

POSC 120: Comparative Political Regimes

Carleton College, Winter 2012



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Winter Office Hours:
Monday & Wednesday, 2:00-4:00pm
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"Without comparisons to make, the mind does not know how to proceed."
Alexis de Tocqueville

"And what should they know of England who only England know?"
Rudyard Kipling

Course Description

This class serves as an introduction to comparative politics, one of four traditional subfields in political science. Comparative politics involves the systematic study and comparison of the world's political systems. There are almost 200 independent states in the world, and within this group of countries, there is a great deal of variety in institutions, policies, political attitudes, participation, and performance. Students of comparative politics attempt to understand and account for the similarities and differences among these diverse societies.

In this class, we will explore some of the classic questions that have occupied scholars in this field, including:

- Why are some countries democracies and other countries autocracies? How do countries become one or the other?
- Why are some countries poor and other countries wealthy? What can poor countries do to develop their economic potential?
- How do different societies embed their particular values and priorities in their institutional "rules of the game," and what consequences do these choices have for their citizens?

To start to unravel some of these issues, the class will be organized around a series of case studies drawn from recent events in world politics. These case studies will allow us to delve more deeply into the particular choices, histories, and experiences of several key countries around the world. We will also use various theories in comparative politics to better understand the dynamics of these cases.

Course Materials

There is one required text for this course, which is available for purchase at the Carleton bookstore:

- Phillip Shively (2011). Power and Choice: An Introduction to Political Science, 13th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.

All other course readings will be available on Moodle. You are expected to do all the assigned readings before coming to class.

Course Requirements

Your grade will be based on six elements, which will be weighed as follows:

Participation	15%
Midterm exam	15%
Short papers (3)	30% (10% each)
Simulation paper	15%
Quizzes	5%
Final exam	20%

Participation

Your grade for this component is based on your active engagement with the course material and, as such, is a measure of the quality of your contributions and not how much you talk in class. Instead, your score will be based on making regular and informed contributions during class discussions (including raising questions). Your participation grade will also reflect your overall “citizenship” in the classroom. Behaviors that will substantially lower your participation score include: repeated tardiness, unexplained absences, not paying attention during class (texting, using the internet, etc.), and engaging in disruptive or disrespectful behavior during lecture or discussion.

Midterm exam

We will have an in-class midterm exam that will consist of several short-answer questions and an essay question. The exam will be closed-book and closed-note, and will include all the material we have covered (in lectures, discussions, and readings) up to that point in the term.

Short papers

Throughout the term, I will post a variety of questions that require you to critically analyze a selected issue or topic. Topics will cover a range of matters, from purely theoretical concerns to policy issues to current events and will generally follow the order of topics that we cover in class. You will pick any three of these questions and, for each one, submit a 3-4 page (double-spaced) paper that draws on course materials (readings, lectures, discussions) to demonstrate your understanding of the course content and your ability to use that content to construct a coherent argument and achieve a deeper level of understanding or insight about a topic.

In each of these papers, you are expected to draw substantially from the relevant assigned course readings in your analysis. In addition, you are required to look up related scholarly literature on the topic and incorporate one outside article, book, or book chapter into each paper. As part of your bibliography, you will include a short paragraph explaining how you found this outside source, and why you chose to include it (as opposed to other sources you may have found). The bibliography and this explanatory paragraph do not count towards your page total.

To ensure you do not leave all your papers until the very end of the term, you are required to pick one topic from those posted in the first three weeks of the class, one topic from those posted in weeks 4-6 of the term, and one topic from those posted in weeks 7-9 of the term.

Papers are due one week after I post the topic on Moodle. Because you have control over the due dates for the short papers, extensions will not be granted for any reason, save extended illness or truly catastrophic developments. For the first and second paper (but not the third), you will be able submit a draft, receive comments from me, and then re-submit a revised version within three days.

Simulation paper

We will spend two days doing an extended democratization simulation in which all members of the class will have assigned roles to play. Prior to the start of the simulation, you will submit a short paper (3-4 double-spaced pages, worth 5% of your grade) in which you will outline your position and strategy for the simulation. Following the simulation, you will submit a longer paper (5-7 double-spaced pages, worth 10% of your grade) in which you will discuss the dynamics and outcomes of the simulation, critically assess your prior strategy in light of the outcome that occurred, and reflect on what this simulation suggests about democratization processes in general.

Quizzes

We will have periodic, unannounced quizzes, mostly involving simple and straightforward questions based on the readings. The purpose of these quizzes is not to ensure you retain all the minute details of the material, but to encourage you to keep up with the schedule and not fall behind in the syllabus. Questions will be general and cover main concepts and theories, and mostly multiple choice or short answer. There will be four quizzes given in the term; only the three highest scores will count towards your grade. If you miss a quiz for any reason, you cannot make it up.

Final exam

The final exam will consist of several short-answer questions as well as essay questions. It will cover material from the lectures, discussion, and readings, and will be cumulative, closed-book, and closed-note. The final exam will be on Tuesday, March 13 from 8:30-11:00am. Please note: this is not a self-scheduled exam.

Miscellaneous

From time to time, there will be miscellaneous, non-graded assignments, mostly pertaining to the writing-rich content of the course. These assignments are designed to help you refine your writing skills and, as such, are required. Failure to complete these assignments will result in a lower participation grade.

Course Policies

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory. You are expected to come to class regularly and on time. If you are unable to attend a particular session due to illness or some other emergency, you should notify me by email, preferably in advance. A pattern of unexcused absences or tardiness will significantly lower your participation grade. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes from a classmate and then come see me in office hours to answer any questions you have about the material or lecture. Please do not email me asking “did I miss anything important?” Yes. Yes, you did.

Late work: Late work will automatically incur a penalty of 1/3 grade for every 24 hours past the specified deadline unless you provide documentation of extenuating circumstances (illness, family emergency, etc.) Technology failures—unless system-wide—will not excuse late work.

Extensions: Extensions will not be granted except in exceptional circumstances involving unforeseen complications. Simply having a lot of work in a given week is not sufficient grounds for getting an extension. You know your due dates ahead of time; please plan accordingly.

Internet/cell phones: You are not to text, surf the internet, check email, Facebook, etc. during class. There is a zero tolerance policy in effect. If you are caught violating this expectation, your participation score will be seriously affected. If internet usage during class seems to be a widespread and/or recurring problem, no one will be allowed to use a computer to take notes during class time.

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty: You are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity in this class, submitting only your own, original work and not taking credit for work done by anyone else or for any other class. Anyone caught plagiarizing, cheating, or otherwise violating the rules of academic honesty at Carleton will automatically receive a zero for the assignment and will have the case referred to the Dean’s office for further investigation and possible disciplinary action. In addition, offenders may receive a failing grade for the course at the discretion of the professor.

Because academic dishonesty comes in many forms, we will discuss and clarify some of these standards (especially with respect to citations) prior to your writing assignments. You are also strongly encouraged to familiarize yourself with Carleton’s website on academic honesty, which is available at <http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/honesty/>.

Special needs: If you require special accommodation due to a documented physical or learning disability, please come see me during the first week of class to discuss how I might best assist you in meeting the objectives and requirements of this course.

Schedule of Readings

The readings from this course come from a variety of sources, some intended for a general audience, and some for a more specialized and knowledgeable audience of political scientists. Depending on your background and prior experience with the subject, you may find some of these readings to be fairly straightforward; others may be tougher going and may take you longer to read and process. Regardless, it is your responsibility to take each one seriously and read it with care in order to understand the author's main arguments. I will occasionally post reading guides to help you understand and think about the material. All readings that are not taken from the Shively textbook are available on Moodle.

Unless otherwise noted below, all assignments are to be (1) converted into PDF format and (2) uploaded to Moodle by 5pm on the designated due date. Assignments will not be accepted in any other form. Please make sure your work conforms to all the guidelines in the "Assignment Formatting" document, which is available on Moodle (under "Handouts").

Date	Topic	Reading	Other
January 4	Introduction: what is comparative politics?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optional, but recommended: skim Shively, ch. 2 to familiarize yourself with different political ideologies 	<i>Comparisons exercise handed out</i>
January 6	How do we "do" comparisons in comparative politics?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shively, ch. 1, Appendix David Collier, "The Comparative Method." 	<i>Comparisons exercise due in class</i> <i>Diagnostic essay assignment handed out</i>

Current Events Issue #1: Statehood and the International Community

January 9	States and state-building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shively, ch. 3 (pp. 49-57, 63-69) Charles Tilly, <u>Capital, Coercion, and European States, AD990-1992</u>, ch. 2 & 3 	<i>Diagnostic essay due</i>
January 11	Nations and nationalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shively, ch. 3 (pp. 57-63) Anthony D. Smith, <u>The Antiquity of Nations</u>, ch. 7 	
January 13	Non-states and aspiring states	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "How To Start Your Own Country." BBC documentary 	
January 16	States and nations outside of Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rolf Schwartz, "The Political Economy of State Formation in the Arab Middle East: Rentier States, Economic Reform, and Democratization." 	
January 18	Weak and failed states	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ken Menkhaus, "State Collapse in Somalia: Second Thoughts." 	
January 20	Current events application: Palestine and UNESCO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> News articles and clips 	<i>Your first short paper topic must be selected by this date!</i>
January 23	The European Experiment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shively, ch. 3 (pp. 71-75) Michelle Cini, <u>European Union</u> 	

		<u>Politics</u> , ch. 1-4	
January 25	Current events application: Eurozone crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> News articles and clips 	

Current Events Issue #2: Regime Change and Transitions

January 27	Varieties of democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robert A. Dahl, <u>On Democracy</u>, ch. 4, 12-14 	
January 30	Varieties of autocracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shively, ch. 7 (pp. 164-172) David Collier and Steven Levitsky, "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research." 	
February 1	Democratization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shively, ch. 7 (pp. 151-164, 172-174) Samuel Huntington, <u>The Third Wave, Democratization in the 20th Century</u>, ch. 1 	
February 3	Current events application: Myanmar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> News articles and clips 	
February 6	Fall break – no class!		
February 8	Democratization simulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No reading 	<i>Simulation reflection paper due</i>
February 10	Democratization simulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No reading 	<i>Your second short paper topic must be selected by this date!</i>
February 13	Midterm Exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No reading 	

Current Events Issue #3: Governing Rules and Institutions

February 15	Presidential and parliamentary systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shively, ch. 14, 15, & 9 (pp. 213-218) 	
February 17	Majoritarian and proportional systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shively, ch. 10 (pp. 226-242) 	<i>Post-simulation reflection paper due</i>
February 20	Parties and party systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shively, ch. 10 (243-246), ch. 11 	
February 22	Current events application: Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> News articles and clips 	

Current Events Issue #4: Development and Economic Crisis

February 24	Pathways of development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shively, ch. 5 (pp. 96-101) Alexander Gerschenkron, <i>Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective</i>, ch. 1 	
February 27	Development strategies and models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shively, ch. 5 (p. 101-104) Gary Gereffi, <u>Manufacturing Miracles: Paths of Industrialization</u> 	

		<u>in Latin America and East Asia</u> , ch. 1	
February 29	Challenges to development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shively, ch. 5 (104-118) • Paul Collier and Jan Willem Gunning, "Why Has Africa Grown Slowly?" 	
March 2	Current events application: Brazil, India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News articles and clips 	<i>Your third short paper topic must be selected by this date!</i>

Current Events Issue #5: Interactions Between States and their Citizens

March 5	Civic engagement and civil society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shively, ch. 8 • Robert Putnam, <u>Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy</u>, ch. 5 	
March 7	Protest and rebellion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shively, ch. 13 	
March 9	Current events application: the Arab Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News articles and clips 	