Introduction to Comparative Politics

Fall 2018

INTL 3300

Department of International Affairs
University of Georgia

Professor Megan Turnbull   Class: T/Th, 3:30-4:45, Candler Hall 115
Email: megan.turnbull@uga.edu   Office Hours: T/Th, 5-6pm or by appt.

COURSE DESCRPTION

Why do some countries hold elections while others do not? Why are some states able to provide security and welfare to their citizens while others struggle to do so? Why are some countries plagued by violence while others enjoy internal peace? These questions have long animated the field of comparative politics and are among the several of which we will explore this semester. This course will provide students with a firm foundation in the subfield of comparative politics, preparing them for more specialized courses on the topics in the course schedule below. The course has two main objectives:

   1. To familiarize students with the importance of theory for describing, explaining, and understanding political processes. After taking this course, students should be able to distinguish between different theoretical perspectives and evaluate the merit of evidence used to support them.

   2. To provide students with an overview of the debates and issues in comparative politics. Students should be able to understand the basis of these debates as well as take and support positions on them.

READINGS

All readings will be accessible through eLearning Commons. As important current events unfold throughout the term, I will post short newspaper articles and other links on eLearning Commons and notify students about them by email. Reading these articles is also a requirement of this course. I will post all lecture slides on eLearning Commons- if not before class, then immediately after.

Some of the readings are dense and involve advanced statistics and formal modeling. You are not expected to fully grasp the mathematics and statistical models in the readings; indeed, we will spend very little time on them in class. Rather, you should focus on absorbing the logic and internal coherence of the argument being presented and the evidence used to support it. You are strongly encouraged to bring any questions about jargon, concepts, argumentation, or anything else either in class or my office hours.

REQUIREMENTS

Assignment	Description	% of Final Grade	Due Date
Active participation & attendance	Attendance is mandatory; see note below on participation	20	-
Pop quizzes	Short answer questions; 5 quizzes total	25	-
Rough draft of midterm paper	4-6 pages double spaced pages	10	October 12
Peer feedback on midterm paper	~1 page per person	10	October 16
Midterm paper	5-6 double spaced pages	15	October 22
Final paper	7-8 double spaced pages	20	December 14

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

In order to earn a strong participation grade, you should do the following:

1. Attend class.

Both lecture and class discussions will be an important part of this course. Class attendance is thus required in order to do well in the course. Attendance will be recorded for each class, and will constitute a portion of your participation grade. You can miss two classes, no questions asked, with no penalty. In the absence of exceptional circumstances, all subsequent missed classes will be reflected in your participation score. Regular tardiness and excessive bathroom breaks will reduce your participation grade.

2. Read the assigned materials.

The course schedule details course reading assignments day-by-day. Students are expected to have read the assigned material before class and bring the readings to class. For most readings, you should be able to succinctly answer the following:

- What is the research question(s)? What is the dependent variable?
- What is the argument?
- What evidence do the authors draw on to evaluate their argument?
- What are some potential criticisms? You might consider:
    - Alternative explanations: what else might explain these findings?
    - Logic and coherence of the argument
    - Biases in the data: selection bias, omitted variable bias, etc.

Preparing answers to these questions as well as the "guiding questions" in the course schedule, below, will ensure that you are prepared for class discussion and will also assist you in class activities.

3. Actively participate in class.

Students will maximize the course's benefits by actively engaging in class discussions and activities. It is the responsibility of the student to raise questions when something is unclear. Regular and active participation will be recorded during each class meeting, and will constitute a portion of your participation grade. Your participation should reflect that you have carefully done the readings for the day. To give you a sense of the breakdown of the participation grade:

A range: Attend and participate in every class; participation reflects that you have done the
    readings

B range: Attend and participate in most classes; participation reflects that you have done the
    readings

C range: Attend most classes and participate about 50 percent of the time or less

D range: Attend about 50 percent of the classes; rarely participate

F: Absent more often than present; rarely participate

If you have any questions or concerns about participation, you are encouraged to bring them to me early in the semester.

POP QUIZZES

The purpose of the pop quizzes is to test your knowledge of key concepts and theoretical debates in a low-stress format. There will be six pop quizzes during the semester; at the end of the semester, only five will count as I will drop the lowest grade. Each quiz is worth 5 percent of your final grade. Quizzes will be 4-5, short answer questions and you will have 20 minutes to complete them. All quizzes will be at the start of class and there will be no make-ups.

MIDTERM AND FINAL PAPERS

In lieu of a midterm and final exam, there will be a midterm and final paper. For the midterm paper, you will be asked to critically evaluate a piece of political science scholarship from the course schedule, below. For the final paper, you will evaluate the quality of democracy in a single country. More information on both of these papers will be circulated during the semester.

Revising is an essential part of the writing process. To sharpen your writing skills, you will be divided into groups of 3-4 on the midterm paper. You'll read each other's papers and provide constructive feedback on them, and then incorporate these revisions into the final product. We

will have a writing workshop for the midterm paper in class on October 16. It is thus essential that you circulate a rough draft of your paper beforehand (see table of requirements with dates, above). A hand-out on how to give constructive feedback will be circulated in advance. While this revision exercise will not be a requirement for the final paper, I strongly encourage you to do it on your own as a group.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

I will provide more detailed rubrics for each assignment, but generally, grades are assigned on the following basis:

A: 93-100   A-: 90-92   B+: 87-89   B: 83-86   B-: 80-82   C+: 77-79

         C: 73-76   C-: 70-72   D+: 67-69   D: 60-66   F: <60

MISSED EXAMS OR ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignments will be penalized, with the exception of a bona fide medical or other emergency as validated by appropriate documentation (e.g., a doctor's note). For each day an assignment is late, 10% of its total worth will be deducted. There will be no makeups for pop quizzes.

USE OF LAPTOPS AND TABLETS IN CLASS

While some students find that personal laptops and tablets enhance their classroom experience, others find them to be a significant distraction. In an effort to accommodate all students, the classroom will be divided into "laptop" and "non-laptop" sections. On the second day of class, students will decide which section they would like to spend the entire semester sitting in. Think carefully about your learning style and specifically whether or not you find laptops distracting during class. I will hold you to your choice for the entire semester and enforce the laptop/non-laptop sections.

UNIVERISTY HONOR CODE AND ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty" found at: https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Tuesday, August 14: Introduction
- Read the entire syllabus thoroughly

Thursday, August 16: What is comparative politics?
- Readings
  - Collier, David. 1993. "The Comparative Method." In *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II*, edited by Ada W. Finifter, 105-119. Washington DC: American Political Science Association.
- Guiding questions
  - Why do we compare?
  - What is the comparative method? Its strengths? Weaknesses?

Tuesday, August 21: Qualitative and quantitative methods
- Readings
  - Gerring, John. 2017. "Qualitative Methods." *Annual Review of Political Science* 20: 15–36.
- Guiding questions
  - What is the difference between qualitative and quantitative data? What are their strengths and weaknesses?
  - What is multimethod research?

Thursday, August 23: Experiments in political science
- Readings
  - Dunning, Thad. 2008. "Improving Causal Inference: Strengths and Limitations of Natural Experiments." *Political Research Quarterly* 61 (2): 282-293.
- Guiding questions
  - What is a "natural" experiment? How is it different from an actual experiment?
  - Why do political scientists care about "as-if" randomization?

Tuesday, August 28: Methods wrap-up
- No readings for today; review reading and lecture notes for all previous readings to prepare for class activity on building a research design

Thursday, August 30: No class, American Political Science Association Annual Meeting

Tuesday, September 4: The State
- Readings
  - Tilly, Charles. 1985. "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime." In *Bringing the State Back In*, edited by Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, 169–91. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Guiding Questions

     o What is the state? According to Tilly, how did it emerge?

Thursday, September 6: State as provider and protector
- Readings
    - Fukuyama, Francis. 2004. "The Imperative of State-Building." *Journal of Democracy* 15(2): 17-31.
    - Mecham, Quinn. 2015. "How Much of a State Is the Islamic State?" *The Washington Post*, February 5.
- Guiding questions
    - How can we measure state capacity?
    - According to Fukuyama, why should we want strong states? Do you agree?
    - If warfare forges strong states, should the international community 'give war a chance'?

Tuesday, September 11: Running away from the state
- Readings
    - Scott, James C. 2009. "Hills, Valleys, and States: An Introduction to Zomia." In *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, 1–39. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Guiding questions
    - What are shatter zones? Why might people run away from the state?
    - Are we better off without the modern state?

Thursday, September 13: Who has the right to govern?
- Readings
    - Blair, Robert, and Pablo Kalmanovitz. 2016. "On the Rights of Warlords: Legitimate Authority and Basic Protection in War-Torn Societies." *American Political Science Review* 110 (3): 428–40.
- Guiding questions
    - Do warlords ever have a right to govern? If so, when?
    - Are "state rulers" any different from "warlords"? If so, how?

Tuesday, September 18: The state and development
- Readings
    - Evans, Peter. 1988. "Predatory, Developmental, and Other Apparatuses: A Comparative Political Economy Perspective on the Third World State." *Sociological Forum* 4(4): 561–87.
- Guiding questions
    - What role, if any, can and should the state play in promoting economic growth and improving human welfare?

Thursday, September 20: What do we mean by "development?"
- Readings
    - Sen, Amartya. 1999. "Introduction: Development as Freedom," and "The Ends and Means of Development." In *Development as Freedom*. 3-11 and 35-53. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

- o Singer, Peter. "What Should a Billionaire Give – and What Should You?" *New York Times Magazine*, December 17, 2006.
- Guiding questions
  - o What does Sen mean by "development as freedom?"
  - o Do all good things- democracy, freedom, economic growth- go together?
  - o Who is responsible for "development"?

Tuesday, September 25: Political regimes
- Reading
  - o Diamond, Larry. 2002. "Thinking About Hybrid Regimes." *Journal of Democracy* 13(2): 21-35.
  - o Dahl, Robert A. 1972. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 1-9.
- Guiding Questions
  - o What makes a country a democracy? An authoritarian regime?
  - o How would you define democracy? How would you know it when you see it?

Thursday, September 27: Measuring democracy
- Readings
  - o Levitsky, Steven and Lucan Way. 2002. "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy* 13: 51-65.
  - o Read Freedom House country report hand-outs in preparation for class activity

Tuesday, October 2: Making democracy
- Reading
  - o Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson. 2006. *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Chapter 2.
- Guiding Questions
  - o Why are some countries democracies and others not?
  - o What are the building blocks of the authors' argument?

Thursday, October 4: Civil society
- Readings
  - o Berman, Sheri. 1997. "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic." *World Politics* 49 (3): 401–29.
- Guiding Questions
  - o What is civil society?
  - o How can civil society promote or reinforce democracy? How can it undermine it?

Tuesday, October 9: Polarization
- Readings
  - o McCoy, Jennifer, Tahmina Rahman & Murat Somer. 2018. "Polarization and the Global Crisis of Democracy: Common Patterns, Dynamics, and Pernicious Consequences for Democratic Polities." *The American Behavioral Scientist* 62 (1): 16-42.

- Guiding Questions
  - What is polarization?
  - According to the authors, why does it undermine democracy?
  - How do societies de-polarize?

Thursday, October 11: Polarization activity
- Class activity; read hand-out on voter ID debate prior to class

Tuesday, October 16: Writing workshop
- Read your group members' midterm papers and come to class with constructive feedback. (See handout for how to give constructive feedback)

Thursday, October 18: Political culture and development
- Readings
  - Tsai, Lily L. 2007. "Solidary Groups, Informal Accountability, and Local Public Goods Provision in Rural China." *American Political Science Review* 101 (2): 355-372
- Guiding questions
  - What are informal norms? How does the author measure them?
  - What are the findings' implications for the relationship between democracy and development?

Tuesday, October 23: Political culture and repression
- Readings
  - Wedeen, Lisa. 1999. *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 2.
- Guiding questions
  - How does political culture sustain authoritarianism? Democracy?
  - When does political culture fail to sustain political regimes? If the 'cult of Asad' was so strong, then what explains the Syrian civil war?

Thursday, October 25: Civil war
- Readings
  - Collier, Paul, and Anke Hoeffler. 2004. "Greed and Grievance in Civil War." *Oxford Economic Papers* 56: 563–95.
- Guiding questions
  - What causes civil war?
  - How do the authors measure their variables? What might be some problems with their measurements and indicators?

Tuesday, October 30: Violence in civil war
- Readings
  - Kalyvas, Stathis. 1999. "Wanton and Senseless? The Logic of Massacres in Algeria." *Rationality and Society* 11(3): 243-285.
- Guiding questions

- According to Kalyvas, why do armed actors inflict mass violence against civilians?
- How does Kalyvas evaluate his argument? What evidence does he draw on? What might be some biases in the data?

Thursday, November 1: Ethnicity and nationalism
- Readings
  - Varshney, Ashutosh. 2007. "Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict." In *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, edited by Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes, 274–94. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Guiding questions
  - What is ethnicity? Nationalism?
  - What are the different theoretical frameworks for studying ethnic identity and ethnic politics?

Tuesday, November 6: Ethnic politics
- Readings
  - Habyarimana, James, Macartan Humphreys, Daniel N. Posner, and Jeremy M. Weinstein. 2007. "Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision?" *American Political Science Review* 101 (4): 709–25.
  - Singh, Prerna. "Nationalism can have its good points. Really." *The Washington Post*, January 26, 2018.
- Guiding Questions
  - What is the correlation the authors identify? What are the different mechanisms that might explain that correlation?
  - How do the authors know what they know? What are their methods?

Thursday, November 8: (Non)State Welfare
- Readings
  - Cammett, Melani and Sukriti Issar. 2010. "Bricks and Mortar Clientelism: The Logic of Welfare Allocation in Lebanon." *World Politics* 62(3): 381-421.
- Guiding questions
  - What is the research question? The argument? What kind of data do the authors use to evaluate their argument?
  - Can you think of alternative explanations? What else might explain the authors' findings?

Tuesday, November 13: Political parties
- Readings
  - Boix, Carles. 2008. "The Emergence of Parties and Party Systems." In *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics* edited by Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes, 499-521. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Guiding questions
  - What are the different schools of thoughts on the emergence of political parties?
  - According to Boix, what explains the emergence of political parties?
  - Are political parties necessary for democracy?

Thursday, November 15: Electoral Systems
- Readings
  - Lijphart, Arend. 1991. "Constitutional Choices for New Democracies." *Journal of Democracy* 2(1): 72-84.
- Guiding questions
  - What are the different electoral systems described in the article? Which one does Lijphart advocate for and why? Do you agree?

Tuesday, November 27: Collective Action
- Readings
  - Varshney, Ashutosh. 2003. "Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Rationality." *Perspectives on Politics* 1(1): 85-99.
- Guiding questions
  - According to Varshney, why do individuals participate in high-risk collective action? Do you agree? Can you think of alternative explanations?

Thursday, November 29: Contemporary debate: Democratic backsliding
- Readings
  - Introduction and Chapter 5 from Levitsky, Steven, and Daniel Ziblatt. 2018. *How Democracies Die: What History Reveals About Our Future*. New York: Random House.
  - Robin, Corey. "Democracy is Norm Erosion." *Jacobin Magazine*. January 29, 2018.
- Guiding questions
  - What is Levitsky and Ziblatt's argument? Robin's critique?
  - Are you persuaded by either of these readings? Did either change your mind about the quality of democracy in the US?

Tuesday, December 4: Contemporary debate continued: Democratic backsliding in comparative perspective
- Readings
  - Corrales, Javier. "Hugo Boss." *Foreign Policy*. February 19, 2006.
  - Ost, David. "Regime Change in Poland, Carried Out from Within." *The Nation*. January 8, 2016.
  - Riddell, Kelly. "Anti-Trump Left a Threat to American Democracy." *The Washington Times*. December 19, 2016.
  - Kuhn, David Paul. "Sorry, Liberals. Bigotry Didn't Elect Donald Trump." *The New York Times*. December 26, 2016.
- Guiding questions
  - What does democratic erosion look like in Latin America, Europe, elsewhere?
  - Is American democracy eroding?