

**Northwestern University**  
**Department of Political Science**

**Political Science 250: Introduction to Comparative Politics**

Fall 2016

Time: Mon/Wed 11-12:20, Parkes Hall 213

Instructor: Dr. Moses Khisa

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Office Hours: Wednesday 4-6pm and any other time by appointment

**Course overview and objective**

The subfield of comparative politics is concerned with assessing variations and making comparisons about the *internal* processes and institutional outcomes within countries. This contrasts with the subfield of international relations whose focus is on interactions between nation-states and non-state actors, major political developments such as terrorism, trade, and war at the global level.

This 200-level introductory course will cover a range of key comparative politics questions and concepts that are central to the subfield. Starting with the most important question of the state or nation-state in its modern understanding, we will proceed to address questions like: what are the causes and consequences of democracy and why are some countries democratic while others are undemocratic? Does democracy lead to development or it is development that produces democracy? Why are some countries poor while others are rich? How do we account for global differences in material wellbeing and economic inequality? Why do some societies experience social violence and not others? How has globalization impacted nation-states and what are the major forces and actors behind globalization?

The study of comparative politics is associated with at least four main frameworks of analysis: macro-historical (structural), micro-behavioral (rational choice), culturalist, and institutionalist. The subfield is also built around key concepts like the state, nation-state, democracy, authoritarianism, economic development, institutions, war and conflict, etc. This course will introduce students to these frameworks of analysis and the key conceptual tools that underpin the subfield.

Comparative politics tends to focus on three major empirical areas of analysis: public policy (what government do or don't do), political behavior (what individuals do or don't do), and governmental structures (the range of political institutions that undergird different systems). The topics surveyed in this course will touch all those three strands of the comparative politics enterprise.

The course will combine lectures with class discussions, so completing the week's assigned readings and being well-prepared to participate in class will be critical. This means that attendance

and informed class participation will be a key requirement for the course. Barring unforeseen circumstances like ill health and family emergencies, all students will be expected to attend class consistently. In the event of missing class, I should be informed beforehand. To compensate for missing class, you will email to me a **two-page** (in **Times New Roman, font 12 and single-spaced**) reading summary by 10.00 am on the day of class. Students with disabilities and in need of special assistance should inform me as well as the university office of disabilities.

In addition to class attendance and participation, there will be three other requirements: **a). three (3) response papers, b) an in-class midterm, and c) a final paper.** Each of the three response papers will be between **3-5 pages long, Times New Roman, font 12 and double-spaced**, and will analyze readings for the specific week that a student signs up for. I will provide a signup sheet for response papers on the first day of class. The response papers will not summarize the readings; rather they will make an incisive critique, highlighting the most persuasive arguments but also pointing out the shortcomings in the readings. The response papers will be due to me by email before start of class either on Monday or Wednesday depending on which set of readings you signed-up for.

The midterm will be a combination of short answer and essay questions. This will be completed in class on **Wednesday October 19, 2016** and will last approximately one hour.

The final term paper will be a “mini research paper” that addresses one of the topics covered in the course or a related and interesting research question that is worth analyzing in-depth. It will be a **maximum of 15 pages long, Times New Roman, font 12 and double-spaced.** Students will submit by email a five-page draft paper on **Monday November 21 by 6pm** and receive feedback from me before proceeding with completing the final paper which will be due to me by email on **Friday December 2 by 6pm.**

### **Grading Breakdown**

Class participation will count towards 10%

The three response papers will take 10% each and a combined 30%

In-class midterm will be 30%

The final paper will be 30%

### **Academic Integrity**

Northwestern University has a strict policy against any form of academic dishonesty otherwise called plagiarism. Northwestern University’s “Principles Regarding Academic Integrity” defines plagiarism as “submitting material that in part or whole is not entirely one’s own work without attributing those same portions to their correct source.”

See <http://www.weinberg.northwestern.edu/handbook/integrity/>

### **Books and Other Course Materials**

We shall draw readings from a combination of book chapters and journal articles. There is one textbook that all students **MUST** purchase: Patrick O’Neil and Ronald Rogowski, *Essential Readings in Comparative Politics*, **Fourth Edition (note: DO NOT buy the Third Edition).** Another book that you may consider buying is Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty.* We will read several chapters from this book,

so if you can, do buy it. Otherwise, the selected chapters will be scanned and posted on Canvas. All other course readings will be available via Canvas or shall be sent to students via email. Some readings (mostly journal articles) will be accessible directly via the Internet using web links included in this syllabus.

### **Research Study Participation Requirement**

Students enrolled in this course are required to complete a research assignment that can include up to 4 hours of research study participation. These studies require that students set up an appointment to complete participation at a laboratory on campus (or via an on-line survey). Students will learn how studies are conducted and will receive a synopsis at the conclusion of the quarter describing the study's goal, result, and relevance to the class. Students who prefer not to participate in research as a subject may opt for an alternative that entails reading any one chapter about political science research and writing a five page reaction paper. The typical chapter is about 20 pages and thus reading it and writing a five page paper should take approximately four hours.

During the first week of the quarter, students will receive an e-mail asking them whether they prefer study participation or the alternative assignment. The e-mail will also include details on how to complete either requirement. Failure to complete the requirement during the quarter will result in an incomplete. Failure to complete the requirement during the following quarter will result in a failing grade for the class. *Note that if you are enrolled in multiple classes that require participation, you only need to satisfy the requirement one time. Also, if you already completed the requirement in another course in a previous quarter, you are excused from the requirement.*

## **Topics and Readings**

### **Week One: Course Overview and Introduction**

What is Comparative Politics, and how is it different from other subfields in political science? How is comparative politics studied and what are the major frameworks of analysis? What are scholars of comparative politics most interested in explaining and why should we care?

**Monday September 19:** No class.

*Required Readings:* None

### **Wednesday September 21: Introduction to Comparative Politics**

*Required Readings*

- Mark I. Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman, "Research Traditions in Comparative Politics: An Introduction," in O'Neil and Rogowski
- Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, "The Science in Social Science" in O'Neil and Rogowski
- Ronald Rogowski, "How Inference in the Social (but Not the Physical) Sciences Neglects Theoretical Anomaly," in O'Neil and Rogowski
- Arend Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 65 No. 3 (1971)

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1955513.pdf?acceptTC=true>

Total pages of reading load for week one: ~35

## **Week Two: States, Power, and Authority**

What is the state and how do states come about? What do states do and how different are they from other authorities in society? Why are some states weak while others are strong, or are all states necessarily the same?

### **Monday September 26: Definition and Origins of the Modern European State**

#### *Required Readings*

- Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in O'Neil and Rogowski
- Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," on Canvas
- Hendrik Spruyt, *The Sovereign State and its Competitors* (Princeton 1994): 153-80

### **Wednesday September 28: State-Building outside Europe**

#### *Required Readings*

- Francis Fukuyama, "War and the Rise of the Chinese State," in his *The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution*, on Canvas
- Jeffrey Herbst, "War and States in Africa," In O'Neil and Rogowski
- Joel S. Migdal, Chapter One, "A Model of State-Society Relations," in his *Strong Societies and Weak States*, on Canvas

Total pages for week two: 111

## **Week Three: Nations, Nationalism, and Ethnic Conflict**

What are nations, and how is nation conceptually different from a state? What accounts for the birth of modern nationalism and the emergence of nation-states? Are ethnic groups nations in the modern sense? What explains the persistence of ethnic identities and why has the world seen so much ethnically driven conflict? Does ethnic heterogeneity engender social conflict and underdevelopment?

### **Monday October 3: Nationalism and Ethnic Identity**

#### *Required Readings*

- Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, on Canvas
- Kanchan Chandra, "What is Ethnic Identity and Does It Matter?" *Annual Review of Political Science*, 9 (2006), pp. 397-424

<http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev.polisci.9.062404.170715>

### **Wednesday October 5: Identity and Social Conflict**

#### *Required Readings*

- Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?"  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/20045621.pdf?acceptTC=true>
- Ashtosh Vashny, "Civil Society and Ethnic Conflict: India and Beyond" *World Politics*  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/25054154.pdf>

- James Fearon and David Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review*

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3118222.pdf>

Total pages for week three: ~150

### **Week Four: Democracy, Democratization, and Nondemocratic Regimes**

What are democratic systems of government and how do they come about? What are the causes and consequences of democracy? Why is democracy considered the best available form of government? How do we account for the recent birth of new democratic states in the 1980s and 90s especially in Africa and Latin America but less so in Asia? What are the different strands of nondemocratic systems and why have they persisted in certain places and not others?

#### **October 10: Defining Democracy and Democratic Transitions**

##### *Required Readings*

- Phillippe Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, “What Democracy Is and Is Not” in O’Neil and Rogowski, or see link below  
[http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal\\_of\\_democracy/v002/2.3schmitter.pdf](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v002/2.3schmitter.pdf)
- Samuel Huntington, “Explaining the Third Wave” in his *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, on Canvas

#### **October 12: Nondemocratic Regimes**

##### *Required Readings*

- Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, “Modern Non-Democratic Regimes,” in O’Neil and Rogowski
- Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, “The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism,” in O’Neil and Rogowski and via this link:

[http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal\\_of\\_democracy/v013/13.2levitsky.pdf](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v013/13.2levitsky.pdf)

Total pages for week four: ~80

### **Week Five: Parties, Elections, and Representation**

What are political parties and why are they important in modern politics? What are the major political party systems in modern democracies? What is the relationship between party systems and electoral politics? What is the impact of parties and elections on representation?

#### **Monday October 17: Political Party Systems**

##### *Required Readings*

- Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, Chapters 1 & 5

### **\*\*\*Wednesday October 19: In-class midterm\*\*\***

Total pages for week five: 36

### **Week Six: Systems of Government and Electoral Rules**

How are presidential systems different from parliamentary systems? What are the pros and cons of the two systems, and in what context would one work better than the other? What are the different rules through which elections are conducted and how do they impact the extent of representation?

## **Monday October 24: Presidential versus Parliamentary Systems**

### *Required Readings*

- Juan Linz, “The Perils of Presidentialism,” *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 1 No. 1 (Winter 1990)

[http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal\\_of\\_democracy/v001/1.1linz.pdf](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v001/1.1linz.pdf)

- Scott Mainwaring and Matthew S. Shugart, “Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy: A Critical Appraisal,” *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 29, No.4

[http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/levitsky/files/mainwaring\\_shugart.pdf](http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/levitsky/files/mainwaring_shugart.pdf)

## **Wednesday October 26: Elections and Representation**

### *Required Readings*

- Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, Chapters 8, on Canvas
- Joel Barkan, “Elections in Agrarian Societies,” *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (1995)

[http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal\\_of\\_democracy/v006/6.4barkan.html?pagewanted=all](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v006/6.4barkan.html?pagewanted=all)

Total pages for week five: ~78

## **Week Seven: Political Economy Development and Underdevelopment**

What causes economic development? Why did the West develop before the rest of the world? Why have some parts of the world caught up with the West while others still lag behind. We will consider the classical theories of development and underdevelopment first then turn to other alternative explanations.

## **Monday October 31: Explaining Growth and Development**

### *Required Readings*

- Adam Smith, “An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations” in O’Neil and Rogoswki
- Douglas C. North, “Institutions,” in O’Neil and Rogoswki
- Jared Diamond, “Prologue: Yali’s Question,” in his *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*, on Canvas
- Adam Przeworski and Carolina Curvale, “Does Politics Explain the Economic Gap Between the United States and Latin America?” in Francis Fukuyama, E.d., *Falling Behind: Explaining the Development Gap Between the United States and Latin America*

## **Wednesday November 2: Understanding Underdevelopment**

- Samuel Valenzuela and Arturo Valenzuela, “Modernization and Dependency: Alternative Perspectives in the Study of Latin American Underdevelopment,” *Comparative Politics*

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/421571.pdf>

- Fared Zakaria, “Culture is Destiny: Conversations with Lee Kuan Yew”

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/20045923.pdf?acceptTC=true>

Total pages for week seven: ~110

## **Week Eight: Explaining Poverty and Inequality**

Is it Institutions or Geography? Why have some poor countries continued to remain poor while others have recently made a breakthrough? How can poor countries get out of the poverty trap?

### **Monday November 7: The Institutionalist Explanation**

#### *Required Readings*

- Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Poverty, and Prosperity*, Chapters 1, 2, 13, & 15, on Canvas

### **Wednesday November 9: The Role of Geography, Ecology, and Conflict**

#### *Required Readings*

- Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Falling and What Can Be Done About it*, Chapters 1, 2, & 3, on Canvas
- Jared Diamond, “2003 Afterword,” in his *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, on Canvas
- Jeffrey Sachs, “Reply to Acemoglu and Robinson”

[http://jeffsachs.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Reply-to-Acemoglu-and-Robinson-December-1-2012\\_final.pdf](http://jeffsachs.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Reply-to-Acemoglu-and-Robinson-December-1-2012_final.pdf)

Total pages for week eight: 219

### **Week Nine: Collective Action, Social Mobilization, and Revolution**

When is group mobilization and collective action possible? Does it follow that self-interested people who share the same interests can act together? If not, under what conditions can groups of people with similar interests act collectively? How do we account for major social revolutions in world history?

### **Monday November 14: Explaining Group Action**

#### *Required Reading*

- Mancur Olsen, *The Logic of Collective Action*, Chapters 1 & 2, on Canvas

### **Wednesday November 16: Alternative Explanations; Critical Mass and Structural Analysis**

#### *Required Readings*

- Pamela Oliver and Gerald Marwell, *The Critical Mass in Collective Action: A Microsocial Theory*, Chapter 1 & 2, on Canvas
- Theda Skocpol, “France, Russia, China: A Structural Analysis of Social Revolutions,” in O’Neil and Rogowski

Total pages for week nine: 108

### **Week Ten: Globalization**

### **November 21: Defending Globalization**

#### *Required Readings*

- Martin Wolf, *Why Globalization Works*, pp3-39. on Canvas
- Jagdish Bhagwati “In Defense of Globalization” 2005 Angelos Costa Lecture

[http://www.columbia.edu/~jb38/papers/pdf/Angelo\\_Costa\\_Lecture\\_2005.pdf](http://www.columbia.edu/~jb38/papers/pdf/Angelo_Costa_Lecture_2005.pdf)

### **November 23: Problems of Globalization**

*Required Readings*

- Stiglitz, Joseph E. *Globalization and Its Discontents*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2002, pp.3-52, on Canvas
- Richard Florida “The World is Spiky: Globalization Has Changed the Economic Playing Field, But Hasn’t Levelled It” *The Atlantic Monthly* (October 2005) p. 48 – 51

<http://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/images/issues/200510/world-is-spiky.pdf>

- Stanley Hoffman, “Clash of Globalizations” *Foreign Affairs* , 81, no. 4 (July/ August 2002), p. 104 – 15

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/20033243.pdf>

Total pages for week ten: 112