

**Case Western Reserve University**  
**POSC160: Introduction to Comparative Politics**  
**(TTh 2:30-3:45)**

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Office Hours: TTH 12:00-2:00pm (Mather House 221)

Comparative politics is a very broad and inter-disciplinary field which explores politics and societies across the world and across time. It is concerned with methods of study, empirical accuracy, learning through comparing, and investigating some of the most important issues facing the world today. The goals of this course are to introduce students to the tools and subjects of modern comparative politics and also engage political issues relevant to wide parts of the world. While we will not focus on individual countries per se, we will investigate debates and themes relevant to modern to Latin America, Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.

**Grades and responsibilities**

Grading is comprised of four components:

- |    |                          |     |
|----|--------------------------|-----|
| 1. | Exams (2x)               | 40% |
| 2. | Participation/Attendance | 20% |
| 3. | Final Short Paper        | 40% |

There are two in-class exams scheduled during the semester. The participation and attendance grade is based on an objective presence in class and on a subjective assessment of being prepared (i.e. having done assigned readings and prepared to discuss). During the semester I will assign individual short presentations which will also factor into this grade. A final short paper based on the Van Buren book and drawing on course readings will comprise the final assignment and will be due after the last class (exact date to be determined).

**Class Policies to Note:**

Computers or portable devices may only be used in class, with instructor permission, to take notes. You are allowed three excused absences (with documentation); any absences beyond three will affect the grade as well as possible failure. A key to doing well in the class is keeping pace with the readings and actively participating in class discussion.

**\*\*Please turn off mobile phones**

**\*\*Lap tops may only be used in class for note taking. Please see me for permission**

**\*\*Due dates and times for all assignments are strictly enforced. Any rescheduling and/or extensions of exams and/or papers that are not completed at the designed time must be discussed before the deadline to receive a rescheduling/extension.**

Plagiarism whether from digital or printed sources will not be tolerated. Failure to give credit in footnotes for other's ideas, failure to use quotation marks when quoting directly from another source, and/or failure to acknowledge another author's conclusions will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of university regulations.

**Required Text, available in book store:**

Peter Van Buren, *We Meant Well: How I Helped Lose the Battle for the Hearts and Minds of the Iraqi People*, Metropolitan Books, 2011

Also please follow national and international news sources, *New York Times*, *Financial Times*, *Washington Post*, and *The Economist* for example.

**LECTURES and READINGS**

All readings are available through our class canvas site.

- Week 1**      **Introduction to Concepts and their Importance: One of the great historical debates centers on what constitutes political order and how it is achieved. Hobbes and Rousseau exemplify strong positions on these questions.**
- 8/29-31**      Thomas Hobbes, “Of the Natural Condition of Mankind as Concerning their Felicity and Misery” in *Leviathan*, Collier Books, 1962  
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “The Impossibility of Representation” in *The Social Contract*, Oxford University Press, 1960
- Week 2**      **Concepts II: Other concepts key to modern politics across the world are power, legitimacy, and violence. How do we differentiate and what are sources of political and social power in the modern world?**
- 9/5-7**      Hanna Arendt, “On Violence” in *On Violence*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1970  
James Scott, “Behind the Official Story” in *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, Yale University Press, 1992  
George Orwell, “Shooting an Elephant” (this short story can be found online)
- Week 3**      **The modern state is the most powerful association in the world. What is the state and how do we understand its origins?**
- 9/12-14**      Hendrik Spruyt, “The Origins, Development, and Possible Decline of the Modern State”  
Charles Tilly, “How war made states and vice versa,” in *Coercion, Capital, and European States AD 900-1990*, Basil Blackwell, 1990.
- Week 4:**      **States and Late Development in Europe: In modern European history, the building of states, economies, and social power was deeply intertwined.**
- 9/19**      Alexander Gerschenkron, “Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective” in *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective*, Belknap Press, 1962.  
Michel Foucault, “The body of the condemned” in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Random House, 1995)
- 9/21**      **NO CLASS**

- Week 5**      **States and Late Development in Africa and the Middle East: In the developing world, states, economic development, and social power unfolded under very different conditions.**
- 9/26-28**      Ian Lustick, “The Absence of a Middle Eastern Great Power: Political ‘Backwardness’ in Historical Perspective” *International Organization* 51:4, Autumn 1997  
 Robert Jackson and Carl Roseberg, “Why Africa’s Weak States Persist,” *World Politics* October 1982  
 Mouin Rabbani, “The Un-Islamic State,” Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre, September 2014
- Week 6**      **Exam Week**
- 10/3**          **Film: *The Ambassador***  
 Normitsu Onishi, “Portugal Dominated Angola for Centuries, Now the Roles are Reversed,” *New York Times*, August 22, 2017
- 10/5**          **EXAM I**
- Week 7**      **Regime Types: What is democracy in global terms? How do we conceptualize non-democratic regimes?**
- 10/10-12**      Phillipe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, “What Democracy is...and is Not,” *Journal of Democracy*, Summer 1991  
 Lisa Wedeen, *Peripheral Visions: Publics, Power, and Performance in Yemen*, pp. 105-113.  
 Larry Diamond, “Thinking about Hybrid Regimes,” *Journal of Democracy*, 2002
- Week 8**      **Comparative Political Economies: The mutual constitution of the economy and politics is basic to understanding wealth and poverty in the world.**
- 10/17-19**      Lant Pritchett, “Divergence, Big Time,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 11:3, Summer 1997, pp. 3-17.  
 Charles E. Lindblom, “The Market as Prison,” *Journal of Politics* 44:2, May 1982, pp. 324-336  
 Robert Gilpin, “Three Ideologies of Political Economy” in *The Political Economy of International Relations*, 1987
- Week 9**      **Political Economy and Development: One of the classic political economy treatments comes from Barrington Moore’s study of democracy and dictatorship in Europe.**
- 10/24**          **FALL BREAK**
- 10/26**          Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*, pp. 1-55 (skim chapter on France but focus on comparative differences)

**Week 10**      **Rebellions, Revolution, and High Risk Activism: Revolutions constitute one of the most consequential, yet rare, political events. How do we understand the roots of revolution? More to the point, how do we explain the willingness of individuals and groups to participate in such high risk activism?**

10/31      Samuel Huntington, "Revolution and Political Order," in *Political Order and Changing Societies*, Yale University Press, 1968  
Charles Tilly, "Does Modernization Breed Revolution?" *Comparative Politics*, April 1973 (selection)

11/2      Doug McAdam, "Recruitment to High-Risk Activism: The Case of Freedom Summer," *The American Journal of Sociology* (July 1986)

**Week 11**      **The Resource Curse Debate: Returning to political economy, a popular explanation for development and democracy today is the emphasis on resource dependency. Too much resource dependency is deemed bad. How does this work?**

11/7      **Guest Speaker: Guest speaker, Lisa Hajjar, Department of Sociology, University of California at Santa Barbara**

11/9      Michael Ross, "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" *World Politics* 53 no.3, 2001  
Richard Doner, Bryan Ritchie, and Dan Slater "Systemic Vulnerability and the Origins of the Developmental State: North and Southeast Asia in Comparative Perspective," *International Organization* 59, Spring 2005

**Week 12**      **Rentier States: Are states and societies reliant on resource export doomed to failure?**

11/14-16      Ellis Goldberg, Erik Wibbels, and Eric Mvukiyehe, 2008. "Lessons from Strange Cases: Democracy, Development, and the Resource Curse in the U.S. States," *Comparative Political Studies*, 41, 4/5 (April/May), pp. 477-514.  
Marcus Kurtz, "The Social Foundations of Institutional Order: Reconsidering War and the 'Resource Curse' in Third World State Building," *Politics and Society* 37;4, 2009.

**Week 13**      **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

11/21      **EXAM II**

11/23      **THANKSGIVING**

**Week 14**      **Intervention and Nation-State Building: Iraq**

11/28-30      Peter Van Buren, *We Meant Well*, pp. 1-164  
Michel Hechter and Nika Kabiri, "Attaining social order in Iraq," in *Order, Conflict, and Violence*, edited by Stathis N. Kalyvas, Ian Shapiro, and Tarek Masoud Cambridge University Press, 2008  
James Dobbins, "Who lost Iraq?" *Foreign Affairs* 86: 5 (Sep/Oct2007)  
Jason Brownlee, "Can America Nation Build?" *World Politics* 59 (January 2007)

**Week 15**

**The Aftermath**

**12/5-7**

Buren, *We Meant Well*, pp. 165-261

Paul Bremmer interview on Al Jazeera,

Nir Rosen, "What America Left Behind in Iraq," *Foreign Policy*, September 7, 2010.

Also recall: Mouin Rabbani, "The Un-Islamic State," Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre, September 2014

**(Final Short Paper Due, TBA)**