

Introduction to Comparative Politics
POSC208D-01
St. John Fisher College—Spring 2019
MW 4-5:20pm, Basil 207

Contact Information

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Course Description

This course introduces students to the analysis and comparison of political units, such as states, regimes, electoral institutions, governing institutions, as well as the analysis and comparison of outcomes, like state capacity, regime-type, elections, and governance. The field addresses matters of scholarly and practical concern, notably the consequences, degrees, and types of democracy and autocracy, economic growth and wealth inequality, political order and instability, poor governance, and political violence. This course broadly surveys the field, but pays particular attention to five themes: the state, society, democracy/authoritarianism, institutional design, and political conflict/violence.

Course Objectives. This class will, first, teach you to make and evaluate arguments about politics in comparative perspective and, second, introduce you to the methods political scientists use in their research. Upon completion of the course, you should:

- 1) understand and think critically about ideas and disputes in the field of Comparative Politics, with the aim of teaching you to investigate the world more rigorously (in this course and in subsequent courses you take in your careers).
 - a. This comes in two parts:
 - i. *Cases*: learning about and how to compare the ways politics works in other countries;
 - ii. *Methods*: how to compare politics in other countries.
- 2) be able to think critically about the practical effects of academic findings and the effects of the practice of politics in the social world, not just academic findings themselves. This includes understanding debates about political labeling (especially with reference to regime type) and foreign aid work.
- 3) be able to apply the skills learned in this course to the conduct of rigorous research on questions of comparative interest. You should also be able to take these skills with you to your future courses and careers.

Required Text. Readings come from book chapters and articles of my choosing, but we supplement these works with additional cases from your only required text. The price below is based on the new book, but of course you can buy used (or an older edition):

Fields, K., O’Neil, P., & Sher, D. (2006). *Cases in comparative politics*. (5th Ed.). New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co. (ISBN: [978-0393937541](#), price: \$58.89 [Amazon]).

POSC400. If you entered the College under the 2015-2016 academic catalog (or later), and you are a political science major, then you will be required to pass POSC400. This includes building an electronic portfolio during your time at SJFC. Please make sure that you’re selecting the POSC template when you set up your e-portfolio in Google sites. You should consider archiving some of your work from this course on that site. You will find it most helpful to complete POSC 400 during your senior year.

Special Accommodations. If you have a disability, which may require classroom or test accommodations, please see me as soon as possible or meet with Disabilities Services (Kearney 300), which is responsible for coordinating accommodations and services for students with disabilities. Phone: (585) 385-5252 and [website](#).

Course Requirements and Evaluation

Break-down of course grades:

Midterm Exam (Feb. 27)	25%
Response Questions	10%
Research Proposal (due Apr. 22)	20%
Final Exam (Apr. 24)	25%
Participation	20%

Attendance. Attendance is a requirement if you wish to do well in this course. In-class notes, discussion, and lecture material are the basis for the course’s exams.

I give you *two allowed absences*, no questions asked. You will be responsible for course material and discussion content for days that you miss. For absences beyond the given *two allowed absences*, you must provide some sort of documentation, excluding in certain circumstances as discussed with me. Missing more than three courses without good cause, e.g., illness, religious holidays, family deaths, will result in a 2% grade reduction per absence. It is possible to earn a failure due to absence (FA) grade in this course.

Participation. Individual participation is worth 20% of your grade. Simply showing up for class is not sufficient to earn participation points. You are expected to attend classes regularly and participate in discussions. I want you to talk so that you engage with the material and your classmates. It is not any more complicated than that. You are free to ask about current events, readings you did not understand, et cetera. This way we can learn interactively.

Response Questions. You are required to submit three questions prior to each class, based on reading material, via Blackboard under the “Response Questions” tab, for a total of 24 submissions @ 4 points per submission (96). For those of you who simply submit all 24, I will add an additional 4 points to your point total (100 points possible).

Nota Bene. It is essential that you complete the readings in the course. If it becomes apparent that the class is not keeping up with the readings, I reserve the right to administer surprise quizzes. If this occurs, I will redistribute the relative weight of the course assignments.

Midterm Exam. The midterm exam covers all topics discussed in class from our introduction on Monday, January 14th (1/14) to the day of our exam on Wednesday, February 27th (2/27).

Final Exam. The final is cumulative: it covers topics discussed in class from January 14th (1/14) to the day of the exam on Wednesday, April 24th (4/24).

Research Proposal. You will complete a 2-page research proposal on a subject of your choosing. A strong proposal requires five essential elements: 1) a refined research question; 2) an argument for why the question is of socio-political importance; 3) a brief discussion, derived from outside research, on possible/alternative answers to your question; 4) a statement on how you would conduct the necessary research to answer your question; and 5) a note on possible obstacles/barriers to conducting your question, such as difficulty in locating/accessing sources. We will discuss each of these elements in detail during our class sessions. Proposals are due via the course Blackboard site's Turnitin tool before class on April 22nd (4/22). I will deduct one third of a letter grade for each day your proposal is late, unless otherwise discussed with me.

Course Policies

Makeup exams. You are not automatically entitled to a makeup examination, which are only given in cases of compelling and well-documented excuses, e.g., acute illness, religious observances, athletic events. Oversleeping is not included on that list. You must also have documentation from a physician (not a nurse) or the appropriate administrator at the College. If you have sufficient cause to warrant a makeup exam, I will determine the date and time of the exam.

Late submissions. If you submit work late, I reserve the right to fail you (with a zero) on that particular assignment. If you find yourself needing more time to complete assignments, please proactively contact me via email and ask for an extension.

Grading. I encourage you to come see me if you have questions about a grade for an assignment. However, I do ask that you wait one week (a cooling off period). During that time, please re-read your assignment and be prepared to defend your position by incorporating relevant course materials.

Course Feedback. Aside from the formal evaluation at the end of the term, I welcome and encourage feedback throughout the semester on course structure, readings, lectures, et cetera. If you would like to see additional topics covered, please let me know and I will give it consideration. Comments, suggestions, and criticisms will have no bearing (positive or negative) on your grade. You may leave anonymous feedback via Google Form by: 1) signing in to the course Blackboard site; 2) clicking the "Content" tab; 3) clicking "Feedback."

Academic Integrity. You will likely fail the course if I catch you cheating on exams. Plagiarism will result in an automatic F on with no opportunity to redo the assignment. A second violation of plagiarism will result in course failure. Academic dishonesty is intellectual theft, and I treat it as such. You should review the College's [Academic Honesty Policy](#) and [Academic Integrity Portal](#).

Concern for Others. If you have a concern about another classmate in this class or any other setting on SJFC's campus, please communicate with your professor.

Outside Resources. Aside from visiting me outside of class, St. John Fisher also offers other support services, such as:

Center for Academic Excellence. The [Center](#) provides advice on improving academic performance, tutoring services, disability services, career services, math and writing services, and plenty of online resources. Phone: (585) 385-8147.

Course Schedule and Readings. You are responsible for reading all assignments. Come prepared to discuss them in class. As well, follow closely in class and watch Blackboard for updates. The syllabus could change.

Some readings are available through Blackboard, but most readings are available via links, which are marked in blue (below). Clicking on the Further Reading "doc" will bring you to a Google Doc of additional readings on each course topic. These links will remain active beyond the length of the course, so you can use them for independent research, capstones, and the like. Clicking "Notes" brings you to a Google Doc that raises general and specific questions related to the readings for each topic. Ideally, you will click this link before you read for class, as a reading guide. These will also serve as study guides because I update them after each lecture.

Course Outline

January 14, Comparison

Lijphart, A. (1971). [Comparative politics and the comparative method](#). *American Political Science Review*, 66(3), 682-693.

I. The State and Political Order

Further Reading, Notes

(Jan. 16-23)

January 16, Defining the State

Weber, M. (1946). [Politics as a vocation](#). In H. H. Gerth and C. W. Mills (Eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in sociology* (read only pp. 77-83). Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

Mitchell, T. (1991). [The limits of the state: Beyond statist approaches and their critics](#). *The American Political Science Review* 85(1), 77-96.

Winters, J. (2011). [Oligarchy](#). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press (read only pp. 8-36).

January 21, War & the State

Tilly, C. (1985). [War making and state making as organized crime](#). In P. Evans, D. Rueschemeyer, & T. Skocpol (Eds.), *Bringing the state back in* (pp. 169-191). Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Herbst, J. (1990). [War and the state in Africa](#). *International Security*, 14(4), 117-139 (optional).

Taylor, B. D., & Botea, R. (2008). [Tilly tally: War-making and state-making in the contemporary third world](#). *International Studies Review*, 10(1), 27-56.

Centeno, M. A. (1997). [Blood and debt: War and taxation in nineteenth-century Latin America](#). *American Journal of Sociology*, 102(6), 1565-1605.

**We will play [Of Rulers & Realms](#), a strategy game that teaches state formation.*

January 23, Political Order: States & Societies

Huntington, S. P. (1965). [Political development and political decay](#). *World Politics*, 17(3), 386-430.

Epstein, C. (2013). [Theorizing agency in Hobbes's wake: The rational actor, the self, or the speaking subject?](#) *International Organization*, 67(2), 287-316.

II. Culture and Nationalism

Further Reading, Notes

(Jan. 28 & 30)

January 28, Political Culture

Geertz, C. (1972). [Deep play: Notes on the Balinese cockfight](#). *Daedalus*, 101(1), 1-37.

Huntington, S. P. (1993). [The clash of civilizations?](#) *Foreign Affairs*, 72(3), 22-49. Retrieved from: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/>

Orwell, G. (1936). [Shooting an elephant](#). *New Writing*. Retrieved from: <http://www.online-literature.com/>

January 30, Nationalism

Anderson, B. (1983). [Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism](#). London, United Kingdom: Verso (introduction).

Chatterjee, P. (1993). [The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories](#). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press (introduction).

Abizadeh, A. (2002). [Does liberal democracy presuppose a cultural nation?](#) *The American Political Science Review*, 96(3), 495-509.

III. Regimes: Democracy and Dictatorship

Further Reading, Notes

(Feb. 4-25)

I. Describing Democracy and Dictatorship

February 4, Defining Democracy & Dictatorship

Schmitter, P. C., & Karl, T. L. (1991). *What democracy is... and is not*. *Journal of Democracy*, 2(3), 75-88.

Wedeen, L. (2008). *Peripheral visions: Publics, power, and performance in Yemen*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press (only pp. 1-21 & 103-146).

February 6, Types of Democracies: Parliamentary and Presidential Systems

Linz, J. (1990). *The perils of presidentialism*. *Journal of Democracy*, 1(1), 51-69.

Cases, U.K. (pp. 47-61)

Cases, U.S. (pp. 107-118)

**We will play an institution engineering game based on these two cases.*

February 11, Types of Dictatorships: Strongmen, Single Parties, and Hybrid Regimes

Gandhi, J. (2008). *Political institutions under dictatorship*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press (only pp. xv-xxi).

Levitsky, S., & Way, L. A. (2002). *The rise of competitive authoritarianism*. *Journal of Democracy*, 13, 51-65.

Cases, Mexico

II. Explaining Political Regimes

February 13, Democratization

Ziblatt, D. (2006). *How Did Europe Democratize?* *World Politics*, 58 (2): 311-338.

Carothers, T. (2002). *The end of the transition paradigm*. *Journal of Democracy*, 13(1), 5-21.

Schedler, A. (1998). *What is democratic consolidation?* *Journal of Democracy*, 9(2), 91-107.

February 18, Explaining Authoritarianism & Authoritarian Persistence

Ross, M. L. (2001). *Does oil hinder democracy?* *World Politics*, 53(3), 325-361.

Mitchell, T. (2009). *Carbon democracy*. *Economy and Society*, 38(3), 399-432.

Fish, M. S. (2002). *Islam and authoritarianism*. *World Politics*, 4, 4-37.

Albrecht, H. & Schlumberger, O. (2004). *'Waiting for Godot': Regime Change Without Democratization in the Middle East*. *International Political Science Review*, 25(4), 371-392.

III. Outcomes of Dictatorship and Democracy

February 20, Effects of Democracy

- Elman, M. F. (2000). [Unpacking democracy: Presidentialism, parliamentarism, and theories of democratic peace](#). *Security Studies*, 9(4), 91-126.
- Díaz-Cayeros, A., & Magaloni, B. (2009). [Aiding Latin America's poor](#). *Journal of Democracy*, 20(4), 36-49.

February 25, Effects of Dictatorship

- Przeworski, A., & Limongi, F. (1997). [Modernization: Theories and facts](#). *World Politics*, 49, 155-183.
- Peceny, M., Beer, C. C., and Sanchez-Terry, S. (2002). [Dictatorial peace?](#) *The American Political Science Review*, 96(1), 15-26.

Midterm & Spring Break¹

February 27 & March 4-6

¹ Your midterm will be held during our class session on February 27, the Wednesday before Spring Break, which means our class does not meet on March 4th or 6th. Have a nice break!

IV. Institutions
Further Reading, Notes
(March 11-25)

I. Parties, Votes & Seats

March 11, Parties & Party Systems

Clarke, H., & Stewart, M. (1998). [The decline of parties in the minds of citizens](#). *Annual Review of Political Science*, 1, 357-78.

March 13, Elections & Electoral Systems

Spruyt, H. (2014). [Territorial concessions, domestic politics, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict](#). In (eds.) M. F. Elman, O. Haklai, and H. Spruyt (Eds.), *Democracy and conflict resolution: The dilemmas of Israel's peacemaking* (read only, pp. 29-60). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Gill, M. S. (1998). [India, running the world's biggest elections](#). *Journal of Democracy*, 9(1), 164-168.

March 18, Legislatures

Reynolds, A. (1999). [Women in the legislatures and executives of the world: Knocking at the highest glass ceiling](#). *World Politics*, 51(4), 547-572.

II. Federalism and Decentralization

March 20, Federalism & Decentralization

KaneJoost, S., Hiltermann, R., & R. Alkadiri. (2012). [Iraq's Federalism Quandary](#). *The National Interest*. February 28.

Lijphart, A. (1996). [The puzzle of Indian democracy: A consociational interpretation](#). *The American Political Science Review*, 90(2), 258-268.

III. Effects of Institutional Designs

March 25, Governance & Accountability

Tsai, L. L. (2007). [Solidary groups, informal accountability, and local public goods provision in rural China](#). *The American Political Science Review*, 101(2), 355-372.

V. Contention and Political Violence

Further Reading, Notes

(March 27-Apr. 3)

I. Contentious Politics: Civil Society & Social Movements

March 27, Civil Society & Social Movements

Berman, S. (1997). [Civil society and the collapse of the Weimar Republic](#). *World Politics*, 49(3), 401-429.

Putnam, R. D. (Winter 1996). [The strange disappearance of civic America](#). *The American Prospect*.

II. Security Studies & Political Violence in Comparative Perspective

April 1, Comparative Civil-Military Relations

Kinney, D. H. (2018). [Politicians at Arms: Civilian Recruitment of Soldiers for Middle East Coups](#). *Armed Forces & Society*. Firstview.

April 3, Ethnic Conflict

Pandey, G. (2001). *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India*.

Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press (only p. 1-20).

Mueller, J. 2000. *The Banality of Ethnic War*. *International Security* 25(1), 42-70.

VI. Comparative Political Economy

Further Reading, Notes

(April 8-17)

April 8, International Trade

Gourevitch, P. (1977). *International Trade, Domestic Coalitions, and Liberty: Comparative Responses to the Crisis of 1873-1896*. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 8(2), 281-313.

Milner, H. V., & Kubota, K. (2005). *Why the move to free trade? Democracy and trade policy in the developing countries*. *International Organization*, 59, 107-143.

April 10, Institutions & Growth

North, D. (1991). *Institutions*. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 5, 97-112.

Olson, M. (1993). *Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development*. *American Political Science Review*, 87(3), 567-576.

April 15, Inequality, Redistribution, & the Public Sector

Wallerstein, M. (1999). *Wage-Setting Institutions and Pay Inequality in Advanced Industrial Societies*. *American Journal of Political Science*, 43(3), 649-680.

Adserà, A., & Boix, C. (2002). *Trade, Democracy, and the Size of the Public Sector: The Political Underpinnings of Openness*. *International Organization*, 56(2) 229-262.

April 17, International Capital Mobility

Frieden, J. A. (1991). [Invested interests: the politics of national economic policies in a world of global finance](#). *International Organization*, 45(4), 425-451.

April 22, International Labor Mobility²

Olson, M. (1996). [Big Bills on the Sidewalk: Why Some Nations are Rich, and Others Poor](#). *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 10(2), 3-24.

Slobodian, Q. (2018). [A History of Neoliberalism](#). *The Dig Podcast*. November 14.

Final Exam

April 24

² Your research proposals are due on April 22 (4/22), on which we will review for the final exam during the second half of our class session. The final is on Wednesday, April 24 during our regularly scheduled class session.