

PSCI 3350: Comparative Politics
Fall 2016
Monday and Wednesday: 1:00-2:15pm
Room: CB1 1.106

Professor Idean Salehyan (idean@utdallas.edu)

Course website found at elearning.utdallas.edu

Phone: (972)883-6241

Office Hours: Green Hall 3.802A, Monday, 2:45pm-4:45pm, or by appointment

Comparative politics is the study of various forms of government around the world. Questions that comparativists ask include: why are some countries democratic while others are run by dictatorships? Why do some democracies have only two parties while others have multiple parties? How do different electoral rules shape competition among politicians? Why are some countries relatively stable and secure, while others face recurring conflict? These questions are inherently *comparative* in that one must examine political systems in relation to each other.

In this course, we will be examining theories of comparative politics as well as comparing and contrasting several political systems around the world. Students will gain a basic familiarity with the historical context of several states, their political institutions, major parties, political behavior, and contemporary challenges. By the end of the course, students will be able to analyze political events and debates around the world, and apply such insights to their own experience as citizens.

Learning objectives

- Understand the major concepts of comparative politics
- Ability to apply theories of comparative politics to contemporary issues
- Develop basic knowledge of political systems around the world
- Understand key differences between various types of democratic and autocratic regimes

Required texts

1. O'Neil, Patrick. 2015. *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, 5th edition. W.W. Norton (Listed as "Essentials")
2. O'Neil, Patrick, Karl Fields, and Don Share. 2015. *Cases in Comparative Politics*. 5th edition. W.W. Norton (Listed as "Cases")
3. All other readings will be posted on Blackboard/elearning (Listed as BB)

Assignments and Grading

Exams (3 exams, 50 points, each). There will be three in-class exams over the course of the semester. These exams are non-cumulative and will cover material up to and including the week of the test. They will consist of several short essays and one longer essay and are designed to test comprehension of the reading material and lectures. Students must bring a blank, completely unmarked bluebook on the date of the exam.

Dates: 1) September 21; 2) October 27; 3) December 7

Quizzes (6 total, 10 points each. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped for a total of 50 points). Wednesdays of even numbered weeks are quiz days (unless there is an exam scheduled). These quizzes are to ensure that you are keeping up with the readings. You should be familiar with the basic concepts in the assigned texts (studying the “key terms” in the O’Neil books will help, although the quizzes are not limited to these). These quizzes will be multiple choice and/or fill in the blank-type tests. There are 6 quizzes and the lowest grade will be dropped, including for absences.

Participation (50 points). I do not take regular class attendance, as it is your choice to show up or not. However, I do keep track of who is participating in class discussions and group projects. It is essential that you come to class regularly and be an active contributor to class discussions. It is also essential that you remain polite and respectful of others, even as we discuss controversial topics.

Optional final paper (30 points). Students concerned about their grade may choose to submit an optional final paper. This paper will be used to “top off” points missed on the quizzes and exams. This will be a take-home, essay-based paper, with several questions as prompts. It will cover material from the entire class and will be approximately 5-7 pages. The essay questions will be distributed on December 7; the paper is due on December 14.

Final grade calculation (250 points possible). Point totals of 240-250 will be scored as an A+, 230-239 = A, 220-229 = A-, 210-219 = B+, and so on. A score below 160 = D and below 140 = F.

*It is unlikely that I will change a grade unless there was an error on my part. If you did poorly on an assignment, I would be happy to discuss ways you can improve next time. If you wish to contest a grade on any assignment, you must submit a written notification indicating why you believe your grade was not justified within one week of the assignment due date.

**Make-up exams. If a student misses an exam, she or he must have a written, documented excuse and submit it *prior* to the exam date, or no more than 24 hours afterward. It is up to my discretion to determine if the excuse is valid. Make-ups will

be scheduled within one week of the date of the test. Missed quizzes will not be made up; however, please note that the lowest quiz score, including a missed quiz will be dropped.

***Cheating, collusion, plagiarism, and other academic dishonest are serious offenses and will promptly be referred to the Judicial Affairs office for review, according to UT Dallas policies and procedures.

Course Policies

Lecture slides: I will not be distributing lecture slides for the class. It is important that you come to class and take careful notes, as this is the best way to prepare for the exams. The slides are simply a basic outline and are not sufficient for understanding the course material. That said, if you have a legitimate, documented, and excused reason to be absent, I will send you the slides upon request.

Use of electronics: Students are welcome to bring laptops and other electronic devices for the purpose of taking notes only. Cell phones must be silenced so as not to disrupt the class. Students caught using electronic devices for purposes other than taking notes (e.g. playing games, texting, checking social media, etc) will be asked to leave the classroom.

Changes to syllabus: The syllabus is subject to revision at the discretion of the instructor. Changes will be announced in class. Please consult the course website for the most current syllabus.

UT Dallas Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus.

Please go to <https://coursebook.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

Course Schedule

Week 1. Aug 22 & 24

Introduction and Course Preliminaries

-Essentials Chapter 1

Week 2. Aug 29 & 31

States, Regimes, and Governments

-Essentials Chapter 2

-*Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, "Social Contract." Sections 1 (Socrates' Argument) and 2 (Modern Social Contract Theory).

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/soc-cont/>

Week 3. Sept 5 (Labor Day; no class) & 7

Nationalism, Ideology, and Culture

- Essentials Chapter 3
- O'Toole, Fintan. "Brexit is Being Driven By English Nationalism." *The Guardian*. (BB)
- Fuller, Ed. "Here We Go Again: The Global Nationalism Wave Gains Force with Brexit." *Forbes*. (BB)
- Reifowitz, Ian. "Liberal Nationalism is not Only Possible, It's Essential." *Huffington Post*. (BB)

Week 4. Sept 12 & 14

Politics in Democracies

- Essentials Chapter 5
- Black, Eric. "The US: a Four or Five Party Country Jammed into a Two Party System" *Minnesota Post*. (BB)
- The Economist*, "The Evolution of Israeli Politics." (BB)
- Alesina, Alberto and Edward Glaser. "Why Are Welfare States in the US and Europe so Different?" *CAIRN.INFO* (BB)

Week 5. Sept 19 & 21

The UK and Germany

- Cases Chapter 2 (pp 34-71); Chapter 5 (pp 210-250)
- Thursday, September 21: EXAM #1*

Week 6. Sept 26 & 28

Emerging Democracies

- Essentials Chapter 10
- The Economist*. "The Latinobarometro Poll: Listen to Me" (BB)
- Bratton, Michael. "Formal Versus Informal Institutions In Africa" *Journal of Democracy* (BB)

Week 7. Oct 3 & 4

South Africa and Mexico

- Cases Chapter 11 (pp 558-596); Chapter 13 (pp 670-703)

Week 8. Oct 10 & 12

Authoritarian Regimes

- Essentials Chapter 6
- Sullivan, Tim. "Now You See It. Inside North Korea's Tightly Controlled Society, the Truth Is Rarely Simple." *National Geographic*. (BB)
- Diamond, Larry. "Thinking About Hybrid Regimes." *Journal of Democracy* (BB).

Week 9. Oct 17 & 19

Communist and Post-Communist Systems

- Essentials Chapter 9
- White, Stephen. "Soviet Nostalgia and Russian Politics." *Journal of Eurasian Studies* (BB).
- Henken, Todd and Armando Chaguaceda. "Between Reforms and Repression, Can Cuba's New Forces of Change Succeed?" *World Politics Review* (BB).

Week 10. Oct 24 & 26

Russia and China

- Cases Chapter 7 (pp. 330-361); Chapter 8 pp 380-419).
- Thursday, October 26, EXAM #2

Week 11. Oct 31 & Nov 2

Islam and Politics

- Goddard, Hugh. "Islam and Democracy." *The Political Quarterly* (BB)
- Hamid, Shadi. "The Roots of the Islamic States' Appeal." *The Atlantic* (BB)
- Hansen, Suzy. "Whose Turkey Is It?" *New York Times Magazine*. (BB)

Week 12. Nov 7 & 9

Iran & Egypt

- Cases Chapter 10 (pp 502-537)
- Monier, Elizabeth and Annette Ranko. "The Fall of the Muslim Brotherhood: Implications for Egypt." *Middle East Policy* (BB)
- Pew Research Center, "One Year after Morsi's Ouster, Divides Persist on El-Sisi, Muslim Brotherhood." (BB)

Week 13. Nov 14 & 16

Civil Conflict

- Essentials Chapter 7
- Trends in Armed Conflict, 1946-2014. *Peace Research Institute, Oslo* (BB)
- Neil, Shea. "Kurds Fight to Preserve the Other Iraq," *National Geographic*. (BB)
- Sperber, Amanda. "South Sudan's Next Civil War is Starting." *Foreign Policy*. (BB)

Week 14. Nov 21 & 23 (Thanksgiving, no class)

Civil Conflict

- No readings this week

Week 15. Nov 28 & 30

The United States and the World

- Cases Chapter 3, (pp. 136-140)
- McFaul, Michael. "Democracy Promotion as a World Value." *Washington Quarterly*. (BB)
- Walt, Stephen. "Why is America so Bad at Promoting Democracy in Other Countries?" *Foreign Policy* (BB)

-Zogby, James. "Should America be Involved in Democracy Promotion in the Arab World?" *Huffington Post*. (BB)

Week 16. Dec 5 & 7

Review and Discussion

-No readings this week

Thursday, December 7, EXAM #3

Optional Final Paper Due December 14.