

PSC 101: Introduction to Comparative Politics

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Office Hours: Mondays, 12:30 – 2:00 pm

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the study of domestic political institutions, processes, and outcomes across and within countries. The course surveys key concepts and major theoretical contributions in the field of comparative politics, including the challenges for democratization and democratic consolidation, the possibility of revolution, how countries vary in their political and electoral institutions and why these variations matter, and the power of social forces such as ethnicity, culture, and social capital. Country cases are drawn from different regions of the world and historical periods to ground students in the set of tools of comparative analysis.

Course Details

Readings

In this course, we will read a combination of books, book chapters, and journal articles. Students are expected to attend class and keep up with the readings. I understand that there is only so much time you have to complete assigned readings given that the class will be meeting every day. Therefore, some articles/chapters will be read in class to help you manage the reading load. The course schedule below indicates which reading are to be completed *before* coming to class. Students are not required to purchase any books for this class. All the required readings (book chapters, academic articles, etc.) will be provided by the instructor through Blackboard. *If you have any problems accessing the readings please let me know.*

Grading

- In-class participation (20% of final grade). An important part of class time will be devoted to discussing the readings. Regular and active participation is expected; I encourage bringing in not only thoughts on the readings but also questions based on parts of the readings that seemed unclear, difficult to grasp, or that you found interesting. *Students who do not feel comfortable speaking in class should contact me. Please do not wait until the last week of classes.*
- Short assignments (15% of final grade). Students are expected to write three short reading reports – each report is worth 5% of the final grade. The structure of these reports will be discussed in class. The due dates of the reports are indicated in the course schedule below.
- Midterm exam (20% of final grade). There will be a closed-book, closed-notes exam after the first two weeks of classes (June 1). There will be no make-up exam, barring serious circumstances beyond a student's control. Details of the structure of the exam will be discussed in class.

- Presentation (20% of final grade). By the end of the second week of classes (June 1), each student will be assigned a journal article. Students will have almost two weeks to read the article and prepare a 15-20 minute presentation following the same format as the short reading reports. All students will present on June 14.
- Final exam (25% of final grade). There will be a closed-book, closed-notes final exam on the last day of class (June 15). There will be no make-up exam, barring serious circumstances beyond a student's control. Details of the structure of the final exam will be discussed in class.

Academic Honesty

All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the [University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy](#). Violations of these policies will be handled with the utmost seriousness.

Course Schedule

Note: Readings marked with a ★ are to be completed before coming to class. Make sure you have access to your readings during class, as we will have regular discussions.

Week 1

May 22. Course introduction. What is Comparative Politics?

May 23. The Origins of the Modern State.

- ★ Tilly, Charles. 1985. "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime." In Peter Evans, Dietrich Reuschmeyer, and Theda Skocpol (eds.) *Bringing the State Back In*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 169-191.
- Bates, Robert. 2001. *Prosperity and Violence. The Political Economy of Development*. New York: Norton. [Chapters 3-4, pages 34-66](#).

May 24. Political Regimes: What is Democracy?

- ★ Dahl, Robert. 1971. *Polyarchy : Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press. [Chapter 1, pages 1-16](#).
- ★ Przeworski, Adam, Michael E. Alvarez, José Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi. 2000. *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Chapter 1, pages 13-30](#).
- Terry L. Karl and Philippe Schmitter, "What Democracy Is . . . and Is Not" in Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner, eds, *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. 49-62. [Make sure you bring this reading to class. There will be a discussion.](#)

May 25. Political Regimes: Types of Autocratic Regimes.

- ★ Cheibub, José Antonio, Jennifer Gandhi, and James Vreeland. 2010. Democracy and Dictatorship Revisited. *Public Choice*. 143:67-101. [Focus on Section 4.2 \(pages 83-90\)](#).

Week 2

May 29. No class

May 30. How Does Democracy Come About? Theories of Democratization 1.

- ★ Lipset, Seymour M. 1959. Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy. *American Political Science Review*. 53 (March): 69-105.
- Przeworski, Adam and Fernando Limongi. 1997. Modernization: Theories and Facts. *World Politics*. 49(2):155-183.

First reading report is due at the beginning of class: **Lipset 1959.**

May 31. How Does Democracy Come About? Theories of Democratization 2.

- ★ Samuel P. Huntington, "Democracy's Third Wave" in Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner, eds, *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. 49-62.
- ★ Geddes, Barbara. 1999. What do we know about democratization after twenty years? *Annual Review of Political Science*. 2: 115-44.

June 1. **Midterm exam.**

Week 3

June 5. Democratic Institutions: Presidentialism vs Parliamentarism.

- ★ Cheibub, José Antonio, Jennifer Gandhi, and James Vreeland. 2010. Democracy and Dictatorship Revisited. *Public Choice*. 143:67-101. **Focus on Section 4.1 (pages 79-83).**
- ★ Linz, Juan. 1990. The Perils of Presidentialism. *Journal of Democracy*. 1(1): 51-69.
- ★ Horowitz, Donald. 1990. Comparing Democratic Systems. *Journal of Democracy*. 1(4): 73-79.
- Linz, Juan. 1990. The Virtues of Parliamentarism. *Journal of Democracy*. 1(4): 84-91.

Please try your best to do the readings before class. I know it looks like a lot but the readings are short. We will have a discussion in class.

June 6. Democratic Institutions: Electoral Systems.

- ★ Arend Lijphart, "Constitutional Choices in New Democracies," in Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner, eds, *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. 162-174.
- ★ Bormann, Nils-Christian and Matt Golder. 2013. Democratic Electoral Systems Around the World, 1946-2011. *Electoral Studies*. 32: 360-369. **Read only pages 360-365.**

June 7. Political Parties and Party Systems.

- ★ Lipset, Seymour and Stein Rokkan. 1990. "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction." In Peter Mair (ed) *The West European Party System*. Oxford: Oxford UP. 91-138. **Read only pages 91-111.**

- ★ Cox, Gary and Octavio Amorim Neto. 1997. Electoral Institutions, Cleavage Structures and the Number of Parties. *American Journal of Political Science*.41(1): 149-174.

Second reading report is due at the beginning of class: Cox and Neto 2004.

June 8. Does it Make a Difference? The Consequences of Institutions 1.

- ★ Farreell, David M. 2001. Electoral Systems: A Comparative Introduction. New York: Palgrave Chapter 7, pages 142-168.
- Powell, G. Bingham and Guy D. Whitten. 1993. A Cross-National Analysis of Economic Voting: Taking Account of the Political Context. *American Journal of Political Science*. 37(2): 391-414.

Week 4

June 12. Does it Make a Difference? The Consequences of Institutions 2.

- ★ Roberts, Andrew, Jason Seawright, and Jennifer Cyr. 2012. Do Electoral Laws Affect Women's Representation? *Comparative Political Studies*. 46(12): 1555-1581.
- ★ Chang, Eric C. C. and Miriam A. Golden. 2007. Electoral Systems, District Magnitude and Corruption. *British Journal of Political Science*. 37(1): 115-137.

Third reading report is due at the beginning of class: Roberts et al 2012.

June 13. Ethnicity and Violence.

- ★ Posner, Daniel. 2004. The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi. *American Political Science Review*. 98(4): 529-545.
- Cederman, Lars-Erik, Andreas Wimmer and Brian Min. 2010. Why do ethnic groups rebel? New data and analysis. *World Politics*. 62(1): 87-119.
- Fearon, James and David Laitin. 2003. Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War. *American Political Science Review*. 97(1): 75-90.

June 14. Student presentations.

June 15. Final exam.

Final Disclaimer

The schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to ensure better student learning.