

INTL 3300: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Fall 2020

T-Th 2:20-3:35pm

320 LeConte Hall/ Zoom

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Office Hours: T, 3:45-5:00pm, by appointment [on Zoom]

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Course Description:

"A patient pursuit of facts, and cautious combination and comparison of them, is the drudgery to which man is subjected by his Maker, if he wishes to attain sure knowledge."

- Thomas Jefferson

Notes on Virginia Q.VI, 1782. ME 2:97

As Thomas Jefferson so aptly noted, the pursuit of knowledge in all scientific fields is based in comparison. This course will give students a broad overview both of classic debates in the study of comparative politics and of questions the field is grappling with in the present day. Some of the topics addressed in this class include weak states, transitions to and from democracy, economic development, and the effects of institutional design on political outcomes. The term "comparative politics" often refers to the politics of countries outside of the United States, therefore most examples in this class will be drawn from developed and developing political systems around the world.

By the end of the semester, students who successfully complete this course will be able to: explain the role of controlled comparison in the scientific study of politics; understand the different analytical strategies used by comparativists to answer research questions; discuss key debates in the study of comparative politics; and synthesize this knowledge in the production of memos and in-class presentations.

Required Readings:

Articles from academic journals, which are available to you for free online or through the university library, and occasional book excerpts, which will be made available online.

There is no required textbook for this course. For an excellent general overview of debates and conclusions in comparative politics, I recommend the textbook, *Principles of Comparative Politics* (Clarke, Golder, and Golder).

Course Requirements:

- **Reading:** You are responsible for reading all assigned material for each class period. Some of the academic articles we will read are dense. While I do not expect you to understand all of the technical aspects of these articles, I do expect you to make a good faith effort to identify the argument, evidence, and conclusions presented by the authors. In rare cases, readings may be adjusted during the semester.

- **Perusall:** To facilitate discussion among your peers about the reading, at the beginning of the semester you will be asked to make a (free) account at www.perusall.com (the course ID is COHEN-ZMZ5J). Once the course roster is set, you will be assigned to a reading group. You will read materials on Perusall prior to class, leaving comments and questions – and responding to your groupmates’ comments and questions – as you have them.
- **Lectures:** Most class sessions include a short video lecture. You are expected to watch this lecture prior to the class session, with the exception of the first week.
- **Activities:** This class is organized around six group activities. You are expected to complete all associated assignments and to participate in each activity. Participation in activities with your group will occur via Zoom. You may choose to participate in these activities from the classroom when you are eligible; however, because your groupmates may not be eligible for face-to-face instruction on the same days, activities will be conducted online (see the “participation” and “special considerations” sections below).
- **Participation:** Both the quantity and quality of your participation will be considered. You may hold strong opinions about the topics we read about and discuss in this class. I expect you to follow the golden rule during discussions and treat your classmates and their ideas with the same respect you would like to receive.

There are multiple ways for you to participate each week. You can choose to:

1. Engage in group discussion about your questions or concerns about the reading using Perusall (raising at least one question and providing thoughtful responses to at least two questions or comments from your groupmates will result in full participation points for a class period)
2. Post your questions and comments to the class discussion board on eLC (raising at least one question and providing thoughtful responses to at least two threads will result in full participation points for a class period)
3. Hold Zoom discussions about the readings with your classmates. Discussions should be a minimum of five minutes in length. Simply record the discussion and send me the file for credit.

All participation in activities (including participation from the classroom) will take place via Zoom during the scheduled class period, using the “break out rooms” feature.

- **Final Exam:** The final exam will be take-home and open-book.
- **Attendance:** I will not enforce an attendance policy for this class.

If you choose to attend class in person on days you are eligible, you must sign up online at least **24 hours prior to the scheduled class time**. Once the class roster is settled, you will be assigned to an “attendance group” (currently A, B, and C; if enrollment increases, there will also be a D group). You will only be eligible to attend class on your attendance group days. If you choose to attend class in person, note that UGA requires all students, faculty, and staff to

wear face coverings over the nose and mouth while indoors and maintain social distance (at least six feet) whenever possible. If you come to class without a face covering, you will be asked to find one or to leave and participate virtually.

- **Special Considerations for Covid-19:** I would like nothing more than to be in the classroom with all of you this semester; however, the Covid-19 pandemic has made this unsafe for us and for the larger Athens community.
 1. If you experience symptoms consistent with Covid-19, or are exposed to someone who has tested positive for Covid-19, **DO NOT ATTEND CLASS**. Report your exposure and any symptoms immediately through UGA's contact tracing app and seek a test as soon as possible.

It is necessary to meet assignment deadlines in order to actively participate in group activities for this class. However, if you are ill, you might find yourself physically unable to complete your work on time. If you are sick and unable to complete your work on time, **DO NOT PANIC**. Do reach out to me as soon as possible, so we can find a solution and ensure you get credit for your work as you are able to complete it.

2. All course materials, including links to lectures and slides, will be made available through hyperlinks on the syllabus or on eLC. Readings will be posted at www.perusall.com and on eLC. The syllabus will be updated regularly. **You will not be punished in any way for exclusively participating in this class online.**
3. After Thanksgiving (November 26th), all classes will be held exclusively online.

Grades:

Final exam: 20%

Activities: 10% each [60% total]

Participation: 20%

Grade Scale:

$\geq 93\%$:	A
90-92.9%:	A-
87-89.9%:	B+
83-86.9%:	B
80-82.9%:	B-
77-79.9%:	C+
73-76.9%:	C
70-72.9%:	C-
60-69.9%:	D
$< 60\%$:	F

Laptops and Tablets:

Due to adjustments in class structure resulting from the novel coronavirus and Covid-19 pandemic, and in the interest of creating an equal learning environment for all students, all group activities will take place over Zoom. If you decide to come to class on a day when you are eligible, please bring your technology so that you can engage with your peers online.

Late or Missed Assignments:

All assignments for this course inform in-class activities and must therefore be completed on time. If you do not complete the assignments, you will receive a zero for the activity unless you have a medical excuse or family emergency.

University Honor Code and Academic Honesty Policy:

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty" found at: <https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/>. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

Class Schedule

NOTE: Activity days are denoted in bold, with an asterisk (*)

Week	Date	Topic and Assigned Reading
Week 1	August 20	<p>Course Introduction <i>Why do we compare?</i> Read: 1. This syllabus. Watch: 1. Lecture 1: Why do we compare? [watch by 8/25]</p> <p>Synchronous Zoom Chat at 2:20pm to answer your questions</p>
Week 2	<p>August 25</p> <p>August 27</p>	<p>On Science, Causes, and Making Inferences [GRP A] <i>What is science? Is “social science” an oxymoron?</i> Read: 1. Excerpt from Malici and Smith, <i>Political Science Research in Practice</i> (Ch. 1) Watch: 1. Lecture 2: On Science, Causes, and Inference</p> <p>More on the Comparative Method <i>How do we make good comparisons?</i> Read: 1. Excerpt from Malici and Smith, <i>Political Science Research in Practice</i> (Ch. 2) Watch: 1. Lecture 3: The Comparative Method</p>
Week 3	<p>September 1</p> <p>September 3</p>	<p>Understanding and Analyzing Data [GRP B] <i>How do we think about and analyze data in political science?</i> Read: 1. Arthur Conan Doyle. 1892. “The Adventure of Silver Blaze”. Watch: 1. Lecture 4: Understanding and analyzing data</p> <p>Group homework (due via email by noon, 9/8): interpreting a regression table</p> <p>Ethics and research [GRP C]</p>

		<p><i>How do we do ethical research? How does the history of (un)ethical research affect how we do research today?</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The Belmont Report 3. Understand why we have the Belmont Report: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Nuremberg, Tuskegee b. No, the problem didn't go away. Read about Guatemala <p>Watch:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lecture 5: Research ethics [in-class discussion]
Week 4	September 8	<p>Research Design Activity* [GRP A]</p> <p><i>Design a study with your groupmates to answer a research question</i></p>
	September 10	<p>Defining the “State” (with a capital S); strong and weak states <i>What is the “State”? How do States form?</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clarke, Golder and Golder, pp.90-101; 110; 115-120 <p>Watch:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lecture 6: Defining the State
Week 5	September 15	<p>Strong State/ Weak State Activity Prep [GRP B]</p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Smith, Amy Erica. 2018. “Solo reveals the weakness of the Star Wars Galactic Empire.” <p>Watch ONE of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix (better read than watched) 2. The Hunger Games 3. The Lion King 4. Black Panther 5. Battlestar Galactica (Episode 1.2 or 1.3 – “Water” and “Bastille Day”) <p>Write: Strong State/ Weak State Memo (due by start of class on 9/17; instructions on eLC)</p>
	September 17	<p>Strong State/ Weak State Activity* [GRP C]</p> <p><i>Debate: is this a strong or weak state?</i></p>
Week 6	September 22	<p>Defining Democracy [GRP A]</p> <p><i>What is democracy?</i></p> <p>Read:</p>

	September 24	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dahl, Robert. 1971. <i>Polyarchy</i>. Chapter 1. 2. Schmitter, Philippe C., and Terry Lynn Karl. 1991. "What democracy is... and is not." <i>Journal of democracy</i> 2(3): 75-88. <p>Watch:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lecture 7. Defining democracy <p>Defining Dictatorship [GRP B] <i>What is dictatorship?</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Geddes, Franz, and Wright. "Military Rule." <p>Watch:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lecture 8. Defining dictatorship
Week 7	September 29	<p>Measuring Democracy Activity Prep [GRP C] <i>What are existing measures of democracy and dictatorship? Do you think these measures are valid and reliable?</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clarke, Golder, and Golder Excerpt (pp. 152-168). 2. Freedom House methodology overview <p>Watch:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lecture 9. Measuring democracy
	October 1	<p>Measuring Democracy Activity* [GRP A] <i>How reliable and valid was your effort to measure democracy?</i></p>
Week 8	October 6	<p>Measuring Democracy Activity II* [GRP B] <i>How reliable and valid was your effort to measure democracy?</i></p>
	October 8	<p>Transitions to Democracy [GRP C] <i>When do we see transitions to democracy, and what do they usually look like?</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Karl, Terry Lynn. 1990. "Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America." <i>Comparative Politics</i> 23(1): 1-21. 2. https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/06/18/a-users-guide-to-democratic-transitions/ <p>Watch:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lecture 10. Democratic transitions
Week 9	October 13	<p>Transitions from Democracy [GRP A] <i>What is "democratic backsliding," and what does it look like?</i></p> <p>Read:</p>

	October 15	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One-third of the world’s population lives in a declining democracy. That includes the United States. 2. 30 years after the Berlin Wall fell, some former Soviet-controlled countries are dismantling democracy. What happened? 3. Bermeo, Nancy. 2016. “On Democratic Backsliding.” <i>Journal of Democracy</i> 27(1): 5-19. <p>Watch:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Lecture 11. Democratic backsliding <p>Democratic Backsliding Activity [Open group] <i>Describe democratic backsliding in countries around the world</i></p>
Week 10	October 20	<p>Determinants of Democracy and Dictatorship [GRP B] <i>What determines whether a country is a dictatorship or a democracy?</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Culture: Clarke, Golder, and Golder (excerpt from Ch. 7, available on eLC). 2. Economics: Clarke, Golder, and Golder (excerpt from Ch. 6, available on eLC) <p>Recommended:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Economics: Treisman, Daniel. 2020. "Economic Development and Democracy: Predispositions and Triggers." <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> 23: 241-257. <p>Watch: Lecture 12. Modernization Theory</p>
	October 22	<p>The Downstream Effects of Democracy and Dictatorship [GRP C] <i>How do political systems affect other outcomes?</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Economy: Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson. 2012. <i>Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty.</i> (excerpt available on eLC) <p>Watch:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This TED Talk
Week 11	October 27	<p>Special Topics: Public Opinion [GRP B]</p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asher, Herbert. <i>Polling and the public: What Every Citizen Should Know.</i> Chapter 1. 2. “How One 19-Year-Old Illinois Man is Distorting National Polling Averages.” <i>The New York Times.</i>

	October 29	<p>3. How election forecasts confuse Americans — and may lead them not to vote at all</p> <p>Watch:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture 14. Public Opinion <p>About Elections [GRP C] <i>Why do we have elections? How are elections administered around the world?</i></p> <p>Skim:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Compulsory voting around the world Felon disenfranchisement around the world Voter ID laws around the world Write in votes in the US states <p>Watch:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture 15. How the World Votes
Week 12	November 3 November 5	<p>Election Day. Go vote!</p> <p>Assignment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Write a brief reflection (1-2 paragraphs) about your experiences around the election. Due via email by 2pm, November 5. <p>Election Day Debrief Activity* [OPEN GRP – BY SIGN UP] <i>Optional synchronous election discussion</i></p>
Week 13	November 10 November 12	<p>Institutions: Parliamentary vs. Presidential Systems [GRP A]</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Linz, Juan. 1990. “The Perils of Presidentialism.” <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, 1(1): 51-69. Horowitz, Donald. L. 1990. “Comparing Democratic Systems” <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, 1(4): 73-79. Linz, Juan. 1990. “The Virtues of Parliamentarism” <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, 1(4): 84-91. <p>Watch:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture 16. Parliamentary vs. Presidential Systems <p>Electoral Rules [GRP B]</p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Excerpt from Chapter 13 in Clarke, Golder and Golder. “Elections and Electoral Systems.” (pp. 534-577) <p>Watch:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture 17. Electoral Rules

Week 14	November 17	Parties and Party Systems [GRP C] Read: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> O’Neil and Rogowski (pp. 432-436) Lupu, Noam. 2015. “Political Parties and Party Systems.” <i>Routledge Handbook</i>. Watch: Lecture 18: Parties and Party Systems
	November 19	Political System Design Activity* [OPEN GRP – BY SIGN UP]
Week 15	November 24	Migration [OPEN GRP – BY SIGN UP] Read: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Hainmueller, Jens and Daniel J. Hopkins. 2014. “Public Attitudes Toward Immigration.” <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> 17: 225-249. Watch: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture 18: Migration

November 26: No Class – Happy Thanksgiving!

REMEMBER: CLASSES POST-THANKSGIVING WILL TAKE PLACE ON ZOOM

Week 16	December 1	Research Design Due <i>You can either accept your grade on this assignment or make revisions (due by email, December 17 by 5pm)</i>
	December 3	Wrap up: synchronous Zoom chat for loose ends, lingering questions

Final Exam Due Thursday, December 17 by email, 5pm