

Introduction to Comparative Politics - 1XX

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Course Overview and Goals

This introduction to comparative politics aims to expose you to the main theoretical ideas in comparative politics. Together, we will dissect theories and apply them to countries across time and across the world. In dissecting these theories, we will learn how to interpret and evaluate the quantitative evidence supporting or combating these theories. With a strong emphasis on comparing democracies and autocracies, we will examine political-economic systems, censorship, bureaucracies, political parties, voting, succession, and political violence.

Though this is an introductory course that covers a wide variety of topics quickly, I hope that you gain in-depth knowledge on at least one topic of your choosing (see Sub-Topics and Sub-Topic Seminars below). These sub-topic seminars will allow you to go really in-depth on one of eight topics in a small class setting (4-5 people) and break away from the large lecture hall and topics you might not care about.

Assessments

Each assignment point value translates into a percentage point of your final grade in the course.

Assignment	Point Value	Due Date
Participation	10 (2 guaranteed)	
Pre-Exam	2	Class 1
Sub-Topic Seminar Attendance	3	Second Half of Semester
Current Events Quizzes (x5)	15 (3 guaranteed)	Randomly Throughout Semester
Exam 1	20	Class 9
Exam 2	20	Class 19
Final Exam	30	Final Exam Day
Total Points Available	100	

Participation

While attending lectures is not required per se, your participation grade will consist of the completion, but not the grade, of five current events quizzes. Five quizzes translate into two

participation points a quiz. However, emergencies happen. I guarantee you two participation points, which allows you to miss one current events quiz. Thus, missing more than one class risks losing two more participation points **and** losing three points on the current events quiz. Attend class.

Current Events Quizzes

Throughout the semester, I will randomly give five in-person quizzes on current events. These quizzes are short and straightforward. If you are up-to-date on major news stories from around the world, these should be easy points. I recommend reading *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Economist* to stay up to date on current events.

Exams

Exams are in-class, handwritten, closed-book, short answers and essays. Exams will not trick you. But they will require you to recall the major themes, key theories, and the most important findings from our readings.

Sub-Topics and Sub-Topic Seminar

Since this is an introductory comparative politics course, we rush through and skip many topics in comparative politics. To allow you to go more in-depth on topics that interest you, below are eight sub-topics. As part of the course, you will: choose one of those topics, read and synthesize all the readings for that topic, attend a small (4-5 person) seminar with me and other students interested in the same topic to discuss (we will schedule these for later in the semester), and answer a unique question on the final exam based on the sub-topic readings and seminar discussion.

State Formation

- Olson, Mancur. "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development." *American Political Science Review* 87.3 (1993): 567-576.
- Kurrild-Klitgaard, Peter, and Gert Tinggaard Svendsen. "Rational Bandits: Plunder, Public Goods, and the Vikings." *Public Choice* 117.3 (2003): 255-272.
- Allen, Robert C., Mattia C. Bertazzini, and Leander Heldring. "The Economic Origins of Government." *American Economic Review* 113.10 (2023): 2507-2545.
- Blaydes, Lisa, and Christopher Paik. "The Impact of Holy Land Crusades on State Formation: War Mobilization, Trade Integration, and Political Development in Medieval Europe." *International Organization* 70.3 (2016): 551-586.

Varieties of Capitalism

- Hall, Peter A. and David Soskice. *Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*. Oxford University Press, 2001. **Chapters 1-6.**

Autocratic Power-Sharing

- Meng, Anne, Jack Paine, and Robert Powell. "Authoritarian Power Sharing: Concepts, Mechanisms, and Strategies." *Annual Review of Political Science* 26.1 (2023): 153-173.
- Arriola, Leonardo R. "Patronage and Political Stability in Africa." *Comparative Political Studies* 42.10 (2009): 1339-1362.
- Bandiera, Antonella, Horacio Larreguy and Jorge Mangonnet. "Family Ties, Social Control, and Authoritarian Distribution to Elites." *American Political Science Review* (2025): 1-19.
- Chen, Joy, Erik H. Wang, and Xiaoming Zhang. "From Powerholders to Stakeholders: State-Building with Elite Compensation in Early Medieval China." *American Journal of Political Science* 69.2 (2025): 607-623.

Colonialism and Democratization

- Lee, Alexander, and Jack Paine. *Colonial Origins of Democracy and Dictatorship*. Cambridge University Press, 2024. **Entire Book.**

Models of Voting (Math Centric)

- Congleton, Roger D. "The Median Voter Model." *The Encyclopedia of Public Choice*. Boston, MA: Springer US, 2004. 707-712.
- Riker, William H., and Peter C. Ordeshook. "A Theory of the Calculus of Voting." *American Political Science Review* 62.1 (1968): 25-42. **Pages 25 -28.**
- Fiorina, Morris P. "Economic Retrospective Voting in American National Elections: A Micro-Analysis." *American Journal of Political Science* (1978): 426-443.
- Anderson, Christopher J. "The End of Economic Voting? Contingency Dilemmas and the Limits of Democratic Accountability." *Annual Review of Political Science*. 10.1 (2007): 271-296.

Long Run Impacts of Institutions

- Voigtländer, Nico, and Hans-Joachim Voth. "Persecution Perpetuated: The Medieval Origins of Anti-Semitic Violence in Nazi Germany." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 127.3 (2012): 1339-1392.
- Nunn, Nathan, and Leonard Wantchekon. "The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa." *American Economic Review* 101.7 (2011): 3221-3252.

- Rozenas, Arturas, Sebastian Schutte, and Yuri Zhukov. “The Political Legacy of Violence: The Long-Term Impact of Stalin’s Repression in Ukraine.” *The Journal of Politics* 79.4 (2017): 1147-1161.
- Jha, Saumitra. “Trade, Institutions, and Ethnic Tolerance: Evidence from South Asia.” *American Political Science Review* 107.4 (2013): 806-832.

Monarchies

- Erickson, Bradley O. “Monarchical Distribution.” Working Paper.
- Kokkonen, Andrej, and Anders Sundell. “Delivering Stability—Primogeniture and Autocratic Survival in European Monarchies 1000–1800.” *American Political Science Review* 108.2 (2014): 438-453.
- Gerring, John, et al. “Why Monarchy? The Rise and Demise of a Regime Type.” *Comparative Political Studies* 54.3-4 (2021): 585-622.
- Ottinger, Sebastian, and Nico Voigtländer. “History’s Masters: The Effect of European Monarchs on State Performance.” *Econometrica* 93.1 (2025): 95-128.

Decline and Rise of Democracy

- Stasavage, David. *The Decline and Rise of Democracy: A Global History from Antiquity to Today*. Princeton University Press, 2020. **Entire Book.**

Grading Scale

I do not round grades.

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D
Point Value	>93	93 - 90	89 - 87	86 - 84	83 - 80	79 - 77	76 - 74	73 - 70	<70

Classroom Technology Policies

I do not permit laptops or phones in class. If you wish to take notes during class (you should), it will be a great time to revisit your 3rd-grade handwriting exercises. “But what about the readings, Mr. Erickson?” Take notes when you read the readings before class. Or print them. At the very least, I recommend printing the readings for your sub-topic seminars. “But what about the environmental impact of printing?” Do not worry, I donate plenty to environmental charities to offset whatever environmental cost you all incur from remaining engaged in class.

For each instance I observed you using a phone or a laptop (including dings, rings, and vibrations), I will deduct one participation point from your participation grade, which translates to one percentage point from your final grade.

How to Succeed in this Course?

Read. This course does not require written papers. Instead, you should allocate that time to reading the assigned readings, taking notes, and reviewing for exams. ChaptGPT summaries will not help as much as you think they will. Read the actual readings.

Generate a routine. Since this course is an introduction to comparative politics, and comparative politics is a massive field, we have much to cover. And you have much to read. Find set hours during the week to accomplish the readings. On average, weekly readings should take you between 2.5 and 4.5 hours. Setting aside three undistracted 90-minute blocks across the week (e.g., Tuesday afternoon, Friday morning, Sunday morning) and sticking to a reading routine will help you keep up and get ahead on readings.

Plan ahead. You know when you'll be out of town. You know when you'll go to that party with really fun drugs. You know when you'll break up with your high school sweetheart after meeting someone cute in your comparative politics class. Read ahead some weeks. This especially applies to the sub-topic seminars. You cannot wait until the night before the small seminar to read an entire book or four long articles.

Ask for help. Come to office hours. Form study groups, maybe with that cute person you dumped your high school sweetheart for. Everyone will struggle with at least some concepts and readings. So try on your own first, then ask for help.

Prioritize learning over a grade. This course is challenging. Few will receive A's. And that is okay. Don't worry about getting specific exam grades. Worry about learning the articles and books we read. Worry about learning, and you will not need to worry about grades.

Class Schedule and Readings

Introduction

Class 1 - Pre-Exam

The Comparative Approach

Class 2

- Tyler Dickovick and Jonathan Eastwood, *Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases*. 3rd edition. Oxford University Press, 2019. **Pages 1 - 22.**
- King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press, 2021. **Pages 3 - 12.**

Power and the State

Class 3

- Weber, Max. "Politics as a Vocation." (1921).
- Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Prince*. Translated by Robert M. Adams. New York: Norton & Company, 1992. **Pages 24-27, 30-31, and 37-43.**
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1967. **First Essay Section 13 and Second Essay Section 17.**

Class 4

- Tyler Dickovick and Jonathan Eastwood, *Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases*. 3rd edition. Oxford University Press, 2019. **Pages 48 - 69.**
- Herbst, Jeffrey. "War and the State in Africa." *International Security* 14.4 (1990): 117-139.

The State and the Economy

Class 5

- Adam Smith **Book I Chapters 1-3, Book III, and Book V Chapter 1.**
- Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. "The Communist Manifesto." in Tucker, Robert C., ed. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. (1978).

- James A Caporaso and David P Levine. *Theories of Political Economy*. Cambridge University Press, 1992. **Chapter 4.**

Class 6

- Michal Kalecki. “Political Aspects of Full Employment.” *The Political Quarterly*, 14(4):322-330, 1943.
- Milton Friedman. *Capitalism and Freedom*. University of Chicago Press, 1962. **Chapter 2.**
- Ben Bernanke. 2004. [“The Great Moderation”](#)

Class 7

- Acemoglu, Daron. 2003. “A Historical Approach to Assessing the Role of Institutions in Economic Development.”
- North, Douglass C., and Barry R. Weingast. “Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth-Century England.” *The Journal of Economic History* 49.4 (1989): 803-832.

Class 8

- Garland, David. *The Welfare State: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2016. **Pages 59 - 80.**
- Tyler Dickovick and Jonathan Eastwood, *Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases*. 3rd edition. Oxford University Press, 2019. **Pages 87 - 95.**

Class 9 - Exam 1

Democracy

Class 10

- Stasavage, David. *The Decline and Rise of Democracy: A Global History from Antiquity to Today*. Princeton University Press, 2020. **Chapter 11.**
- Tyler Dickovick and Jonathan Eastwood, *Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases*. 3rd edition. Oxford University Press, 2019. **Pages 122 - 145.**

Class 11 - Bring Laptops

- Coppedge, Michael, et al. *Varieties of Democracy: Measuring Two Centuries of Political Change*. Cambridge University Press, 2020. **Chapter 2 and Pages 103-104, 110-112, 115-119, and 122-129.**

Class 12

- Cheibub, José Antonio, and Fernando Limongi. “Democratic institutions and regime survival: Parliamentary and presidential democracies reconsidered.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 5.1 (2002): 151-179.
- McManus, Richard, and F. Gulcin Ozkan. “Who Does Better for the Economy? Presidents versus Parliamentary Democracies.” *Public Choice* 176.3 (2018): 361-387.

Class 13

- Ganghof, Steffen. “How Forms of Government Shape Models of Democracy and their Vulnerability to Backsliding.” *Handbook of Comparative Political Institutions*. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2024. 395-409.
- Kaufman, Robert R., R. Daniel Kelemen, and Burcu Kolcak. “Federalism and Democratic Backsliding in Comparative Perspective.” *Perspectives on Politics* 23.1 (2025): 15-34.

Authoritarianism**Class 14**

- Gandhi, Jennifer. *Political Institutions Under Dictatorship*. Cambridge University Press, 2008. **Chapter 1.**

Class 15

- Paine, Jack. “Reframing the guardianship dilemma: how the military’s dual disloyalty options imperil dictators.” *American Political Science Review* 116.4 (2022): 1425-1442. **Skip the mathematical model.**
- Finer, Samuel E. *The History of Government III: Empires, Monarchies, and the Modern State*. Oxford University Press, 1997. **Pages 15–23, 59–62, 728–37.**

Class 16

- King, Gary, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts. “How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression.” *American Political Science Review* 107.2 (2013): 326-343.
- Pan, Jennifer, and Alexandra A. Siegel. “How Saudi Crackdowns Fail to Silence Online Dissent.” *American Political Science Review* 114.1 (2020): 109-125.

Leadership Change

Class 17

- Meng, Anne. “Winning the Game of Thrones: Leadership Succession in Modern Autocracies.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 65.5 (2021): 950-981.
- Levitsky, Steven and Lucan A. Way. *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*. Cambridge University Press. 2010. **Chapter 1**.

Class 18 - Bring Laptops

- Tyler Dickovick and Jonathan Eastwood, *Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases*. 3rd edition. Oxford University Press, 2019. **Pages 208 - 221**.
- “What is First Past the Post?”
- “Party List Proportional Representation”

Class 19 - Exam

Political Parties

Class 20

- “Duverger’s Law and the Two-Party System Explained”
- Tyler Dickovick and Jonathan Eastwood, *Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases*. 3rd edition. Oxford University Press, 2019. **Pages 255 - 278**.

Class 21 - Bring Phone and Laptops

- Miller, Michael K. “The autocratic ruling parties dataset: Origins, durability, and death.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 64.4 (2020): 756-782.
- Aksoy, Deniz, David B. Carter, and Joseph Wright. “Terrorism in dictatorships.” *The Journal of Politics* 74.3 (2012): 810-826.

Bureaucracies

Class 22

- McCubbins, Mathew D., Roger G. Noll, and Barry R. Weingast. “Administrative procedures as instruments of political control.” *The Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 3.2 (1987): 243-277. **Pages 243 - 264**.
- Gulzar, Saad, and Benjamin J. Pasquale. “Politicians, bureaucrats, and development: Evidence from India.” *American Political Science Review* 111.1 (2017): 162-183.

Political Violence

Class 23

- Blattman, Christopher, and Edward Miguel. "Civil War." *Journal of Economic Literature* 48.1 (2010): 3-57.
- Tyler Dickovick and Jonathan Eastwood, *Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases*. 3rd edition. Oxford University Press, 2019. **Pages 280 - 300.**

Class 24

- Chenoweth, Erica. "Terrorism and democracy." *Annual Review of Political Science* 16.1 (2013): 355-378.
- Abadie, Alberto. "Poverty, political freedom, and the roots of terrorism." *American Economic Review* 96.2 (2006): 50-56.

Class 25

- Sánchez-Cuenca, Ignacio, and Luis De la Calle. "Domestic Terrorism: The Hidden Side of Political Violence." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12.1 (2009): 31-49.
- Harding, Robin, and Arinze Nwokolo. "Terrorism, Trust, and Identity: Evidence from a Natural Experiment in Nigeria." *American Journal of Political Science* 68.3 (2024): 942-957.

Class 26 - Flex Class As Needed

Queens or Pirates?

Class 27

- Leeson, Peter T. "An-arrgh-chy: The law and economics of pirate organization." *Journal of Political Economy* 115.6 (2007): 1049-1094.
- or
- Dube, Oeindrila, and S. P. Harish. "Queens." *Journal of Political Economy* 128.7 (2020): 2579-2652.

Class 28 - Final Exam Review and Evaluations

University Final Exam Day - Final Exam

University Resources

My goal is to create an inclusive learning environment in the course. The Department of Accessibility Services (DAS) works with students who have disabilities to provide reasonable accommodations. It is your responsibility to request accommodations. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must register with the DAS [here](#). Accommodations cannot be retroactively applied so you need to contact DAS as early as possible and contact me as early as possible in the semester to discuss the plan for implementation of your accommodations. For additional information about accessibility and accommodations, please contact the Department of Accessibility Services at (404) 727-9877 or accessibility@emory.edu.

University Honor Code

The Honor Code applies to all work submitted for courses in Emory College. Students who violate the Honor Code may be subject to a written mark on their record, failure of the course, suspension, permanent exclusion, or a combination of these and other sanctions. The Honor Code may be reviewed online [here](#).

Using an artificial intelligence program to generate any content for any assignment in this course (including, but not limited to examinations, papers, homework, and creative work) constitutes plagiarism and is a violation of the Honor Code. The use of an artificial intelligence program in this course without permission from the instructor may also constitute seeking unauthorized assistance or violate other provisions of the Honor Code. Any suspicion of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Council.