

POLI 130
INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Spring 2018
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Instructor: Jelle Koedam (koedam@unc.edu)
Class times: Tuesday & Thursday, 9:30-10:45am
Room: Phillips 247
Office hours: Wednesday, 9:30am-12:30pm, Global Cup Café (GEC/FedEx)

Course Description & Objectives

This course provides an introduction to the important themes of one of the major subfields of Political Science, Comparative Politics. It is designed to familiarize students with the core themes and theories relevant to the study of politics around the world. Over the course of the semester, we will cover concepts like power, nationalism, democracy, and authoritarianism, and attempt to answer questions such as: Why are some countries able to successfully become democratic, while others fail? In what different ways can elections be organized? And how can divisions in society—and the tensions they produce—be alleviated? We will use examples from all regions of the world along the way. The course is divided in four parts:

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| 1) Core Concepts & Processes | (January 11 – January 25) |
| 2) Democracy & Democratization | (January 30 – February 22) |
| 3) Authoritarianism & Contentious Politics | (March 6 – March 29) |
| 4) Contemporary Issues & Challenges | (April 3 – April 24) |

Part 1 provides an overview of the most fundamental concepts of Comparative Politics, as well as the comparative method, and lays the foundation for the remainder of the semester. Part 2 disentangles patterns of democratization and examines the varieties in which democratic institutions can be set up, such as, for instance, electoral systems. Part 3 covers its counterpart, authoritarianism, and other forms of political suppression, violence, and conflict. Finally, Part 4 looks at the contemporary challenges to the status quo, be it in democratic regimes or otherwise, like populism, globalization, and terrorism.

Besides educating students about areas of the world that they might be less familiar with, this course is intended to provide them with some of the historical knowledge necessary for understanding what *has* happened and *is* happening in the world today, help them learn how to independently assess the merits of various political institutions, and allow them to practice analyzing people's actions and current events. Consequently, this course will consist of a combination of interactive lectures, small group activities, and large group discussions.

Readings

There is one required textbook for this course: Patrick O’Neil (2018) *Essentials of Comparative Politics* [Sixth edition]. New York: W.W. Norton and Company. Older editions of this book are also acceptable, but know that content may be outdated and page numbers will have changed. Other readings will be made available on the course Sakai website or can be accessed through the UNC Library.

Attendance

Attendance and participation are required, and I will take attendance. Excused absences are acceptable (medical, sports, etc.), but do notify me beforehand and provide the proper verification. You are allowed to have three unexcused absences over the course of the semester. After that, every additional absence will lead to a half a letter grade, 5-point deduction in your participation grade.

Classroom Policies

Tablets, laptops, and cell phones are *not* allowed during lecture. While I know that some of you might prefer to take notes on your computer, it is easy to get distracted, not least for your classmates. In addition, evidence suggests that students are better able to remember course material when taking handwritten notes, so all the more reason to go old school! On occasion you may need your laptop or phone for in-class assignments, however, so please do bring them along.

This next one should be pretty straightforward, but to be sure: Please be respectful. Different opinions are healthy and welcome in the classroom. Moreover, do not hesitate to ask questions, both in and outside of class. Questions are as important as general comments when it comes to participation, so ask away! I am always available to answer your questions over email, but prefer that you come see me after class or during office hours. In most cases it is simply easier to help you when we sit down in person. Note that the primary way for me to communicate with you outside of class is through email, so please make sure that you regularly check your UNC email.

Finally, every instructor has his/her pet peeves. Mine are 1) getting questions for which the answer is unmistakably in the syllabus, and 2) receiving emails that lack any sort of proper salutation and/or valediction (i.e. a “hello” or “bye”). I am always happy to answer your emails, and generally do so promptly, but please be professional when reaching out.

Honor Code

As always, the University’s Honor Code applies to all course work. This means that all work must be original and completely your own – plagiarism, cheating, and related violations will not be tolerated. For more information on the honor code, please visit <http://honor.unc.edu/>. You might want to familiarize yourself with the concept and practice of plagiarism to make sure that you avoid it. Take a look at the library’s tutorial (<http://www.lib.unc.edu/instruct/plagiarism/>) and do not hesitate to ask me if you have any questions.

Course Requirements

Now, for the important part, the breakdown of your final grade for this class is as follows:

- Participation (15%)
- Final paper (20%)
- Short papers (10%)
- Midterm (25%)
- Final (30%)

As said, **attendance** and **participation** are required (15% of final grade). Participation, like the other components of your final grade, is evaluated comparatively. This means that ‘just’ showing up to class is by no means sufficient to receive an A. There are many ways to show you are an engaged student, though, and to improve your participation grade, including coming to lecture prepared, asking questions in class, actively participating in group assignments, and stopping by during office hours.

To lessen the load of the writing requirement for this course (for both you and me!), you will write more than one paper over the course of the semester. A longer, 6-page **final paper** (20% of your final grade) is due towards the end of the semester, on Tuesday, April 17. A short (half a page) paper proposal is due on Thursday, March 22. I will spend some time in lecture to discuss how to go about writing an academic paper.

In addition to the final paper, you will write two, 2-page **short papers**. Not only do these papers allow you to explore more topics in-depth, the assignments will also help you to improve your academic writing skills. The full prompts for all papers, including the final paper, will be made available at a later date. The deadlines for the two short papers are Tuesday, January 30, and Tuesday, February 20. Combined, the two papers account for 10% of your final grade.

The **midterm** will take place on Thursday, March 1, and covers all course material up to then. The midterm counts for 25% of your final grade. Further information about the format of the exam will be provided during the semester.

Your **final exam** is scheduled for Friday, May 4, and makes up 30% of your final grade. As always, the final exam is cumulative and covers all course material, but the emphasis will be on the second half of the class. As with the midterm, more information will be provided in time.

In line with university policy, I cannot discuss grades over email, so please come see me during office hours if you have any questions. If you want me to regrade an assignment or answer, you will need to provide me with a written request (hard copy or email) with a detailed justification.

I use the following grade scale:

A	94 – 100	B-	80 – 83	D+	67 – 69
A-	90 – 93	C+	77 – 79	D	60 – 66
B+	87 – 89	C	74 – 76	F	0 – 59
B	84 – 86	C-	70 – 73		

Important Dates

- Short paper #1 Tuesday, January 30
- Short paper #2 Tuesday, February 20
- Midterm: Thursday, March 1
- Paper proposal: Thursday, March 22
- Final paper: Tuesday, April 17
- Final exam: Friday, May 4

Course Schedule

Please note that the schedule is tentative, and that I reserve the right to make changes.

1) Core Concepts & Processes

Thu 11 January The Comparative Method

- O’Neil (2018) “Chapter 1: Introduction”

Tue 16 January Power

- Lukes (2005 [1974]) *Power: A Radical View*, p. 14-29

Thu 18 January The Modern State

- O’Neil (2018) “Chapter 2: States”

Tue 23 January Nationalism

- O’Neil (2018) “Chapter 3: Nations and Society”, p. 62-77

Thu 25 January Democracy

- O’Neil (2018) “Chapter 5: Democratic Regimes”, p. 134-141
- Lijphart (2012 [1999]) *Patters of Democracy*, p. 1-8

2) Democracy & Democratization

Tue 30 January Democratization I

*** SHORT PAPER #1 DUE (in class) ***

- O’Neil (2018) “Chapter 5: Democratic Regimes”, p. 141-146
- Geddes (2009) *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, “What Causes Democratization?” [skim]

Thu 1 February Democratization II

- O’Neil (2018) “Chapter 10: Developing Countries”

Tue 6 February Presidential systems

- O’Neil (2018) “Chapter 5: Democratic Regimes”, p. 146-156
- Lijphart (2012 [1999]) *Patters of Democracy*, p. 105-129

Thu 8 February Parliamentary systems

- No new readings (same as previous lecture)

- Tue 13 February** Legislatures & Federalism
- Lijphart (2012 [1999]) *Patters of Democracy*, p. 174-203
- Thu 15 February** Electoral systems
- O’Neil (2018) “Chapter 5: Democratic Regimes”, p. 156-165
- Tue 20 February** Political parties
- *** SHORT PAPER #2 DUE (in class) ***
- Boix (2009) *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, “The Emergence of Parties and Party Systems”
- Thu 22 February** Ideologies
- O’Neil (2018) “Chapter 3: Nations and Society”, p. 77-95
- Tue 27 February** Review
- Thu 1 March** *** MIDTERM (in class) ***

3) Authoritarianism & Contentious Politics

- Tue 6 March** Authoritarianism
- O’Neil (2018) “Chapter 6: Nondemocratic Regimes”
- Thu 8 March** Hybrid regimes
- Diamond (2002) “Thinking About Hybrid Regimes”
- Tue 13 March** * No class, Spring Break
- Thu 15 March** * No class, Spring Break
- Tue 20 March** (Post-) Communism
- O’Neil (2018) “Chapter 9: Communism and Postcommunism”
- Thu 22 March** Political violence
- *** PAPER PROPOSAL DUE (in class) ***
- O’Neil (2018) “Chapter 7: Political Violence”
- Tue 27 March** Political economy
- O’Neil (2018) “Chapter 4: Political Economy”, p. 96-118
- Thu 29 March** Inequality
- O’Neil (2018) “Chapter 4: Political Economy”, p. 118-132

4) Contemporary Issues & Challenges

- Tue 3 April** Political diversity
- Htun (2004) “Is Gender like Ethnicity? The Political Representation of Identity Groups”
- Thu 5 April** * No class, away for conference

- Tue 10 April** Globalization
- O’Neil (2018) “Chapter 11: Globalization and the Future of Comparative Politics”
- Thu 12 April** The decline of the state?
- O’Neil (2018) “Chapter 8: Developed Democracies”
- Tue 17 April** Populism & extremist politics
- *** FINAL PAPER DUE (in class) ***
- Readings to be determined
- Thu 19 April** Political disenchantment
- Readings to be determined
- Tue 24 April** Terrorism
- Readings to be determined
- Thu 26 April** Review
- Fri 4 May** *** FINAL EXAM (8:00am (!), Phillips 247) ***