

Political Science 260: Introduction to Comparative Politics

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How did Saddam Hussein maintain control in Iraq? Why is Britain more democratic than Russia? Why did Hutus kill an estimated half a million Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994? Puzzles such as these are the focus of comparative politics. Comparative politics is the study of processes and institutions within countries, whereas international relations is the study of interactions *among* countries. Prompted by real-world puzzles, comparativists investigate broader, more theoretical questions: How do forms of governance differ, and how do they affect everyday life? How does one country become more democratic than another? Why do relations between some ethnic groups turn violent? This course introduces students to some of the central puzzles and theories of comparative politics in order to help them better understand world events.

We will explore the following political phenomena: types of governance, revolutionary movements and revolutions, democratization, participation and activism, poverty and its alleviation, ethnic conflict and peace, and state failure. For each of the topics we will spend one week examining explanations of the phenomenon and a second week evaluating the explanations against real-world examples. Are the existing explanations satisfactory, and, if not, what alternative explanations can we suggest? The examples are drawn from most regions of the world, including the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Europe, the former Soviet Union, North America, and South America.

Course Materials

To evaluate the explanations, we will read scholarly works as well as journalistic accounts, travelogues, and policy pieces. Political novels are suggested for further reading. The course also incorporates film clips, slides, and policy exercises.

Books and Articles: Six works are available for purchase at the bookstore: *The Magic Lantern*, *Power in Movement*, *Activists Beyond Borders*, *The Foundation of Ethnic Politics*, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families*, and *When Things Fell Apart*. The books are also on reserve at Kelvin Smith Library. Required materials for week one will be distributed in class; required materials for subsequent weeks will be available on the course Blackboard site, unless otherwise noted. Paper or electronic copies of readings should be brought to class the days they are assigned.

News: Students are strongly encouraged to follow world events. These sources offer some of the best foreign coverage:

- *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/>, provides daily news for free on its website, once you register. Also see the website for details about a student subscription discount.
- *The Economist* is available for free online through EuclidPLUS and in print at Kelvin Smith Periodicals. For information about a student subscription rate call 1-800-456-6086.
- National Public Radio (WCPN 90.3 FM) broadcasts brief news updates at the top of the hour and news analyses throughout the day on programs like Morning Edition, Talk of the Nation, All Things Considered, and Marketplace. See <http://www.wcpn.org> for the schedule and podcasts.

Course Requirements

Participation: The class is discussion-based, and students are strongly encouraged to take notes on the readings in order to be prepared to integrate and critique the materials and to pose questions for discussion. Readings should be completed by the first day of the week they are assigned, and a copy of each reading should be brought to class. Paper or electronic copies of readings should be brought to class the days they are assigned. Because participation is critical to understanding the material, students are expected to attend all classes. Except under extraordinary circumstances, absenteeism will negatively affect students' final grades.

Reading Responses: In addition to reading course materials and participating in class, students will write a reading response for three of the seven "Explanations" weeks. The purpose of the reading responses is to help students understand, critique, and integrate the readings and prepare to pose questions for discussion in class. Students should develop an argument related to an analytical question, such as:

- What roles do masses and elites play in democratization?
- How does regime type affect the likelihood of state failure?

Reading responses should be between one and a half to two pages double-spaced. They must be submitted at the beginning of the first class of the week the analyzed materials are assigned. Evaluation of the responses will take into account the degree of independent thinking, use of assigned materials, and quality of writing.

Short Essays: Students will write a short essay for three of the seven "Examples" weeks. The purpose of the essays is to help students evaluate the readings and prepare to pose questions for discussion in class. For these essays the students should develop an argument through the application of the explanations from the previous week to the real-world examples found in the course materials. Students may choose which three weeks to write the essays; however, they may not write on the same topics as they covered in the reading responses. For example, if a student writes a reading response on democratization, he or she cannot write a short essay on democratization. The essays should be between two and two and a half pages double-spaced. They must be submitted at the beginning of the first class of the week the evaluated materials are assigned. Grading of the responses will take into account the degree of independent thinking, use of assigned materials, and quality of writing.

Final Assignment: Students will complete a final, take-home assignment, for which they can use notes and readings but cannot confer with others. The assignment will include a series of essay questions, requiring integration of the seven political phenomena. Assignments will be distributed at the end of class Wednesday, April 14 and must be turned in at the beginning of class Monday, April 19. Students should plan their schedules accordingly and organize and review their notes in advance.

All written work should be carefully structured and grammatically correct. Informal citations—phrases like "as Goodwin argues"—are acceptable. To avoid plagiarism, students should review "Plagiarism: What It is and How to Recognize and Avoid It," distributed in class. Cases of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be investigated by university judicial bodies.

Class participation and attendance will constitute 15 percent of the course grade, the three reading responses will count for 25 percent, the three short essays for 30 percent, and the final assignment for 30 percent. Students will lose a half a grade on any assignment for each day it is late.

Course Schedule and Readings

Day 1 (January 11): Introduction to Course and Comparative Politics

TYPES OF GOVERNANCE

Week 1 (January 13): Explanations

Max Weber. "Politics as a Vocation." In *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, edited by Hans Heinrich Gerth and C. Wright Mills, 77-128. New York: Oxford University Press, 1946. Read 77-79. Distributed in class January 11.

Robert Alan Dahl. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971. Read "Concepts" [part], 1-6. Distributed in class January 11.

Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski. "The General Characteristics of Totalitarian Dictatorship." In *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, edited by Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, 3-13. New York: Praeger, 1956. Distributed in class January 11.

Juan J. Linz. "An Authoritarian Regime: Spain." In *Mass Politics: Studies in Political Sociology*, edited by Erik Allardt and Stein Rokkan, 251-283. New York: Free Press, 1970. Read 251-267. Distributed in class January 11.

Larry Diamond. "Thinking About Hybrid Regimes." *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 2 (2002), 21-35. Distributed in class January 11.

NO CLASS January 18

Week 2 (January 20): Examples

Hedrick Smith. *The Russians*. revised edition. New York: Ballantine Books, 1976. Read "The Party: Communist Rituals and Communist Jokes" [part], 363-385.

Sandra Mackey. *The Reckoning: Iraq and the Legacy of Saddam Hussein*. 1st ed. New York: Norton, 2002. Read "The Triumph of the Baath," 198-234.

Howard Handelman. "'Waiting for Democracy' in Mexico: Cultural Change and Institutional Reform," 218-241. In *Democracy and Its Limits: Lessons for Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East*, edited by Howard Handelman and Mark Tessler. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999.

Philip Gourevitch. "Letter from Korea: Alone in the Dark." *The New Yorker* (September 8, 2003): 54-60, 62-66, 68-75.

SUGGESTED: Chinua Achebe. *Anthills of the Savannah*. New York: Doubleday, 1987. A satirical novel about political corruption and oppression in postcolonial Africa. On reserve at Kelvin Smith Library.

REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS and REVOLUTIONS

Week 3 (January 25, 27): Explanations

Jeff Goodwin. *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Read “Comparing Revolutionary Movements” [part], “The State-Centered Perspective on Revolutions: Strengths and Limitations” [part], 3-31, 35-50.

Week 4 (February 1, 3): Examples

Goodwin. *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991*. Read “The Formation of Revolutionary Movements in Central America” [part], “ 145-176.

Timothy Garton Ash. *The Magic Lantern: The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, and Prague*. 1st Vintage books ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1993. Read “Witness and History” [part], “Berlin: Wall’s End,” “Prague: Inside the Magic Lantern,” “Ten Years After: Afterword to the Vintage Edition” [part], 11-20, 61-130, 162-167.

SUGGESTED:

Naguib Mahfouz. *Autumn Quail*. Translator Roger Allen. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1985. A short novel, set in Egypt, about how revolutions affect daily life. You may borrow a copy of this out-of-print book from the instructor.

DEMOCRATIZATION

Week 5 (February 8, 10): Explanations

Seymour Martin Lipset. "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," 69-105. *American Political Science Review* 53, no. 1 (1959). Read 75-85.

Giuseppe Di Palma. *To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990. Read "Rethinking Some Hard Facts"[part], "Why Transferring Loyalties to Democracy May Be Less Difficult Than We Think," 1-9, 27-43.

Week 6 (February 15, 17): Examples

Barrington Moore. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1966. Read "England and the Contributions of Violence to Gradualism" [part], 3-20, 29-39.

Timothy Garton Ash. *The Magic Lantern: The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, and Prague*. 1st Vintage books ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1993. Read "Warsaw: The First Election," "Budapest: The Last Funeral," "Ten Years After: Afterword to the Vintage Edition" [part], 25-60, 157-162.

Elisabeth Jean Wood. *Forging Democracy from Below: Insurgent Transitions in South Africa and El Salvador*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Read "Apartheid, Conservative Modernization, and Mobilization" [part], "The Challenge to Economic Elite Interests" [part], "From Recalcitrance to Compromise," 111-125, 140-144, 169-193.

SUGGESTED: Timothy Garton Ash. *The Magic Lantern: The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, and Prague*. 1st Vintage books ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1993. "The Year of Truth," 131-156.

PARTICIPATION and ACTIVISM

Week 7 (February 22, February 24): Explanations

Sidney G. Tarrow. *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. 2nd edition. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Read “Introduction” [part], “Contentious Politics and Social Movements [part],” “Political Opportunities and Constraints,” “Framing Contention,” “Mobilizing Structures and Contentious Politics,” 1-7, 10-19, 71-90, 106-122, 123-138.

Week 8 (March 1, 3): Examples

Keck and Sikkink. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Read “Human Rights Advocacy Networks in Latin America” [part], “Transnational Networks on Violence Against Women,” 79-80, 89-120, 165-198.

Erik Eckhom. “Leaner Factories, Fewer Workers Bring More Labor Unrest to China.” *The New York Times* (March 19, 2002): A1, A8.

Chris Buckley. “Beijing Journal: Seeking Justice, Clad in the Armor of Persistence.” *The New York Times* (March 11, 2002): A4.

Nasra Hassan. *Letter from Gaza: An Arsenal of Believers*. *The New Yorker* (November 19, 2001).

Robert D. Putnam. “Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital.” *Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 1 (1995): 65-78.

NO CLASS March 8, 10

POVERTY and ITS ALLEVIATION

Week 9 (March 15, 17): Explanations AND Examples

Assessing Aid: What Works, What Doesn't and Why. A World Bank Policy Research Report. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. "Overview: Rethinking the Money and Ideas of Aid," 1-27.

Matt Bivens. "Aboard the Gravy Train." *Harper's Magazine* (August 1997): 69-76.

Somesh Kumar. "India: Gains and Stagnation in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh." In *Voices of the Poor: From Many Lands*, edited by Deepa Narayan and Patty Petesch, 147-180. Published for The World Bank. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Nilanjana Mukherjee. "Indonesia: Coping with Vulnerability and Crisis." In *Voices of the Poor: From Many Lands*, edited by Deepa Narayan and Patty Petesch, 181-212. Published for The World Bank. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Alexey Levinson, et al. "The Russian Federation: Struggling Against the Tide." In *Voices of the Poor: From Many Lands*, edited by Deepa Narayan and Patty Petesch, 301-331. Published for The World Bank. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Students may write a reading response or a short essay for this week. Both types of papers are due March 15.

ETHNIC CONFLICT and PEACE

Week 10 (March 22, March 24): Explanations

Henry E. Hale. *The Foundation of Ethnic Politics: Separatism of States and Nations in Eurasia and the World*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008. Read 1-89.

Week 11 (March 29, March 31): Examples

Philip Gourevitch. *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda*. 1st ed. New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1998. Read 1-171. (This book is a journalist's excellent, but disturbing, account of the Rwandan genocide. If you prefer not to read descriptions of graphic violence, skip pages 15-16, 19-20, 30, and 31.)

STATE FAILURE

Week 12 (April 5, 7): Explanations

Robert H. Bates. *State When Things Fell Apart: State Failure in Late-Century Africa*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008. Read “Introduction,” “From Fable to Fact,” 3-14, 15-29.

Week 13 (April 12): Examples

Robert H. Bates. *State When Things Fell Apart: State Failure in Late-Century Africa*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008. Read “Political Legacies,” “Policy Choices,” “Subnational Tensions,” “Things Fall Apart,” “Conclusion,” 33-139.

Conclusion (April 14): Integrating the Phenomena

Students are expected to review their notes and be prepared to integrate the topics we studied.

Final Day (April 19)

DUE: Final Assignment—April 19

NO CLASS April 21, 26