

SOSC 3520 Understanding Comparative Politics

Fall, 2023

Wed, Fri 1:30pm-2:50pm

Rm 1409 (Lift 25-26)

Instructor:

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Office hours: Fri 4:00-5:30 pm or by e-mail appointment (Rm 3351)

TA:

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Course Description:

This introductory course targets advanced undergraduate students interested in analyzing politics from a comparative perspective. Comparative politics is an essential subfield of political sciences and encompasses many topics. This course selects the most important ones: comparative approach and methodology, comparative political regimes, comparative political institutions, and comparative political economy. We explore different political phenomena and outcomes, including democratization, authoritarian resilience, democratic recession, economic development, etc.

By the end of this course, students will be able to 1) gain an understanding of key concepts, methods, and theories in comparative politics; 2) describe and analyze the similarities and differences in different political systems around the world; 3) apply concepts and theories to develop explanations of various political issues in comparative politics.

Grading Policy

Participation (10%). Students are expected to actively contribute during the class after finishing the essential reading. You are encouraged to read other assigned readings, though you are not forced to do so except if you select to do the weekly response of that day. Students need to sign the ATTENDANCE SHEET for each class after the add-drop period. Consider that you may have various personal, family, and emergency reasons for missing the class. You will have a maximum of six chances for absences. After

the sixth absence, you will lose ALL participation points.

Weekly critical responses (20 %). Starting from the third week (Sep. 13 to Nov.29), you are required to write two short critical memos to the class-assigned readings. To secure a good score, your response should avoid only summarizing the content of the reading. Instead, you must show your own insights and arguments about the reading. If you are unsatisfied with the score of two responses, you can do it one more time. I will take the two highest scores from the three responses. By starting to write earlier, you may get more chances to get a higher score. Each response is around two double-spaced pages (12-point font). The deadline is before the start of the day's class (1:29 pm).

Midterm Exam (25%). The midterm exam will take place in class and will be an hour long. The exam format will be multiple-choice. There will be no make-up exams unless there is a family emergency and your emergent surgery. Make-up exams may only be possible by submitting a doctor's note and contact information. The mid-term will cover the readings and lectures in the class.

Final Group Project (45%). Students will work in groups of two to complete a group project. Students should organize no later than Sep.27. The TA will help you to form the group. The finished product of the final paper is a comparative case study of a specific political phenomenon in two countries of interest to you. The group project will be graded in three parts: **1) Research Outline (10%).** By Nov. 3, each group will be required to submit a research outline (maximum of three double-spaced pages, including references). The research outline should include the background of the study, the research question, and the reasons for case selection; **2) Final Presentation (10%).** The group will have approximately 8 minutes to present their preliminary results in class, 6 minutes for presentation, and 2 minutes for Q & A. **3) Final Paper (25%).** The final paper will be approximately twelve pages including references (12-point font, double spaces). The due date will be on Dec 5 (11:59 pm). To avoid free riding, the final presentation and paper should attach a page about the detailed division of labor. An individual's grade may be adjusted by the quality of labor.

Textbooks

William R. Clark, Matt Golder, & Sona N. Golder (2019). *Foundation of Comparative Politics*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, Sage. (Hereafter, CGG)

Course Schedule and Readings

PART 1. Comparative Approach and Methodology (Week 1-2)

Sep.1: Introduction

CGG, Chapter 1

David Laitin, "Comparative Politics: The State of the Subdiscipline," in Helen Milner and Ira Katznelson, eds. *Political Science: The State of the Discipline* (W.W. Norton, 2003)

Week 2: Approach and Methodology

CGG, Chapter 2

Arend Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," *American Political Science Review* 65, (3) 1971: 682-93.

PART 2. Comparing State and Regime (Week 3-6)

Week 3: State and State-Society Relationship

CGG, Chapter 4

Assigned Readings:

Sep.13 Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge University Press, 1985)

Sep.15 Fukuyama Francis, "The Imperative of State-Building." *Journal of Democracy* 15 (2004): 17-31.

Week 4: Democracy

CGG, Chapter 5: 71-86; Chapter 6: 97-116

Seymour Martin Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *American Political Science Review* 53, (1) 1959: 69-105 (75-84 only).

Assigned Readings:

Sep.20 Philippe Schmitter and Terry Karl, "What Democracy Is. . . and Is Not," *Journal of Democracy* 2, (3) 1991: 75-88

Sep.22 Ronald Inglehart and Christian Wetzel, "How Development Leads to Democracy: What We Know about Modernization," *Foreign Affairs*, (March/April

2009): 33-48.

Week 5: Autocracy

CGG, Chapter 5: 87-95; Chapter 8

Larry Diamond, "Elections Without Democracy: Thinking About Hybrid Regimes," *Journal of Democracy* 13, (2) 2002: 21-35.

Assigned Readings:

Sep.27 Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy* 13, (2) 2002: 51-65

Sep.29 Andrew Nathan, "Authoritarian Resilience," *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 14, No. 1 (January 2003), pp. 6-17.

Week 6: Democratic Transitions

CGG Chapter 7

Adam Day et al., *When Dictators Fall: Preventing Violent Conflict During Transitions from Authoritarian Rule* (New York: United Nations University, 2020).

Assigned Readings:

Oct.4 Adam Przeworski et al., "What Makes Democracies Endure?" *Journal of Democracy* 7(1), 1996: 39-55.

Oct.6 Carles Boix, "The Roots of Democracy," *Policy Review* (February/March 2006): 1-19.

PART 3. Comparing Political Institutions (Week 7-9)

Week 7: Government Systems and Electoral System

CGG Chapter 10; Chapter 11: 261-286; Chapter 13: 345-348

Assigned Readings:

Oct.11 Horowitz, Donald L. "Electoral Systems: A Primer for Decision Makers." *Journal of Democracy* 14 (2003): 115-127.

Oct.13 Gandhi, Jennifer, and Abigail L. Heller. "Electoral Systems in Authoritarian States," in *Oxford Handbook of Electoral Systems* (Oxford University Press, 2018)

Week 8: Political Parties

CGG Chapter 12: 289-307

Assigned Reading

Oct.18 Richard Gunther and Larry Diamond, "Types and Functions of Parties" in *Political Parties and Democracy*, (JHU Press, 2001)

Oct 20 Midterm Exam (Content cover until Oct. 13)

Oct. 25 and 27: Democratic Recession

CGG Chapter 14: 351-363; 370-391

Andrea Kendall-Taylor and Erica Franz, "How Democracies Fall Apart: Why Populism is a Pathway to Autocracy," *Foreign Affairs*, December 5, 2016.

Assigned Readings:

Oct.25 Larry Diamond, "Facing Up to the Democratic Recession," *Journal of Democracy* 26, (1) 2015: 141- 155.

Oct 27 Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die* (Crown, 2018): Introduction & Chapter 1.

PART 4. Comparative Political Economy (Week 9-14)

Week 9: Economic Development

Keefer, Philip, "The Poor Performance of Poor Democracies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2007)

Assigned Readings:

Nov.1 Mancur Olson. "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development." *American Political Science Review* 87.3 (1993): 567-576.

Nov.3 Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* (Crown, 2012): Chapter 3.

Week 10: Government-Business Relationship

Peter Evans, *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation* (Princeton University Press, 1995): Chapter 3.

Khan, Lina M. "Sources of Tech Platform Power," *Geo. L. Tech. Rev.* 2 (2018): 325-334.

Assigned Readings:

Nov.8 Chalmers Johnson, "Political Institutions and Economic Performance: The Government-Business Relationship in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan," in *The Political*

Economy of the New Asian Industrialism (Cornell University Press, 1987): pp. 136-64.
Nov.10 Fred Block, "Innovation and the Invisible Hand of Government," in *State of Innovation: The U.S Government Role in Technology Development* (Routledge, 2015)

Week 11: Development Model

Ebbinghaus, Bernhard, "Peter A. Hall and David Soskice, *Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*," in *The Oxford Handbook of Classics in Public Policy and Administration* (Oxford University Press, 2015)

Chen Ling, "Getting China's Political Economy Right: State, Business, and Authoritarian Capitalism," *Perspectives on Politics*, 20.4 (2022): 1397-1402.

Assigned Readings:

Nov.15 Bremmer, Ian. "State Capitalism Comes of Age: The End of the Free Market?." *Foreign Affairs*. 88 (2009): 40-55.

Nov.17 Pearson, Margaret, Meg Rithmire, and Kellee S. Tsai. "Party-state Capitalism in China." *Current History* 120.827 (2021): 207-213; Ang, Yuen Yuen. "Autocracy with Chinese Characteristics: Beijing's Behind-the-Scenes Reforms." *Foreign Affairs* 97 (2018): 39-46.

Nov 22 and 24: Final Presentation

Comparative Politics: Latest Progress

Nov. 29 Assigned Reading:

Read, Benjamin L. "Problems and Possibilities of Comparison Across Regime Types: Examples Involving China," in *Rethinking Comparison: Innovative Methods for Qualitative Political Inquiry* (Cambridge University Press, 2021)