

POLC 2300-04: INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Semester: Spring 2023

Classroom: Richardson Building (RB) 108

Schedule: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays at 10:00 am – 10:50 am

Instructor: Lucia Kovacicova

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Office: Hebert Computer Lab (3rd floor)

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Wednesdays 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Course Description and Objectives:

This course offers an introduction to the Comparative Politics subfield. It is divided into seven units:

- 1) An introduction to Comparative Politics and its methods;
- 2) State, Order, and Political Violence;
- 3) Democracy, Democratic Institutions, and Public Interests;
- 4) Dictatorships and Hybrid Regimes;
- 5) Explaining Political Regimes – Culture and Economy;
- 6) Emerging Comparative Perspectives;
- 7) Political Economy, Globalization, and Social Outcomes.

By the end of the semester, students should have a good understanding of what Political Scientists know – and don't know – about these topics. The course will draw on examples from around the world and will expose students to different political systems, cultures, and traditions. The course's main goal is to prepare students for making, evaluating, and comparing arguments about politics and using sound methodological principles while doing so. Through this class, the students will learn to examine general patterns within and across countries and learn to communicate them effectively, in verbal discussions and in writing, to their peers.

Learning Outcomes:

After completing the course, students should:

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of the main Comparative Politics debates;
- Understand and appreciate the nature of different political systems, cultures, and traditions, and how these impact the political makeup of present-day countries;
- Improve their critical thinking skills in order to make, evaluate, and compare existing written, verbal, and multi-media arguments/sources of information about politics, using sound methodology;
- Learn to structure sound comparative arguments and communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing, the general patterns found within and across countries.

Class Structure:

This course is structured primarily as a lecture. However, attendance and participation are mandatory, since numerous class exercises, group discussions, and debates will be part of the learning experience. Students will be graded on their participation in these activities.

Class Requirements:

Assignment	Due Date	Percent
Attendance		5%
Participation		10%
Weekly Reflection Assignments		10%
Midterm Exam	March 6	25%
Essay Development Assignment	March 10	5%
Essay Assignment	April 17	15%
Final Cumulative Exam	May 10	30%

- **Attendance (5%):** Attendance is mandatory and extremely important to succeed in this class. You are allowed up to 4 unexcused absences; any additional absences will begin to affect your grade. If you miss a class, ask another student for the notes.
- **Participation (10%):** You will be asked to make regular contributions during class discussions, including asking questions, responding to the instructor's questions, taking part in group exercises and discussions, as well as classroom debates.
- **Weekly Reflection Assignments (10%):** You will be asked to write a total of 10 weekly reflection assignments (5 as part of in-class exercises, 5 online through Canvas) that will serve as summaries of key points from the week and help you develop your writing and analytical skills. All assignments will be 1-2 paragraphs in length and will be submitted on the end of class or online through Canvas. These are individual assignments and are *not* meant to be completed with others.
- **In-Class Midterm Exam (25%):** *You must take the midterm exam at the scheduled time, on Monday, March 6.* The exam will include material presented in class, in the readings, and during class discussions. It will be composed of multiple choice and short and long answer questions. Further instructions will be given a week prior to the exam.
- **Essay Development Assignment (5%):** You will write a one-page essay development assignment. It must list a researchable *comparative* essay question and a brief outline of your proposed argument. You **must** discuss your topic with your instructor; you can meet with your instructor at any time prior to the deadline, however your instructor must have met with you and must have approved your topic by **Friday, March 10.**
- **Essay Assignment (15%):** An essay of 4-5 pages in length (double-spaced, 12-inch font, 1-inch margins). The essay assignment will require you to conduct independent research. You will be asked to cite *at least* five (5) academic sources to be given full marks. The

essay will be due on Canvas at the beginning of class (10:00 am) on **Monday, April 17**. No late assignments will be accepted, no exceptions or extensions.

- **In-Class Final Exam (30%):** *You must take the final exam at the scheduled time, on **Wednesday, May 10, 12:00 pm – 3:00 pm**.* The exam will be *cumulative* and will include all materials presented in the lectures, in the readings, and during class discussions. It will be composed of multiple choice and short and long answer questions. Further instructions will be given a week prior to the exam.
- **Extra Credit:** Any extra credit events will be announced in class and will count toward your participation grade. To receive extra credit, you have to attend the event and write a 2-3 page reaction paper, due in class on the **Friday following the event**. The paper must answer the following three questions:
 - Who was the speaker, and what is his/her background/potential biases?
 - What did he or she say?
 - What did you think of what he/she had to say?

If you see an interesting event on campus, please notify me. I will evaluate whether it meets the extra credit criteria. If so, I will announce it in class to give everyone a chance to attend.

Readings:

The required text for this class is: **Samuels, David J. *Comparative Politics*, 2nd ed. Boston: Pearson Education, 2021.** The textbook is available through the Tulane Bookstore, either as an e-book through the First Day Complete program or as a hard-copy rental. All additional readings will be made available on Canvas.

All course reading should be completed by the beginning of each lecture for which they were assigned. Please consult the Course Schedule section for details.

Class Policies:

- **Electronic Devices:** No computers, phones, or other electronic devices may be used during class for any reason – *no exceptions*. Any such devices on your person must be *off* and put completely away. Those who do not respect this requirement will be asked to leave the class.
- **Class Etiquette:** Please be respectful of others’ learning environment. Make sure to be on time. Please refrain from eating during class.
- **Grading:** The course will be graded according to the following scale:

A	>=93	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F
A-	90-92	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66	59 &
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62	below

- **Academic Honesty:** Please refer to the Tulane University Code of Academic Conduct (<https://college.tulane.edu/academics/academic-integrity>) for details on academic dishonesty. If you have any questions, please ask. I will enforce the honor code strictly and deal severely with any violations of any kind.

Additional Information:

- **Writing Resources:** Writing is very important in this class. I *strongly* suggest that you begin any writing assignments early, edit multiple drafts, and proofread carefully before turning it in. Consider visiting the Tulane Academic Writing Centre (<https://success.tulane.edu/support/altc/academic-writing-center>) for additional support and resources.
- **Goldman Office of Disability Services (ODS):** The ODS’ mission is to provide services and promote an accessible environment to all members of the Tulane community. Students with psychological, medical/physical, and learning/developmental disabilities who need accommodations must be registered with the Office of Disability Services and follow their procedures for obtaining assistance. See: <https://accessibility.tulane.edu/>.

If you have any kind of special circumstances, such as a disability, illness or handicap, let your instructor know as soon as possible. This information is confidential. Students needing accommodations must provide a Course Accommodation Form and if applicable, an Exam Request Form (“blue sheet”) in order to schedule an exam to be taken at ODS. Any student receiving an exam-related accommodation should plan to take the exam at ODS.

- **Title IX:**

Prohibition of gender-based discrimination

Tulane University recognizes the inherent dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. As such, Tulane is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination including sexual and gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence like sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or is experiencing these types of behaviors, know that you are not alone. Resources and support are available: you can learn more at allin.tulane.edu.

Disclosures of gender-based discrimination

In order to comply with the requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Tulane University requires all faculty members to report incidents of gender-based discrimination. Please know that if you choose to confide in me, I am required by the university to share your disclosure in a Care Connection to the Office of Case Management and Victim Support Services to be sure you are connected with all the support the university can offer. The Title IX Coordinator is also notified of these disclosures. You choose whether or not you want to meet with these offices. You can also make a disclosure yourself, including an anonymous report, through the form at tulane.edu/concerns.

Statement on Confidentiality and Privacy

Tulane University is committed to protecting the privacy of all individuals involved in a disclosure of gender-based discrimination. Any and all of your communications on these matters will be treated as either “Confidential” or “Private.”

Confidential

Certain individuals and resources (see list below) are designated as confidential. Individuals and resources designated as confidential will not share any information, except in extreme circumstances involving imminent danger to one’s self or others, with the Office of Case Management and Victim Services, the Title IX Coordinator, or local law enforcement without the express permission of the disclosing party.

The Counseling Center | (504) 314-2277
The Line (24/7) | (504) 264-6074
Student Health Center | (504) 865-5255
Sexual Aggression Peer Hotline and Education (SAPHE) | (504) 654-9543

Private

Private resources means that information related to a disclosure of gender-based discrimination may be shared with key staff members of the University to assist in the review, investigation, or resolution of the disclosure or to deliver resources, accommodations, and support services. Information pertinent to the disclosure will be shared with the following Offices:

Case Management & Victim Support Services | (504) 314-2160 or srss@tulane.edu
Tulane University Police (TUPD) | Uptown - (504) 865-5911
Title IX Office & Title IX Coordinator | (504) 865-5611 or titleix@tulane.edu
Student Affairs Professional On-Call (24/7) | (504) 920-9900

Title IX Safeguards for Pregnant and Parenting Students

Title IX also provides reasonable protections and support for pregnant and parenting students. Discrimination on the basis of a student’s pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery from any of the previous conditions is prohibited by Title IX, and Tulane is committed to providing equal access to academic programs and extracurricular activities to students who might be, are, or have been pregnant. If you need support related to a pregnancy or any of the previously listed conditions, visit pregnancy.tulane.edu for more information, including a list of resources.

Student who believe that they may have experienced pregnancy discrimination can file a complaint with the Title IX Office by contacting 504-865-5611 or titleix@tulane.edu, visiting the office in Jones Hall 308, or filing a report at tulane.edu/concerns.

Course Schedule:

UNIT I: Introduction to Comparative Politics and Its Methods

Wednesday, January 18 – Introduction

- Introduction to the course
- Overview of syllabus and course requirements

Friday, January 20 – What is ‘Comparative Politics’?

- Samuels, Chapter 1, pg. 1-8.

Monday, January 23 – Methods in Comparative Politics

- Samuels, Chapter 1, pg. 8-26.
- Optional Readings:
 - John Stuart Mill, “Of the Four Methods of Experimental Inquiry,” in *A System of Logic Ratiocinative and Inductive* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974 [1843]), pg. 388-391.
 - Barbara Geddes, “How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics,” *Political Analysis* 2, no. 1 (1990): 131-150.
- **[Online Weekly Reflection Assignment #1 due on Saturday](#)**

UNIT II: The State, Order, and Political Violence

Wednesday, January 25 – What is a state?

- Samuels, Chapter 2, pg. 28-36.
- Social Contract Theories: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glgU6o4nZQc>

Friday, January 27 – Early vs. Late State Formation

- Charles Tilly, “War Making as Organized Crime,” in *Bringing the State Back In*, edited by Peter Evans et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pg. 161-191.
- Jeffrey Herbst, “The Challenge of State-Building in Africa,” in *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), pg. 11-31.
- Optional Reading:
 - Samuels, Chapter 2, pg. 36-52.
- **[Online Weekly Reflection Assignment #2 due on Saturday](#)**

Monday, January 30 – Failed States

- Jeffrey Gettleman, “As Somali Crisis Swells, Experts See a Void in Aid,” *The New York Times*, 20 November 2007, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/20/world/africa/20somalia.html>.
- Jeffrey Gettleman, “Somaliland is an Overlooked African success story,” *The New York Times*, 6 March 2007, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/06/world/africa/06iht-somalia.4818753.html>

- “Somalia No Longer a Failed State, Just a Fragile One, says UN,” *The Guardian*, 23 December 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/23/somalia-no-longer-a-failed-state-just-a-fragile-one-says-un>

Wednesday, February 1 – Political Violence: State-making or state-breaking?

- Samuels, Chapter 10.

Friday, February 3 – Two European Revolutions

- Watch *PBS Crash Course*, “The French Revolution: Crash Course World History,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITTVKwCylFY>.
- Watch *Epic History TV*, “The Russian Revolution 1917,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cV9G1QUIm7w>.
- **In-class Weekly Reflection Assignment #3**

UNIT III: Democracy, Democratic Institutions, and Public Interests

Monday, February 6 – Theory of Democracy

- Samuels, Chapter 3, pg. 55-64.
- Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), Chapter 1.

Wednesday, February 8 – Forms of Democratic Governments (Part 1)

- Samuels, Chapter 3, pg. 64-72.
- Juan Linz, “The Perils of Presidentialism,” *Journal of Democracy* 1, no. 1 (1990): 51-70.

Friday, February 10 – Forms of Democratic Governments (Part 2)

- Samuels, Chapter 3, pg. 72-82.
- Amy Douglas, “How Proportional Representation Would Finally Solve our Redistricting and Gerrymandering Problems,” *FairVote*, <https://fairvote.org/archives/how-proportional-representation-would-finally-solve-our-redistricting-and-gerrymandering-problems/>
- **Online Weekly Reflection Assignment #4 due on Saturday**

Monday, February 13 – Why do we have political parties?

- Samuels, Chapter 9, pg. 235-243.
- Watch *PBS Crash Course*, “Political Parties: Crash Course Government and Politics,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEmOUHxessE>.
- Optional Readings:
 - Omar Sanchez, “Party Non-Systems: A Conceptual Innovation,” *Party Politics* 15, no. 4 (2009): 487-520.
 - Susan C. Stokes, “Political parties and democracy,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 2, no. 1 (1999): 243-267.

Wednesday, February 15 – Social Movements and Interest Groups – “Resistance to Extractive Conflicts in Peru” (Guest Lecture by Andres Sandoval)

- Samuels, Chapter 9, pg. 225-235.

Friday, February 17 – Social Movements and Democratization – Case Study of the Velvet Revolution

- Samuels, Chapter 5, pg. 114-119.

February 20-21 – NO CLASS – Mardi Gras Break

UNIT IV: Dictatorships and Hybrid Regimes

Wednesday, February 22 – Chink in the Armor: Democratic Backsliding

- Valeriya Mechkova et al. “How Much Democratic Backsliding?” *Journal of Democracy* 28, no. 4 (2017): 162-169.
- Steven Levitsky, and Daniel Ziblatt, “How a Democracy Dies,” *The New Republic*, 7 December 2017, <https://newrepublic.com/article/145916/democracy-dies-donald-trump-contempt-for-american-political-institutions>.
- Optional Readings:
 - Ronald Inglehart, “The Age of Insecurity: Can Democracy Save Itself?,” *Foreign Affairs* 209, no. 15 (2018).

Friday, February 24 – Types of Non-Democratic Regimes

- Samuels, Chapter 4.
- **In-class Weekly Reflection Assignment #5**

Monday, February 27 – Authoritarianism vs. Totalitarianism

- Watch History Channel, “The Rise of the Nazis,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yEk6zGYwyhc>.
- Watch Discovery Channel, “Why Voters Choose Authoritarian Leaders,” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-_yKuvrfuwE.

Wednesday, March 1 – Middle Ground? Competitive Authoritarian Regimes

- Steven Levitsky, and Lucan Way, “The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism,” *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 2 (2002): 51-65.

Friday, March 3 – Midterm Review

Monday, March 6 – IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAM

UNIT V: Explaining Political Regimes – Culture and Economy

Wednesday, March 8 – The Role of Culture

- Samuels, Chapter 6, pg. 145-158.
- Kim Dae Jung, “Is Culture Destiny? The Myth of Asia’s Anti-Democratic Values,” *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 6 (1994): 189-194.

- Optional Reading:
 - Fareed Zakaria, “Culture is Destiny: A Conversation with Lee Kuan Yew,” *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 1994): 109-126.

Friday, March 10 – The Role of Religion

- Samuels, Chapter 7.
- Alfred Stepan and Graeme Robertson. “An ‘Arab’ More Than a ‘Muslim’ Democracy Gap,” *Journal of Democracy* 14, no. 3 (2003): 30-44.
- [Essay Development Assignment due](#)

Monday, March 13 – The Role of Nationalism – “Transnationalism in Russia” (Guest Lecture by Antonio Baiz)

- Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies, “Grassroots Nationalism in Contemporary Russia,” 25 March 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-BnVVw8NPs>

Wednesday, March 15 – Original Modernization Theory and Its Flaws

- Samuels, Chapter 5, pg. 119-122.
- W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), pg. 1-12.

Friday, March 17 – New Version of Modernization Theory?

- Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, and George Downs, “Development and Democracy,” *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 5 (2005): 77-86.
- Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, “How Development Leads to Democracy: What We Know About Modernization,” *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 2 (2009): 33-48.
- [Online Weekly Reflection Assignment #6 due on Saturday](#)

UNIT VI: Emerging Comparative Perspectives

Monday, March 20 – Gender and Politics

- Samuels, Chapter 8.

Wednesday, March 22 – LGBTQ+ Politics

- Paulina Barcyszyn-Madziarz and Róża Norström, “Discourse on LGBTQ issues in the Polish presidential campaign (2020): The perception of the LGBTQ community and foreign media,” in *Gender and LGBTQ Issues in Election Processes: Global and Local Contexts*, edited by Paulina Barcyszyn-Madziarz and Przemysław Żukiewicz (London: Routledge, 2022).

Friday, March 24 – Race and Politics

- Samuels, Chapter 6 – “What are the main forms of political identity?,” pg. 141.
- International Context: Hyun Jin Kim, “Politics of Race in East Asia: The Case of Korea and the Chinese community in South Korea,” *Provincial China* 4, no. 1 (2012).
- [In-class Weekly Reflection Assignment #7](#)

UNIT VII: Political Economy, Globalization, and Social Outcomes

Monday, March 27 – How do states promote economic development?

- Samuels, Chapter 11.

Wednesday, March 29 – What regimes are better at economic development?

- Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi, “Political Regimes and Economic Growth,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 7, no. 3 (1993): 51-69.

Friday, March 31 – Should countries help each other grow?

- Kim Yi Dionne, “Here’s What Africans Think About China’s Influence in Their Countries,” *The Washington Post*, 28 October 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/10/28/heres-what-africans-think-about-chinas-influence-in-their-countries/?utm_term=.847caa9fc4e8.
- [In-class Weekly Reflection Assignment #8](#)

April 1 – April 9 – NO CLASS – Spring Break

Monday, April 10 – Can a state develop too fast?

- Alexander Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), Chapter 1.

Wednesday, April 12 – The Resource Curse

- Michael Ross, “Blood Barrels: Why Oil Wealth Fuels Conflict,” *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 3 (May-June 2008): 2-8.
- William Finnegan, “Venezuela, a Failing State,” *The New Yorker*, 14 November 2016, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/11/14/venezuela-a-failing-state>.
- Optional:
 - Listen to *NPR’s Planet Money Podcast*, “Economists Diagnosis Libya With ‘Resource Curse,’” <https://www.npr.org/2011/02/25/134048260/Libyas-Economy>.

Friday, April 14 – Dependency Theory

- Andre Gunder Frank, “The Development of Underdevelopment,” in *Promise of Development*, edited by Peter K. Klarén and Thomas J. Bossert (Boulder: Westview, 1986), pg. 111-123.

Monday, April 17 – Why do we have redistributive policies?

- Samuels, Chapter 12.
- [Essay Assignment due on Canvas](#)

Wednesday, April 19 – Differences Between Welfare States

- Listen to *Freakonomics Podcast*, “What are the Secrets of the German Economy – and Should We Steal Them?,” <http://freakonomics.com/podcast/secrets-german-economy-steal/>.

Friday, April 21 – Debate: Is there a ‘better’ system?

- Russell Shorto, “Going Dutch: How I learned to Love the European Welfare State,” *The New York Times*, 29 April 2009, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/03/magazine/03european-t.html>.
- **Online Weekly Reflection Assignment #9 due on Saturday**

Monday, April 24 – Political, Economic, and Cultural Globalization

- Samuels, Chapter 13.

Wednesday, April 26 – The Post-2007 Economic Crisis

- Joseph Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality: How Today’s Divided Society Endangers Our Future* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2012), Preface.

Friday, April 28 – Political Economy and the COVID-19 Pandemic

- Henry Farrell and Abraham Newman, “Will the Coronavirus End Globalization as We Know It?,” *Foreign Affairs*, 16 March 2020, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/world/will-coronavirus-end-globalization-we-know-it>
- Daniel W. Drezner, “Why COVID-19 Didn’t Change World Politics,” *Foreign Policy*, 29 September 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/09/29/covid-19-pandemic-geopolitics-international-relations-economics/>
- Optional Video:
 - The CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies, “Political Economy of the COVID Pandemic,” 22 September 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jfV40mCjnik>
- **In-class Weekly Reflection Assignment #10**

Monday, May 1 – Political Economy and Subnational Governments

- Rodrigo Tavares, “Forget Nations: Cities Will Transform the Way We Conduct Foreign Affairs,” *United Nations University*, 10 November 2016, <https://unu.edu/publications/articles/forget-the-nation-state-cities-will-transform-the-way-we-conduct-foreign-affairs.html>.
- Listen to *NPR’s Planet Money Podcast*, “Kansas City vs. Kansas City,” <https://www.npr.org/sections/money/2018/11/16/668769284/episode-699-kansas-city-vs-kansas-city>

Wednesday, May 3 – Final Review

Final Exam: Wednesday, May 10, 12:00 pm – 3:00 pm