

POLS 229: INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

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Texas A&M University
Fall 2017

Course Information

Number: POLS 229/501

Term: Fall 2017

Class Time: T/TR 4:40 p.m. - 5:55 p.m.

Place: Allen Building 1015

Instructor Information

Web: <http://people.tamu.edu/~nsthiago/>

Email: nsthiago@tamu.edu

Office: Allen Building 2122

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Course Summary: This course is the introductory seminar for the field of comparative politics in the political science undergraduate program. It introduces the main questions, theories, and empirical research in comparative politics. Comparative politics researchers focus on comparing internal political structures (e.g., parliaments and executives), actors' behavior (voters, parties, social movements, and interest groups), and processes (policy- and executive-making processes, socialization, diffusion, and political cultures), across and within countries, regions, and even supra-national systems (e.g., the European Union). As such, comparative politics is a vast field of research in political science. The substantive topics covered in this course include, among other topics, state formation, political regimes, systems of government, political parties and party systems, electoral systems, vote choice, federalism, and legislatures. The course's primary goal is to prepare students to better understand the world through the analytical lens of a comparative approach.

Course Requirements:

All students are required to have completed the required readings before each class, and everyone should be prepared to discuss the required readings during class. The complementary readings are optional.

- *Quizzes (15%).* I expect you to provide evidence that you have done the required readings in a thoughtful and careful manner. To help this process along, students must periodically answer a short quiz that will be provided by the instructor in the first 10 minutes of class. If you did the reading for the class you should have no trouble answering the quiz. There is a total of 10 quizzes. The instructor retains the right to determine which day(s) the class will or will not have the quiz.

- *Discussion Leadership (25%)*. Groups of five students will be assigned for one case study seminar to lead. Each member of the group will be assigned to present and discuss a particular section of the required reading, and prepare a one-page summary text based on the required section assigned (including questions at the end of the summary document, to guide the class discussion). The depth of preparation evidenced in the summary document, along with the leading of the seminar itself, will determine the student's grade. Therefore, members of the group will be individually graded. The summary document should be sent from your TAMU email to the instructor's email (nsthiago@tamu.edu) 48 hours before the case study seminar's due date. Only emails sent from your TAMU email to the instructor's TAMU email will be accepted.
- *Exams (60%)*. There will be three exams in this course. In each exam, the student will be asked to answer two out of a possible three questions based on material from both the lectures and the required readings. You will need a blue book for each of the exams. The grades for each of the exams are distributed as follows:

First exam: 10%

Second exam: 20%

Third exam: 30%

There is no final exam in this course.

Grading Policy: The grading scale is the standard ten-point scale.

90 – 100	A
80 – 89	B
70 – 79	C
60 – 69	D
59 ↓	F

There will be no extra credit assignments in this course.

Required Books: Students are required to obtain copies of the following textbooks:

- Clark, William R., Matt Golder, and Sona N. Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Thousand Oaks: CQ Press. [3rd Edition.]
- Powell Jr., G. Bingham, Russell J. Dalton, and Kaare Strøm, eds. 2015. *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*. New York: Pearson. [11th Edition.]

Complementary Books: The following textbooks are suggested as complementary material:

- Caramani, Daniele, ed. 2017. *Comparative Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press. [4th Edition.]
- Samuels, David J., ed. 2013. *Case Studies in Comparative Politics*. New York: Pearson.

Course Policies

Make-up Exams/Excused Absences: We abide by Texas A&M Student Rules 7 (<http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07>). To be eligible for a make-up exam, a student must have an excused absence that corresponds with those in Rule 7.1. Students also must follow the procedures outlined in the Student Rules for notifying the instructor of an excused absence and providing documentation.

Student Rule 7.3 states:

To be excused the student must notify his or her instructor in writing [acknowledged TAMU e-mail message is acceptable] prior to the date of absence if such notification is feasible. In cases where advance notification is not feasible [e.g. accident or emergency] the student must provide notification by the end of the second working day after the absence [the missed exam]. This notification should include an explanation of why notice could not be sent prior to the class. [...] [The student must provide additional documentation substantiating the reason for the absence, that is satisfactory to the instructor, within one week of the last date of the absence.

Per this rule, the student has until the end of the *second business day* after the missed exam to contact the instructor; this is not from the last day of the illness.

However, as this same rule states, students have *one week* from the last date of the absence to provide the instructor an acceptable documentation.

Per Student Rules 7.1.6.2 and 7.1.6.3, for injuries or illnesses, students must provide written confirmation of a visit to a health care professional from the professional. It must specify: 1) the date and time of the visit, 2) that the medical service was for an acute injury or illness that made it necessary for the student to be absent from the exam, and 3) the dates of the illness.

Please note that emails, notes, and phone calls from parents or guardians will not suffice as acceptable documentation. In addition, I will *not* accept the “Explanatory Statement for Absence from Class” form as sufficient written documentation of an excused absence.

Note that Rule 7.2 states: “The associate dean for undergraduate programs, or the dean’s designee, of the student’s college may provide a letter for the student to take to the instructor stating that the dean has verified the student’s absence as excused.” Although it states a “letter,” emailed correspondence will suffice.

A student who is absent from a scheduled make up exam must follow Rule 7.3 to schedule and take a make up exam. An exam proctored outside of the normal exam time may be of a different format than the original exam.

Attendance Policy, Attendance Survey, and Classroom Behavior: Attendance of class lectures is your responsibility. You should attend all lectures, but I will not police your attendance. If you need to miss a lecture, make sure you get the notes from another student. Because the course material revolves around lectures, your attendance is crucial in understanding the material. I will not make my notes or the slides available.

At the beginning of the semester, Texas A&M University requires professors to verify attendance in their courses. Therefore, there will be an attendance survey on *eCampus* in which you will need to

vouch that you have attended at least one lecture. Note that this survey does not affect your grade in this course, but it can affect your financial aid with the university. The professor will announce in class and on *eCampus* the timing and deadline for this survey.

In such a large group, it is important to be mindful of others. If you attend lecture, you should behave appropriately in the classroom. After the lecture begins, this means, among other things, not conversing with other students, not using your cellphone (either for calls or texting), not using your computer for anything other than taking notes on the lecture, and not sleeping. Your fellow students and the professor regard these as disruptive behaviors discussed in Student Rule 21:

<http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule21>.

Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, and Cheating:

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do.”

Students are bound by the Aggie Honor Code. Additionally, students should be aware that academic dishonesty involves acts other than plagiarism. As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one’s own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with the definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission of the person. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please consult the Aggie Honor System Office website <http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu> or the latest version of the Texas A&M University Student Rules, under the section “Scholastic Dishonesty.”

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, currently located in the Disability Services building at the Student Services at White Creek complex on West Campus or call 979-845-1637. For additional information, visit <http://disability.tamu.edu>.

Diversity Statement: The Department of Political Science supports the Texas A&M University commitment to diversity, and welcomes individuals from any racial, ethnic, religious, age, gender, sexual orientation, class, disability, and nationality. In the spirit of this vital commitment, in this course each voice in the classroom has something of value to contribute to all discussions. Everyone is expected to respect the different experiences, beliefs and values expressed by fellow students and the instructor, and will engage in reasoned discussion that refrains from derogatory comments about other people, cultures, groups, or viewpoints. For more information, visit <http://diversity.tamu.edu/>.

Course Outline:**• Tuesday, August 29**

Class canceled due to inclement weather (Hurricane Harvey).

• Thursday, August 31

Lecture 1. Introduction: Comparative Politics within Political Science

- Read over the syllabus and course expectations closely.
- Please ask any questions you have about the course logistics or the course in general.
- Assign groups of five (or six) students to lead one of the five case study seminars.
- *Complementary reading:*
Clark, William R., Matt Golder, and Sona N. Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Thousand Oaks: CQ Press. **Chapter 2** [“What is Science?”] **Pages: 15–34.**

• Tuesday, September 5

Lecture 2. What is Politics? Part 1.

Guest Speaker: Professor William R. Clark.

- Required reading:
Clark, William R., Matt Golder, and Sona N. Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Thousand Oaks: CQ Press. **Chapter 3** [“What is Politics?”] **Pages: 48–74.**

• Thursday, September 7

Lecture 3. What is Politics? Part 2.

Guest Speaker: Professor William R. Clark.

- Required reading:
Clark, William R., Matt Golder, and Sona N. Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Thousand Oaks: CQ Press. **Chapter 3** [“What is Politics?”] **Pages: 48–74.**

• Tuesday, September 12

Lecture 4. Research Design and Methods in Comparative Politics

- Required reading:
Keman, Hans, and Paul Pennings. 2017. “Comparative Research Methods,” In *Comparative Politics*, ed. Daniele Caramani. New York: Oxford University Press. **Chapter 3. Pages: 49–63.**

- **Thursday, September 14**

Lecture 5. What is Comparative Politics?

– Required reading:

Caramani, Daniele (ed.). 2017. *Comparative Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press. **Chapter 1** [“Introduction to Comparative Politics.”] **Pages: 1–18.**

- **Tuesday, September 19**

Lecture 6. Where Do States Come From? State of Nature, Social Contract, and the Origins of the Modern State.

– Required reading:

Clark, William R., Matt Golder, and Sona N. Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Thousand Oaks: CQ Press. **Chapter 4** [“The Origins of the Modern State?”] **Pages: 89–120.**

- **Thursday, September 21**

Case Study 1. Nigeria: From the Pre-Colonial Period to its Independence.

Presented by the Instructor.

– Required reading:

Scacco, Alexandra. 2013. “Nigeria.” In *Case Studies in Comparative Politics*, ed. David J. Samuels. New York: Pearson. **Chapter 9. Pages: 321–360.**

- **Tuesday, September 26**

Lecture 7. Political Regimes: Dictatorship and Democracy.

– Required reading:

Clark, William R., Matt Golder, and Sona N. Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Thousand Oaks: CQ Press. **Chapter 5** [“Democracy and Dictatorship: Conceptualization and Measurement”]. **Pages: 145–169.**

- **Thursday, September 28**

Catch up and review. The instructor will not structure an exam review. The students should use this class time to ask questions to the instructor on the material (lectures and readings) covered in previous classes.

- **Tuesday, October 3**

First Exam.

- **Thursday, October 5**

Lecture 8. Varieties of Dictatorship

– Required reading:

Clark, William R., Matt Golder, and Sona N. Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Thousand Oaks: CQ Press. **Chapter 10** [“Varieties of Dictatorship”]. **Pages: 353–400.**

- **Tuesday, October 10**

Case Study 2. China’s Authoritarian Regime.

Presented by Group 1.

– Required reading:

Mertha, Andrew. 2013. “China: How has China’s authoritarian regime managed to build and consolidate state strength in just 60 years?” In *Case Studies in Comparative Politics*, ed. David J. Samuels. New York: Pearson. [**Chapter 10**]. **Pages: 365–406.**

- **Thursday, October 12**

Lecture 9. Varieties of Democracy.

– Required reading:

Collier, David and Steven Levitsky. 1997. “Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research,” *World Politics* 49(3): 430–451.

- **Tuesday, October 17**

Case Study 3. Democracy in America.

Presented by Group 2.

– Required reading:

Kousser, Thad, and Ranney, Austin. 2015. “Politics in the United States.” In *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*, eds. G. Bingham Powell Jr., Russell J. Dalton, and Kaare Strøm. London: Pearson. [11th Edition.] **Chapter 19. Pages: 678–723.**

- **Thursday, October 19**

Lecture 10. Measuring Democracy

– Required reading:

Munck, Gerardo L., and Jay Verkuilen. 2009. “Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: An Evaluation of Alternative Indices.” In *Measuring Democracy: A Bridge Between Scholarship and Politics*, ed. Gerardo Munck. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press. **Chapter 2. Pages: 13–37.**

– Replication files:

Cheibub, Jose Antonio, Jennifer Gandhi, and James Raymond Vreeland. 2010. “Democracy and dictatorship revisited.” *Public Choice* 143(1-2): 67–101. Dataset provided by the authors.

Marshall, Monty G., and Keith Jagers. 2016. “Polity IV: Regime Authority Characteristics and Transitions Datasets, Annual Time-Series 1800-2015.” Available at <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html>.

Freedom House. 2017. “Freedom in the World 2017.” Available at <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2017>.

Coppedge, Michael, John Gerring, et al. 2017. “V-Dem Dataset v7.” Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project. Available at <https://www.v-dem.net/en/data/data-version-7/>.

• **Tuesday, October 24**

Lecture 11. Systems of Government: Parliamentary Democracies.

– Required reading:

Clark, William R., Matt Golder, and Sona N. Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Thousand Oaks: CQ Press. **Chapter 12** [“Parliamentary, Presidential, and Semi-Presidential Democracies”]. **Pages: 453–487.**

• **Thursday, October 26**

Case Study 4. The British Parliamentarism.

Presented by Group 3.

– Required reading:

Ansell, Ben, and Jane Gingrich. 2013. “United Kingdom.” In *Case Studies in Comparative Politics*, ed. David J. Samuels, New York: Pearson. **Chapter 2. Pages: 39–74.**

• **Tuesday, October 31**

Lecture 12. Systems of Government: Presidential Democracies.

– Required reading:

Clark, William R., Matt Golder, and Sona N. Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Thousand Oaks: CQ Press. **Chapter 12** [“Parliamentary, Presidential, and Semi-Presidential Democracies”]. **Pages: 487–511.**

- **Thursday, November 2**

Catch up and review. The instructor will not structure an exam review. The students should use this class time to ask questions to the instructor on the material (lectures and readings) covered in previous classes.

- **Tuesday, November 7**

Second Exam.

- **Thursday, November 9**

Lecture 13. Political Parties and Party Systems.

– Required reading:

Clark, William R., Matt Golder, and Sona N. Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Thousand Oaks: CQ Press. **Chapter 14** [“**Social Cleavages and Party Systems**”]. **Pages: 585–640.**

- **Tuesday, November 14**

Case Study 5. A Hybrid System of Government: The French Semi-Presidentialism.

Presented by Group 4.

– Required reading:

Schain, Martin A. 2015. “Politics in France.” In *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*, eds. G. Bingham Powell Jr., Russell J. Dalton, and Kaare Strøm. London: Pearson. [11th Edition.] **Chapter 9. Pages: 194–243.**

- **Thursday, November 16**

Lecture 14. Electoral Systems.

– Required reading:

Clark, William R., Matt Golder, and Sona N. Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Thousand Oaks: CQ Press. **Chapter 13** [“**Elections and Electoral Systems**”]. **Pages: 521–577.**

- **Tuesday, November 21**

Lecture 15. Federalism, Bicameralism, and Veto Players.

– Required reading:

Clark, William R., Matt Golder, and Sona N. Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Thousand Oaks: CQ Press. **Chapter 15** [“**Institutional Veto Players**”]. **Pages: 645–670.**

- **Thursday, November 23**

No Class. Thanksgiving Holiday.

- **Tuesday, November 28**

Case Study 6. Brazil: A Federal and Bicameral Government.

Presented by Group 5.

– Required reading:

Hagopian, Frances, and Timothy J. Power. 2015. "Politics in Brazil." *In Comparative Politics Today: A World View*, eds. G. Bingham Powell Jr., Russell J. Dalton, and Kaare Strm. London: Pearson. [11th Edition.] **Chapter 15. Pages: 482–531.**

- **Thursday, November 30**

Lecture 16. Representation and Legislative Studies.

– Required reading:

Kreppel, Amie. 2017. "Legislatures." In *Comparative Politics*, ed. Daniele Caramani. New York: Oxford University Press. **Chapter 7. Pages: 117–135.**

- **Tuesday, December 5**

Catch up and review. The instructor will not structure an exam review. The students should use this class time to ask questions to the instructor on the material (lectures and readings) covered in previous classes.

- **Thursday, December 7**

No Class. Reading Day.

- **Tuesday, December 12**

Third Exam.