* 100(2): 165-181.