

GVPT 280: The Study of Comparative Politics
University of Maryland
Fall 2018
LeFrak Hall 2205
Lecture: MW 10:00-10:50am
Discussion Sections: F 9:00-9:50am/10:00-10:50am/1:00-1:50pm

Instructor: Catherine Aiken
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Office Hours: by appointment

Teaching Assistants:

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Course Description

This course introduces students to comparative politics – the study of domestic political institutions, processes, and outcomes across and within countries. Comparative politics includes the comparison of different domestic political systems to enable generalizations about politics and power across borders. Important themes in contemporary comparative politics include the vibrancy of democracy, the centrality of institutions, the possibility of conflict and revolution and the power of ethnicity and identity. Students will become familiar with the major approaches to the comparative study of politics and governance, the major political regime types, and the varying outcomes of different political systems. Cases will be drawn from different countries and periods to give students grounding in the method of comparative analysis.

Learning Objectives

- ✓ Develop a firm understanding of the basics of comparative political study, including the major approaches and methods used in comparative political research.
- ✓ Gain a broader knowledge of the domestic political systems and governments, both past and present, within the global system.
- ✓ Learn about critical concepts within comparative politics, including democratization, conflict, institutions, and political culture.
- ✓ Formulate your own research questions on topics relating to comparative politics and identify relevant variables for comparative inquiry.
- ✓ Critically evaluate existing research on enduring questions in comparative politics.

Course Requirements

Attendance at all lectures and discussion sections is required. Assigned readings should be completed prior to class and must be read by Friday discussion sections. Active participation in class is expected. Class discussion must be up to academic standards and include civil, thoughtful, and respectful dialogue. Offensive, inappropriate, or disrespectful comments will not be tolerated.

Assignments and Grading

Participation – 15%

Reading Quizzes – 20%

Midterm Exam – 30%

Final Exam – 35%

Participation grade includes attendance and contributions to class discussion, especially in discussion sections.

Reading quizzes are short, in-class quizzes taken to test your understanding of the assigned readings. There will be 5 reading quizzes throughout the semester. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped from your final grade. Keeping up with the assigned readings is imperative to doing well on the quizzes (as well as participating in discussion)!

The midterm exam will take place on Wednesday, October 17 during class time. The final exam is scheduled for Tuesday, December 18 at 8:00am (fun!) so plan accordingly for both dates.

Optional extra credit assignments may be announced throughout the semester for students to bolster their final course grade.

Course Policies

Class Absences: Attendance at all class meetings is expected. Absences will only be excused due to a family emergency, religious observance, or illness. Excuses must be sent to your TA via email prior to class with documentation. If you know in advance of any scheduling conflicts, please inform your TA as soon as possible to make appropriate accommodations.

Academic Honesty: Cheating or plagiarizing will not be tolerated. I expect you to work independently on all assignments and to use proper citations in your written work. The University standards for academic honesty apply and academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to University policy. Please consult the University of Maryland Code of Academic Integrity and the Student Honor Code to familiarize yourself with the University's policies: <http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/iii100a.html>.

Accommodation of Disabilities: If you need accommodation, please let me or your TA know as early as possible; I will need written documentation from the Disability Support Service. To obtain a letter of accommodation, contact the Disability Support Service office:

<http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/>

Late Assignments & Exam Dates: All assignments must be turned in on time by the designated deadline. If assignments are turned in late, you will not be able to receive full credit for them. Exams dates are set at the beginning of the semester, so plan to be on campus for the scheduled exams. The only exceptions to this policy are serious illness and emergencies.

Course Website: <https://elms.umd.edu>. On the website, you will find a copy of the syllabus, lecture slides, assigned readings, and course announcements. Please check the website regularly.

Required Course Materials

O'Neil, Patrick H. 2018. *Essentials of Comparative Politics, 6th Edition*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Make sure to purchase the 6th edition. Book is available through bookstore as well as through Amazon. Feel free to purchase your preferred format. All additional course readings will be available online through the course website on ELMS.

Course Schedule

Week 1: August 27 & 29 - Course Introduction and Basics of Comparative Politics

**No discussion section on Friday, August 31*

- What is comparative politics? How is it a science?
- Approaches to studying politics and methods of comparative inquiry
- Conceptualization of the state

Readings:

- O'Neil, *Essentials*, Chapter 2 (p. 31-38, 46-60)
- Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation"
- Jeffrey Herbst, "War and the State in Africa"

Week 2: September 5 & 7 – What is Democracy?

**Labor Day - no class Monday, September 3*

- Conceptualizations and measurements of democracy
- Types of democratic regimes

Readings:

- Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, "What Democracy Is . . . and Is Not"
- Poloni-Staudinger & Wolf, "Similarities Between the United States and Other Democracies"
- Larry Diamond, "Is the Third Wave Over?" (p. 1-6)

Week 3: September 12 & 14 – How do we get Democracy? Theories of Democratization

**No class Monday, September 10*

- Transitions from non-democracy to democracy

Readings:

- O’Neil, *Essentials*, Chapter 5 (p. 141–146)
- Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man* (1960), Chapter 2
- Elisabeth Jean Wood, *Forging Democracy from Below* (2000), Introduction
- Samuel Huntington “Democracy’s Third Wave”

Week 4: September 17-21 – How do we keep Democracy? Consolidation & Backsliding

- What determines if democracy survives?

Readings:

- O’Neil, *Essentials*, Chapter 8 (to pg. 246)
- Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die* (2018), selections
- Scott Mainwaring and Anibal Perez-Linan, “Democratic Breakdown and Survival”
- Roberto Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk, “The Democratic Disconnect”

Week 5: September 24-28 – Comparing Democratic Institutions: Allocating Power

- Presidentialism and Parliamentarism, Majoritarian and Consociational, Unitary and federal systems

Readings:

- O’Neil, *Essentials*, Chapter 5 (p. 146-156)
- O’Neil, *Cases*, selections on United Kingdom, France, & Brazil
- Poloni-Staudinger & Wolf, “Political Institutions”
- Juan Linz, “The Perils of Presidentialism”
- Donald Horowitz, “Comparing Democratic Systems”

Week 6: October 1-5 – Comparing Democratic Institutions: Elections and Parties

- Elections and electoral institutions
- The origins and outcomes of party systems

Readings:

- O’Neil, *Essentials*, Chapter 5 (p. 156-165)
- O’Neil, *Cases*, selections on Brazil, Germany, Nigeria, & South Africa
- Arend Lijphart, “Constitutional Choices for New Democracies”
- Guy Lardeyat, “Problems with PR”
- Octavio Amorim Neto & Gary Cox, “Electoral Institutions, Cleavage Structures and the Number of Parties”

Week 7: October 8-12 – A Democratic Culture? Civic Culture and Social Capital

- The role of culture and social relations in shaping political outcomes
- Is there a cultural basis of democracy?

Readings:

- O’Neil, *Essentials*, Chapter 3 (p. 77-85, 89-94)
- Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture* (1963), Chs 1 & 13
- Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work* (1993), Ch 6
- William Sheridan Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power* (1984), selections

Week 8: October 15-19 – Review and Midterm

In-Class Midterm Wednesday, October 17

No discussion sections on Friday, October 19

Week 9: October 22-26 - Non-Democratic Regimes

- Totalitarian, Authoritarian, Communist, and Military regimes
- Competitive authoritarianism, hybrid and illiberal regimes

Readings:

- O'Neil, *Essentials*, Chapter 9 (p. 267-285)
- O'Neil, *Essentials*, Chapter 6 (p. 176-178, 184-202)
- Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism"
- Jennifer Gandhi, *Political Institutions Under Dictatorship* (2008), Ch 3
- Barbara Geddes, Erica Frantz, and Joseph G. Wright, "Military Rule"

Week 10: October 29-November 2 – Non-Democratic Regimes

- Cases of non-democratic rule
- Politics and society under non-democratic rule

Readings:

- O'Neil, *Cases*, selections on China & Russia
- Beatriz Magaloni, *Voting for Autocracy* (2006), Introduction
- Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination* (1999), selections
- Gary King, Jennifer Pan, & Margaret E. Roberts, "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression"

Week 11: November 5-9 – Contentious Politics, Revolution, and Political Violence

- Definition and determinants of revolution
- Other forms of political contention and violence

Readings:

- O'Neil, *Essentials*, Chapter 7 (to p. 223)
- O'Neil, *Cases*, selections from France, China, Mexico, Russia, & Iran
- Farideh Farhi. "State Disintegration and Urban-Based Revolutionary Crisis: A Comparative Analysis of Iran and Nicaragua"

Week 12: November 12-16 – Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Conflict

- Basis and persistence of ethnic and national identities
- Causes of ethnic and nationalist conflict

Readings:

- O'Neil, *Essentials*, Chapter 3 (p. 66-77)
- Daniel N. Posner, "The Political Salience of Cultural Differences: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi"
- James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War"
- Mihailo Crnobrnja, *The Yugoslav Drama* (1994), Chs 1, 11, 12

Week 13: November 19 – Political Economy & Development

**Thanksgiving Break, no class Wednesday or Friday*

- State and market interactions, political-economic models
- Role of economic conditions in political outcomes and stability

Readings

- O'Neil, *Essentials*, Chapter 4 (p. 100-126)
- Gregory Clark, *A Farewell to Alms* (2007), Introduction

Week 14: November 26-30 – Political Economy & Development

- Politics and economic growth in developing states
- Development, democracy, and global inequality

Readings:

- O'Neil, *Essentials*, Chapter 10 (p. 318-337)
- Daron Acemoglu and Simon Johnson, “Disease and Development: The Effect of Life Expectancy on Economic Growth”
- Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion* (2007), Chs 1 & 6

Week 15: December 3-7 – Globalization

- International organizations and policy
- Domestic responses to economic and political globalization

Readings:

- O'Neil, *Essentials*, Chapter 11 (p. 341-356)
- O'Neil, *Essentials*, Chapter 8 (p. 246-254, 258-264)
- Niall Ferguson, “Populism as a Backlash against Globalization: Historical Perspectives”
- Francois Bourguignon, “Inequality and Globalization”

Week 16: December 10 – Review for final exam

Final Exam on Tuesday, December 18 at 8:00am