

SOSC 3520: UNDERSTANDING COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 10:30 – 11:50, Room 6591 (lifts 31-32)*

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

Instructor	Teaching Assistant
Prof. James K. WONG (jameskalei@ust.hk) Room 3370 (lifts 13-15) Office hours: By e-mail appointment	Miss Riley CHAN (rileyc@ust.hk) Room 3005 (lift 4) Office hours: By e-mail appointment

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 in a 'politicized' world.

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

Dates	Class(es)	Theme	Topics
Feb 8, Feb 10, Feb 15	1-3	I – Doing Comparative Politics	Orientation; Comparative Approaches and Methods
Feb 17, Feb 22, Feb 24, Mar 1, Mar 3, Mar 8, Mar 10, Mar 15	4-11	II – Comparing Political Regimes	Democracy; Economic Explanations; Cultural Explanations; Dictatorship and Political Consequences
Mar 17	12	(N/A)	Mid-term Revision
Mar 22, Mar 24, Mar 29, Mar 31	13-16	III – Comparative Political Actors	Political Parties; Interest Groups
Apr 7, Apr 12, Apr 19, Apr 21, Apr 26, Apr 28, May 3	17-23	IV – Comparing Political Institutions	Government Systems; Democratic Systems and Political Consequences; Electoral Systems and Political Consequences
May 5	24	(N/A)	Group Projects – Discussions
May 10	25		Final Revision

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

Assessment and Grading

Deliverable / Weighting	Requirements
Poster and Video Description (group-based) <i>This deliverable aims to help students consolidate the key</i>	20% • 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 perspective. The analysis should incorporate at least TWO

<p><i>concepts and/or theories learnt through analyzing real-world cases, which aligns with ILOs #1(a), #1(b), #2 and #3.</i></p>		<p>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 <u>AND</u> prepare a video description in 5-10 minutes to illustrate their poster. They will share the poster and video description for peer review as well as respond to a peer review in 2 minutes. • The poster and video description should be submitted by 23:59, Apr 29 (Fri). Responses to peer review will take place on May 5 (Thu). • All posters and video descriptions 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 description of a peer group as assigned. • They will deliver a verbal review in 3-4 minutes and complete a review form with written comments and suggestions. • The verbal review will take place on May 5 (Thu). The review form should be submitted by 23:59, May 10 (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 5 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 noon, Mar 17 (Thu). The questions of Essay 2 will be released by noon, May 10 (Tue). • Students should submit Essay 1 by 23:59, Mar 22 (Tue) and Essay 2 by 23:59, May 15 (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 15-20 minutes. • Quiz 1 will take place on Mar 3 (Thu), Quiz 2 on Apr 7 (Thu), and Quiz 3 on May 3 (Tue). • No 'make-up' quizzes will be arranged except for medical or family emergency. The format of the 'make-up' quizzes may be different.

* **Participation Bonus:** A maximum of 5 points will be awarded to students who contribute actively to class discussions.

** **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
Feb 20 / 23:59	Confirm grouping	May 3 / in class	Quiz 3
Mar 3 / in class	Quiz 1	May 5 / in class	Verbal reviews and responses
Mar 22 / 23:59	Submit Take-home Essay 1	May 10 / 23:59	Submit review form
Apr 7 / in class	Quiz 2	May 15 / 23:59	Submit Take-home Essay 2
Apr 29 / 23:59	Submit poster and video description		

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
2-3	Comparative Approaches and Methods	[CGG], chapter 2
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
13-14	Political Parties	[CGG], chapter 12 (pp.289-307)
15-16	Interest Groups	*See Canvas
17-18	Government Systems	[CGG], chapter 14 (pp.351-363)
19-20	Democratic Systems and Political Consequences	[CGG], chapters 10 & 14 (pp.379-390)
21-23	Electoral Systems and Political Consequences	[CGG], chapters 12 (pp.308-320) & 14 (pp.366-378)
24	Group Projects – Discussions	*No reading
25	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

For students in face-to-face classes, they 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. For students on the Zoom platform, 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.

Last revised: January 27, 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 (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 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.