

Introduction to Comparative Politics

Fall 2020

INTL 3300

Department of International Affairs
University of Georgia

Professor Megan Turnbull

Class Meeting: T/Th, 2:20-3:35pm, Room 115,
International Affairs (IA) Building, 202 Herty Drive

Email: megan.turnbull@uga.edu

Office Hours: by appointment via zoom

COURSE DESCRIPTION

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 and research design for describing, explaining, and understanding political processes. After taking this course, students should be able to distinguish between different theoretical explanations and evaluate the merit of evidence used to support them.
2. To provide students with an overview of key topics and debates in comparative politics. Students should be able to understand the basis of these debates as well as take and support positions on them.

READINGS & COURSE MATERIAL

All readings, lectures, and course materials will be accessible through eLearning Commons (eLC). There are no books or other materials that need to be purchased for this course. 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 little time on them in class. Rather, you should focus on absorbing the logic and steps of the argument, how different variables are operationalized and measured, and the evidence used to support the conclusions. You are strongly encouraged to bring any questions about jargon, concepts, argumentation, or anything else to class or office hours.

The readings/topics for November 10, 12, 17, and 19, will be determined by the students.

REQUIREMENTS

Assignment	Description	% of Final Grade	Due Date
Reading Memos	5 memos, each worth 5%	25	-
Election Day Report	Assessment of American democracy	10	November 5
Peer Response to Election Day Report	Respond to a classmate's Election Day Report	10	November 12
Policy Proposal	Strategies for depolarization	10	November 19
Research Design Group Project	Construct a research design in a group to answer a political science question	15	December 1
Research Design Presentation	Online (recorded) presentation	10	December 1
Final Paper	8-10 pages	20	December 9

ATTENDANCE

There will be many opportunities to participate online and in person throughout the semester, yet given the pandemic, **attendance (in person or via zoom) is not required and there is no participation grade.** Because of physical distancing requirements, it is not possible for all of us to meet every class. During the first week of the semester, the class will be divided into three groups – Groups A, B, and C – and **students are welcome, but not required, to attend** their assigned days in person in the course schedule, below. Everyone is invited to participate via zoom on the days they are not eligible to attend.

As all readings and lectures will be posted on eLC, we will use our class time for discussion, which will be recorded via zoom and uploaded to eLC. If you choose to attend class in person on days you are eligible, **you must sign up online at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled class time.** A link to sign up forms will be available on eLC. If you choose to attend class in person, note that UGA requires all students, faculty, and staff to wear face coverings over the nose and mouth while indoors and maintain at least six feet of distance whenever possible. If you come to class without a face covering, you will be asked to find one or to leave and participate virtually.

Special Considerations for Covid-19: I would like nothing more than to be in the classroom with all of you this semester; however, the Covid-19 pandemic has made this unsafe for us and for the larger Athens community.

1. If you experience symptoms consistent with Covid-19, or are exposed to someone who has tested positive for Covid-19, **DO NOT ATTEND CLASS**. Report your exposure and any symptoms immediately through Dawgcheck and seek a test as soon as possible.

If you are sick and unable to complete your work on time, **DO NOT PANIC**. Do reach out to me as soon as possible, so we can find a solution and ensure you get credit for your work as you are able to complete it. I will not impose late penalties.

2. All course materials, including links to lectures and slides, will be made available through hyperlinks on the syllabus or on eLC. The syllabus will be updated regularly. **You will not be punished in any way for exclusively participating in this class online.**
3. After Thanksgiving (November 26th), all classes will be held exclusively online.

OFFICE HOURS

Office hours are the time that professors and teaching assistants specifically designate to meet with students for help with assignments, questions about the lecture or reading, answer questions, or just to chat. In other words, office hours are **your** time. You are encouraged to come to office hours with questions about the class, comparative politics, political science, or just to introduce yourself. Professor Clare Brock provides a more thorough description of office hours if you would like more information: <http://www.clarebrock.com/blog/office-hours>

CRITICAL READING MEMOS & OTHER ASSIGNMENTS

The purpose of the critical reading memos is threefold. They will (1) help you digest the main points of the readings, (2) strengthen your writing skills, and (3) sharpen your capacity for analytical thinking. **You will complete five critical reading memos during the semester.** Briefly, your memo should (1) summarize the main argument and evidence for the day's reading(s) and (2) critically engage with the readings. Memos should cover all of the readings assigned that day, and they should be 1-2 pages in length. A handout with more information will be circulated at the start of the semester. There will not be a sign-up sheet and you are free to write your memo for any five classes where a reading is assigned. **Memos are due by noon the day of class, uploaded to the specified assignment folder on elc** (for example, "September 1 Reading Memo). Please note that these will be circulated to the entire class and may inform our class discussion for the day.

Information about the remaining assignments in the table above (including guidelines and due dates) will be shared separately.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Recent studies show self-assessment and self-grading enhance student learning and creativity. For each assignment, students will assess and grade themselves, and I will provide written feedback and a grade as well. For assignments worth 10% of the final grade or less, the student's

grade will stand as the final grade (conditional on students submitting the assignment; if the assignment is not submitted, then the grade is an automatic zero). For assignments worth more than 10% of the final grade, the student's grade will stand as the final grade except where there is more than a 5 point difference (out of 100) between their grade and the professor's. In such an event, the student and professor will meet with the goal of agreeing on a final grade. If an agreement cannot be reached, then the final assignment grade will be the average of the student's and the professor's grade.

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. You are welcome to sit in whichever section you feel best suits your learning needs for the day.

CLASS RECORDINGS

There may be instances where the lecture portion of this course is recorded under Section 504 and Title II of the ADA ACT. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the Director of the Disability Resource Center at eeew@uga.edu.

UNIVERSITY 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.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES

If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.

UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).

If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center. Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.

COURSE SCHEDULE

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

Thursday, August 20: Introduction

- We will all meet over zoom for our first meeting to discuss the syllabus and the plan for the semester.

Tuesday, August 25: Why do we compare? (Group A)

- Read
 - Malici, Akan and Elizabeth S. Smith. 2019. "Chapter 2: How Do We Get a Science of Politics?" In *Political Science Research in Practice*, edited by Akan Malici and Elizabeth S. Smith. Second ed., 14-27. New York: Routledge.
- View Lecture 1
- Guiding questions
 - What makes political science a "science"? More broadly, what makes an academic discipline "scientific"?
 - Do you agree that the study of politics can be a scientific endeavor? Why or why not?

Thursday, August 27: The Comparative Method (Group B)

- Reading
 - Eyadat, Zaid. 2019. "The Comparative Case Study Method: "Uncivil Society" in the Arab Uprisings." In *Political Science Research in Practice*, edited by Akan Malici and Elizabeth S. Smith. Second ed., 28-42. New York: Routledge.
- View Lecture 2
- Guiding questions
 - What is the method of agreement? Method of difference?
 - What are the strengths of the comparative case study method? Weaknesses?

Tuesday, September 1: Theory, Hypotheses, and Evidence (Group C)

- Readings
 - Dickovick, J. Tyler & Jonathan Eastwood. 2019. "Chapter 2: Theories, Hypotheses, and Evidence," in *Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases*. Third Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 25-46.
- View Lecture 3
- Guiding questions
 - What are the key terms in the chapter? Why are they useful for studying and thinking about politics?

Thursday, September 3: Research design wrap up (Group A)

- View Lecture 4

Tuesday, September 8: The State (Group B)

- Readings

- Bates, Robert H. 2001. "Chapter 4: State Formation in the Modern Era." In *Prosperity and Violence: The Political Economy of Development*, 70-83. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- View Lecture 5
- Guiding Questions
 - What is the state? What makes it different from other organizations?
 - According to Bates, what is different about state formation in the developing world compared to early modern Europe?
 - What international factors shape state formation today?
 -

Thursday, September 10: The breakdown of the state: civil war (No in-person meeting; Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association)

- Readings
 - Collier, Paul, and Anke Hoeffler. 2004. "Greed and Grievance in Civil War." *Oxford Economic Papers* 56: 563–95.
- View Lecture 6
- Guiding questions
 - What causes civil war? Why does it happen?
 - How do Collier and Hoeffler measure their variables? What might be some problems with their measurements and indicators? Can you think of better ways to measure the key concepts in their hypotheses?

Tuesday, September 15: Research and policy on civil war (Group C)

- Readings
 - Luttwak, Edward N. 1999. "Give War a Chance." *Foreign Affairs* 78(4): 36–44. <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/55210/edward-n-luttwak/give-war-a-chance>
- Guiding questions
 - Do you agree with Luttwak? Why or why not? Be sure to use evidence to support your position.

Thursday, September 17: Rebuilding political authority: post-conflict politics (Group A)

- 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.
 - Read Stakeholder Democracy Networks' short briefing on The Tompolo Foundation
- View Lecture 7
- Guiding questions
 - Do warlords ever have a right to govern? If so, when?
 - Are "state rulers" any different from "warlords"? If so, how?
 - Does Tompolo qualify as a warlord who has a right to govern? If you were a policy advisor to the Nigerian government, what would you advise? Work with Tompolo? Try to weaken and undermine him? As you answer this question, keep in mind our recent discussions on states, political order, and civil war.

Tuesday, September 22: Political order and violence wrap (Group B)

- View Lecture 8

Thursday, September 24: Defining development (Group C)

- 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.
 - Martin, Courtney. "The Reductive Seduction of Other People's Problems." *BRIGHT Magazine*., last modified January 11, accessed Jan 27, 2019, <https://brightthemag.com/the-reductive-seduction-of-other-people-s-problems-3c07b307732d>.
- View Lecture 9
- Guiding questions
 - What does Sen mean by "development as freedom?" Do you agree with his argument?
 - Do all good things- democracy, freedom, economic growth- go together?
 - Have you studied, interned, or worked abroad? Are you thinking about it? How, if at all, does the piece from Bright Magazine resonate with your travel experiences?

Tuesday, September 29: Development (Group A)

- Readings
 - Acemoglu, Daron and James A. Robinson. 2012. "Chapter 3: The Making of Prosperity and Poverty." In *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty*, 70-95. New York: Crown Business.
- View Lecture 10
- Guiding questions
 - What role do institutions play in development? What are the different types of institutions that Acemoglu and Robinson describe?
 - What else might explain differences in wealth and political freedoms between countries and across time?

Thursday, October 1: Political regimes (Group B)

- Reading
 - Schmitter, Philippe C. and Terry Lynn Karl. 1991. "What Democracy Is...and Is Not," *Journal of Democracy*, 2(3): 75-88.
- View Lecture 11
- Guiding Questions
 - What makes a country a democracy? An authoritarian regime?
 - How would you define democracy? How would you know it when you see it?

Tuesday, October 6: Measuring democracy (online activity, no in-person meeting)

- Read Freedom House country report hand-outs in preparation for class activity

Thursday, October 8: Modernization Theory (Group C)

- Readings
 - Przeworski, Adam, and Fernando Papaterra Limongi Neto. 1997. "Modernization: Theories and Facts." *World Politics*, 49(2): 155-183.
- View Lecture 12
- Guiding questions
 - What do you think the key take-aways or conclusions are of the reading?
 - Do you find the reading persuasive? Why or why not?

Tuesday, October 13: Democratization: Rational Actor Explanations (Group A)

- Readings
 - Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson. 2006. *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Chapter 2.
- View Lecture 13
- Guiding questions
 - Who are the key actors in Acemoglu and Robinson's argument? What are their economic interests? How does their economic position shape their preferences for (non)democracy?
 - In a nutshell, what is the argument? Can you explain it to a friend in your own words? Focus on the steps of the argument.

Thursday, October 15: Democratization as a Mistake (Group B)

- Reading
 - Treisman, Daniel. 2017. Democracy by Mistake: National Bureau of Economic Research. <http://www.nber.org/papers/w23944>.
- View Lecture 14
- Guiding Questions
 - How might democratic transitions be a mistake? Why do authoritarian rulers make these mistakes?
 - How does Treisman code mistakes? Put differently, how does he, and the reader, know a "mistake" when they see it?
 - What flaws do you see in the research design? Coding? How would you make it better?

Tuesday, October 20: Governments and electoral systems (Group C)

- Reading
 - Lijphart, Arend. 1991. "Constitutional Choices for New Democracies." *Journal of Democracy* 2(1): 72-84.
- View Lecture 15
- Guiding questions
 - What are the different electoral systems described in the article? Forms of government?
 - Which electoral system does Lijphart advocate for and why? Do you agree?

Thursday, October 22: Regime Transition wrap up (Group A)

- View Lecture 16

Tuesday, October 27: Polarization (Group B)

- Readings
 - 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.
- View Lecture 17
- Guiding Questions
 - What is polarization?
 - According to the authors, why does it undermine democracy?
 - Is polarization always bad for democracy?

Thursday, October 29: Democratic erosion (Group C)

- Readings
 - Chapter 5 from Levitsky, Steven, and Daniel Ziblatt. 2018. *How Democracies Die: What History Reveals About Our Future*. New York: Random House.
 - Bermeo, Nancy. 2016. “On Democratic Backsliding.” *Journal of Democracy* 27(1): 5-19.
- View Lecture 18
- Guiding question
 - What is Levitsky and Ziblatt’s argument? How would you know if they were wrong? How would you know if they were right?

Tuesday, November 3: No class – go vote!

Thursday, November 5: Election Day activity reports (Group A)

Tuesday, November 10: Topic and readings to be determined by students (Group B)

Thursday, November 12: Topic and readings to be determined by students (Group C)

Tuesday, November 17: Topic and readings to be determined by students (Group A)

Thursday, November 19: Topics and readings to be determined by students (Group B)

Tuesday, November 24: Policy Proposal discussions (Group C)

Thanksgiving Break

Tuesday, December 1: Group Research Design Project Online Presentations

Thursday, December 3: Group Research Design Project Online Presentations

Mental Health and Wellness Resources:

- If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.
- UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).
- If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.
- Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.