

POLI 11D

Introduction to Comparative Politics*

Lecture: MW 12:00pm - 12:50pm.

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Introduction

Welcome to POLI 11D: introduction to comparative politics. Our focus in this class is on understanding the diversity of government types and their performance. “Comparative” refers to contrasts and comparisons across political systems, typically comparing countries or states. We will examine the nature of democratic and non-democratic systems, identify key features and variations within each type, and consider the ways that different types perform and persist. Rather than focusing on one or two countries, we will take a system-level approach, examining many different cases as we explore these topics.

Our methods will be equally diverse, as we will examine the implications of single case studies, large-n cross-national analyses, and everything in-between.

In the first part of the course, we begin with a discussion of state and regime types and examine trends in democratization - and anti-democratization. In the second module, we will focus on democratic regimes and the wide variety of forms they take. We will consider which forms work best in which circumstances, as well as their vulnerabilities. In the last section of the course, we will discuss several special topics, including varied approaches to addressing racial and gender equality, colonial legacies, and the future of mass democracy in an information and social media age.

*Last updated Friday 5th May, 2023.

Course Objectives

After completing this course, students will:

1. Understand and be able to explain and categorize regime types, explain their emergence, change, and decline, and their impacts on citizenry.
2. Understand the varieties of democracy, how they work, and their strengths and weaknesses.
3. Demonstrate comprehension of emerging challenges to democracies and how they are being addressed

Reasons to take this course

All of our experiences are increasingly global. All of you may find yourselves working in other parts of the world in the near future. The University of California has a goal that 30% of you will participate in study abroad programs. Many students have global familial connections. As our lives are increasingly international and connected, this course will help you understand the political contexts and challenges in other countries.

Preparation

There are no prerequisites at UCSD for this course.

Study Methods

Read. Think. Discuss. Repeat

Every student can earn any grade they want in this course. The teaching staff are absolutely committed to supporting your success and will work with you to achieve your goals. We encourage you to reach out to us with any questions or issues.

Evaluation

- Two in-class Midterm Exams - 25% each, for a total of 50%

There will be two in-class midterms, one on April 26th and one on May 24th. Each will count for 25% of your grade. These midterm exams must be taken in-person (conditional on campus COVID policy) and cannot be rescheduled.

- Final Exam - 35%

There will be a cumulative final exam per the Schedule of Classes. It will be worth 35 percent of your grade. Per University policy, the exam cannot be rescheduled and you should plan your travel accordingly.

- Discussion, Section, Short Assignments, and Quizzes - 15%

Fifteen percent of your grade will be determined by quizzes, short writing assignments, and participation in section and discussions. Note that section attendance will be taken and will be part of this 15%.

There may be additional extra credit available for participation in discussion boards.

Late Assignments and Exams

Late assignments and examinations will not be accepted. Please plan your quarter accordingly. Medical and family emergencies will be accommodated with standard documentation and conditions.

Policy on Academic Integrity

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. Cheating, plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action consistent with University rules and regulations. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with University regulations regarding plagiarism and academic dishonesty.

Syllabus

The syllabus and course outline is intended to provide an overview of the course. In particular, some topic order and dates may change. Official policy and schedule are always those made in class and as per the official university academic calendar.

Communications

We will use the university's online classroom system, at <https://canvas.ucsd.edu>. Assignments, updates, and other information will be posted there during the quarter. Please login regularly for updates. Please also post general questions there so that all students can see your question and the teaching staff's response. Any issues or questions that you wish to raise privately should be sent to a member of the teaching staff via email or raised in office hours as appropriate. Per university policy, limit your use of online class resources to appropriate academic activities.

The instructor and Teaching Assistants will all offer office hours. To maximize accessibility, we have spread our office hours across the week, with one of us holding office hours every day of the week. You may attend office hours of any teaching assistant, not just your own. You are also always welcome to visit Professor Desposato's office hours.

Readings

All readings are available online at reserves.ucsd.edu.

To access these, you may need to establish a virtual private network, or VPN, connection to UCSD. See Blink for details on how to set this up.

Format

This class will meet in both lecture and section. Lecture will consist of two 50-minute meetings per week, scheduled for 11:00am-11:50am, Monday and Wednesday. There will be no class on Memorial Day, May 29, 2023. Section will consist of a 50 minute meeting with a teaching assistant in a smaller group.

Lectures will be recorded by the university's podcast system, so that you may be able to watch and listen to lectures whenever you wish. You are encouraged to attend, but should you ever be unable to make it to class, you can listen to the podcast and review the lecture slides. A link to the podcast will be on the course website. Lecture notes will also be posted on the course website. While the podcast and lecture notes are intended to help you study and make up for any class you may miss, they are not an obligation or commitment of the university or the instructor and students should always plan on attending class. Any problems caused by a failure of the podcast system will not be considered grounds to waive any requirements or due dates.

Course Schedule and Assignments

Some readings pending: stand by and check the syllabus for updates!!!

Module 1: States, Regimes, Nations, Transitions, and Authoritarianism

- April 3: Introduction

Require Readings: None

- April 5: The Study Of Comparative Politics

Required: Lijphart (1971); Huber (1996, Pages 14-16); Humphreys (2017, Games 1 and 2); Gerring (2004)

Recommended: Bachrach and Baratz (1962); Shepsle and Boncheck (1997, pp. 197-219, 260-96); Rogowski (1995, Pages 467-70); King, Keohane and Verba (1994); Humphreys (2017, Game 3); Hall and Taylor (1996)

- April 10: States and Nations

Required Readings: Tilly (1985, Pages 169-191); Weber (1946); Hobbes (1651, Chapter XIII); Locke (1689, Chapters 7 and 8)

Recommended Readings: Olson (1993) Humphreys (2017, Games 4, 5, and 6); Stepan, Linz and Yadav (2010)

- April 12 Regimes and Waves of Democracy
Required Readings: Huntington (1993, 3-30); Linz and Stepan (1996, 38-54); Levitsky and Way (2002)
- April 17: Transitions to and from Democracy
Geddes (1999); Waldner and Lust (2018)
Recommended: Humphreys (2017, Games 42, 43, and 44) ; Rustow (1970); Carothers (2002); O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986)
- April 19: Authoritarian Politics
Required: Reuter and Robertson (2015); Gandhi and Przeworski (2007); Humphreys (2017, 39); O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986, Pages TBD)
Recommended: Pereira (2005); Moustafa (2009); Hilbink (2007); Desposato (2001) ; Humphreys (2017, Game 39)
- April 24: The Case for Democracy
Required:
Nathan (2003*b*); Pei (2006); Sen (1999)
Recommended:
Jolly and Ray (2006); Olson (1965); Nathan (2003*a*); White (2000)
- April 26: Midterm #1

Module 2: Varieties of Democracies and Their Consequences

- May 1 & 3 Presidentialism and Parliamentarism
Required: Linz (1990); Mainwaring and Shugart (1997); Castle and Erlanger (2010); Peters and Baker (2013)
Recommended: Crisp, Desposato and Kanthak (2011), Krehbiel (1998, p 1-50)
- May 8: Federalism
Required: Volden (2004)
Recommended: Riker (1975)
- May 10 & 15: Electoral Systems
Required: Blais and Massicotte (1996); Austen (2015); The Economist (2015), Lijphart (1999, Chapter 8)
Recommended: Humphreys (2017, Games 8, 9, 11, 12) Shugart and Wattenberg (2003)

- May 17: Political Parties
Required: Stokes (1999), Lijphart (1999, Chapter 5)
Recommended: Mair (1990); Duverger (1990); Kirchheimer (1990); Mainwaring (1990); Katz and Mair (1995); Tamas (2008); Dalton, Farrell and McAllister (2011); Gunther and Diamond (2003)
- May 22 (If we get that far): Political Culture and Democracy
Required: Inglehart and Norris (2003); Putnam (1993)
- May 24: Midterm #2
- May 29: Memorial Day Holiday

Module 3: Special Topics

- May 31 and June 5: Representation of Underrepresented Groups
Required: Dahlerup et al. (2013, Pages 15-34), Rosen (2013); Canon (1999)
Recommended: Tripp (2006), Htun (2015, Chapter 2), Mansbridge (1999); Dovi (2002); Zalta (2018)
- June 7 Social Media and the future of democracy
Required: Farrell (2012)

Final examination, June 14 , 2023 - see schedule of classes for official time and location

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