

# **POL-UA 500: Introduction to Comparative Politics Spring 2020**

**Lectures: GCASL C95, MW 9:30-10:45am**

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**Office Hours: Mondays 2:30pm-4:00pm, sign-up online:**  
**<https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/zgfip>**

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## **Overview**

This course is an introduction to comparative politics. Comparative politics is the study of domestic politics around the world, and is thus a huge area of study. Comparative political scientists try to explain variation in domestic political institutions and outcomes *across* countries as well as variation in political behavior across individuals and groups *within* countries.

An introductory course, this class is designed to give you a beginning understanding of basic concepts, approaches and methods of studying variation in domestic politics. You will not learn definitive answers to all questions about domestic politics (if indeed there are any such definitive answers), but you will gain a better sense of some of the big questions being asked and of the approaches scholars are using to try to answer them. The course provides introductions to various analytic techniques political scientists use: including game theory, descriptive statistics, regressions, and experiments.

One course cannot possibly cover all of the concepts and topics relevant to the study of domestic politics around the world. However, we can give you a first cut into this broad area of research. As one way of cutting into this topic, we will focus our attention this semester on *various dilemmas and dynamics of democracies*. Democracy has long been a concept of interest to political philosophers; and it has become an increasingly common form of government across the world, particularly over the last three to four decades. But democracies vary greatly in how they organize themselves, and there are persistent questions about the conditions under which democracies endure (or do not), and about how democracies confront various challenges of governance. At some points in the course, we will often consider the position of a hypothetical country that has just transitioned to democracy: How and under what conditions do democratic transitions

happen? What are the tradeoffs in designing its institutions and electoral rules in particular ways? Are there economic consequences from having democratic versus non-democratic institutions?

### **Prerequisites and Requirements**

This is an introductory lecture course. There are no prerequisites to enroll.

The requirements and components of the final grade are as follows:

- Lecture attendance, recitation attendance and recitation participation –15%
- Midterm (Wednesday, **March 11**, in-class) – 25%
- Take-home essay (4-6 pages double-spaced, prompt announced/posted morning of April 17, paper must be posted to Classes by 5pm **April 23**) – 20%
- In-class final exam (Friday, **May 15, 8am-9:50am**) – 40%

### **Office Hours**

TAs will hold weekly office hours, which they will announce in recitation. Students should read the syllabus and then contact their TA first regarding logistical questions about the course.

Professor McClendon will hold office hours from 2:30pm to 4:00pm each Monday, in her office in room 223 at 19 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street, unless otherwise announced. Please sign up for a slot in advance here: <https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/zgfip>

### **Late Paper and Grading Policies**

Late papers will be deducted 1/3 of a grade for each 24-hour period in which they are late. In other words, if they are turned in any time after 9:35am at the start of class and before 9:35 am the next day, an assignment that would under normal circumstances receive an A would receive an A-, an assignment that might normally receive an A- would receive a B+ and so forth.

**Extensions (permission to turn in a paper late without the penalty, or to schedule a makeup exam)** will be granted by the professor only when deemed *absolutely necessary*: because of religious obligations, or a medical emergency, or for reasons of accommodation that are documented by a doctor, counselor or the Moses Center. Please email or speak to the professor as soon as you know about any unforeseen circumstances that conflict with your coursework. Travel conflicts with the exams are not typically considered a valid reason for a makeup.

Grading of all assignments will be done blind, by your TA, in coordination with the other instructors of the course. If you have concerns about a grade, you should first have a conversation with your TA. If the issue cannot be resolved between you and the TA, you may ask to have the professor re-grade your exam or paper, *with the understanding that your grade could be revised up or down*. Please make requests for re-grades from the professor **within 10 days** of having received the assignment back from your TAs.

### **Students Who Need Accommodation**

If you have a need for accommodation documented through the Moses Center, please have documentation sent to the professor from the Moses center or speak with the professor or your TA at your earliest convenience so that we can make sure you receive appropriate accommodation throughout the semester.

### **Technology Policy**

There is evidence of the [benefits of taking notes by hand](#) and we encourage you to use pen and paper for notetaking if that is an option for you, or at least to use your laptop wisely (a topic covered in the first lecture). However, the course does not forbid the use of laptops, and from time to time we may ask you to use laptops or your phone for learning purposes. Except in these instances, internet should be switched off during class, and phones should always be on silent during lecture and recitation, for your benefit and the benefit of other students around you.

### **Readings and Participation in Recitation**

All readings are available through the course's NYU Classes page (as PDFs or as links to websites). Please let the professor know if you encounter technical problems with any of the files. There is no textbook for this course.

You are expected to have read each of the required readings for the previous week before participating in recitation. When reading a chapter or article in preparation for recitation, ask yourself: What is the research question motivating the article or chapter? What is its main answer to that question (its argument)? What is the logic of the argument? Does the author consider alternative explanations? If the article or chapter presents empirical findings: what kind of evidence is offered in support of the claims? Active participation in recitations is part of your final grade.

In recitation, we particularly value comments that are grounded in the readings, that build off of other students' comments, and/or that ask questions intended to help all students better understand the materials.

### **Schedule of the course**

***Jan 27: Intro: What is comparative politics?***

***Jan 29: Thinking About Citizen-State Interactions as Strategic***

1. Shepsle, Kenneth, *Analyzing Politics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed, Chapter 9, pp. 262-301
2. Exit, Voice and Loyalty Chapter from Clark, Golder and Golder

[*Note*: NO RECITATIONS during the first week of classes. Recitations start week of Feb 3 and those recitations will cover previous week's (Jan 27-29 lectures and readings).]

***Feb 3: States: What is a state? What explains variation in state strength?***

1. Tilly, Charles. 1985. "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime." In *Bringing the State Back In*. ed. Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschmeyer, and Theda Skocpol. Cambridge University Press.

***Feb 5: Regimes: What is a democracy, and how do we measure it?***

1. Karl, Terry and Philippe Schmitter. 1991. "What Democracy Is...and Is Not." *Journal of Democracy* 2(3), pp.75-88.
2. Levitsky, Steven and Lucan Way, 2002. "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism" *Journal of Democracy*.

***Feb 10: Why are some countries more democratic than others (also: correlation is not necessarily causation)***

1. Przeworski, Adam, and Fernando Limongi. "Modernization: Theories and facts." *World politics* 49.2 (1997): 155-183.
2. Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce and George Downs. 2005. "Development and Democracy," *Foreign Affairs* 84(5), pp.77-86.

***Feb 12: Bottom-up v. top-down democratic transitions***

1. Kuran, Timur. "Now out of never: The element of surprise in the East European revolution of 1989." *World politics* 44.1 (1991): 7-48.
2. Top-down transitions section from Clark, Golder and Golder

**FEBRUARY 17: PRESIDENT'S DAY (NO CLASS)**

***February 19: Federalism and Decentralization***

1. Norris, Pippa. 2008. "Federalism and Decentralization," in *Driving Democracy: Do Power-Sharing Institutions Work?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 157-185.

***Feb 24 and 26: Presidents v. Prime Ministers***

1. Linz, Juan "The Perils of Presidentialism" in *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed, pp.124-142.
2. Cheibub et al. 2014. "Beyond Presidentialism and Parliamentarism." Recommended: Mainwaring, Scott, and Matthew S. Shugart. "Juan Linz, presidentialism, and democracy: a critical appraisal." *Comparative Politics* (1997): 449-471.

***March 2 and 4: Electoral Systems***

1. Norris, Pippa. 2004. Chapter 2 "Classifying Electoral Systems," pp.39-65
2. Chang, Eric and Miriam A. Golden. "Electoral systems, district magnitude and corruption." *British Journal of Political Science* 37.1 (2007): 115-137.

***March 9: Review for the midterm***

[Note: NO RECITATIONS during the week of the midterm]

**MARCH 11: IN-CLASS MIDTERM**

**\*\*DO NOT MAKE TRAVEL PLANS THAT CONFLICT WITH THIS DATE. SPRING BREAK TRAVEL PLANS ARE NOT A LEGITIMATE EXCUSE FOR A MAKE-UP EXAM.**

**March 16-20: SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)**

### **March 23 and 25: Voting Behavior**

1. Shepsle. *Analyzing Politics*. pp. 111-123 (section entitled "Spatial Elections", 12 pages)
2. Gschwent and Meffert. "Strategic Voting" from the *Sage Handbook of Electoral Behavior*, pp.339-351 (13 pages but skim pp.345-351)
3. Brusco, Valeria, Marcelo Nazareno, and Susan Carol Stokes. "Vote buying in Argentina." *Latin American Research Review* 39.2 (2004): 66-88.

### **March 30 and April 1: Turnout and Political Participation**

1. Re-skim Shepsle, *Analyzing Politics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed, Ch. 9 262-301 (from Week 1)
2. Croke, K., Grossman, G., Larreguy, H. A., & Marshall, J. (2016). Deliberate disengagement: How education can decrease political participation in electoral authoritarian regimes. *American Political Science Review*, 110(3), 579-600.
3. Kasara, Kimuli and Pavithra Suryanarayan. 2015. "When Do the Rich Vote Less Than the Poor and Why? Explaining Turnout Inequality Across the World." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(3).

### **April 6 and 8: Partisan Identification**

1. Dalton 2014 *Citizen Politics* Chapter 9 "Partisanship and Electoral Behavior," pp.183-205
2. Brader, Ted, Joshua Tucker and Dominik Duell. 2013. "Which Parties Can Lead Opinion? Experimental Evidence on Partisan Cue Taking in Multiparty Democracies," *Comparative Political Studies* 46. 1485-1517.

### **April 13 and 15: Party systems and ideologies**

**Note: NO RECITATIONS the week of April 13-17 while instructors attend the Midwest Political Science Conference**

**SHORT PAPER TOPIC WILL BE POSTED THE MORNING OF FRIDAY APRIL 17 AND PAPERS DUE TO CLASSES BY 5PM THURSDAY APRIL 23\***

1. Riedl, Rachel Beatty. *Authoritarian origins of democratic party systems in Africa*. Cambridge University Press, 2014, Chapter 1: 1-34
2. Lupu, Noam and Rachel Riedl, "Political Parties and Uncertainty in Developing Democracies," *Comparative Political Studies* 2013. Vol. 46 no 11: 1339-1365.

### **April 20 and 22: Ethnic Diversity and Democratic Politics**

**SHORT PAPERS MUST BE POSTED TO CLASSES BY 5pm THURS, APRIL 23\***

1. Kanchan Chandra, "What is Ethnic Identity and Does It Matter?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 2006 Vol 9, p. 397-424
2. Ferree, Karen E. "Explaining South Africa's racial census." *The Journal of Politics* 68.4 (2006): 803-815.
3. Posner, Daniel N. "The political salience of cultural difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are allies in Zambia and adversaries in Malawi." *American Political Science Review* 98.4 (2004): 529-545.

*\*Dates and times for announcing the paper prompt and for having the paper be due were chosen so as to try to avoid conflict with Passover, Easter and Ramadan. If you have religious obligations that nevertheless still need accommodation, please speak with the professor as soon as possible.*

***April 27 and 29: Challenges for Elections: Fraud and International Observers***

- Lehoucq, Fabrice. "Electoral fraud: Causes, types, and consequences." *Annual review of political science* 6.1 (2003): 233-256.

- Asunka, Joseph, Sara Brierly, Miriam Golden, Eric Kramon and George Ofori. 2017. "Electoral Fraud or Violence: The Effect of Observers on Party Manipulation Strategies." *British Journal of Political Science*: 1-23. (Skim "Estimation" section pp.11-13.)

***May 4 and 6: Explanations for Variation in Economic Development***

No readings this week while recitations finish covering readings from week April 27-29; however, lectures from May 4 and 6 are still game for the final exam.

***May 11: Final exam review***

**MAY 15: 8am to 9:50am: FINAL EXAM (regular classroom)**

**\*\*DO NOT MAKE TRAVEL PLANS THAT CONFLICT WITH THE FINAL EXAM. END-OF-YEAR TRAVEL PLANS ARE NOT A LEGITIMATE EXCUSE FOR A MAKE-UP EXAM.**