

Political Science 160: Introduction to Comparative Politics

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Why were some leaders, but not others, overthrown in the Arab Spring? Why is Britain more democratic than Hungary? How has the militant group Boko Haram gained influence in Nigeria? 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 stable are different forms of government? How does one country become more democratic than another? Why do civil wars erupt? 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: regime types, democratization, civil wars, participation and activism, ethnic voting and parties, and inequality. For each of the topics we will typically spend one week examining theories of the phenomenon and a second week evaluating the theories against real-world examples. Are the existing theories satisfactory, and, if not, what alternative explanations can we suggest? The examples are drawn from most regions of the world, including Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, North America, and South America.

Course Materials

To evaluate the theories, we will read scholarly works as well as journalistic accounts, travelogues, and policy pieces. The course also incorporates film clips, data analysis, and policy exercises.

Books and Articles: Three works are available for purchase at the bookstore: *The Magic Lantern*, *Power in Movement* (4th edition), and *Poverty by America*. Other required materials are available on the course Canvas 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* can be accessed for free by CWRU students by following the instructions at <https://researchguides.case.edu/NYT>
- *The Economist* can be accessed for free by CWRU students by selecting *The Economist* at <https://researchguides.case.edu/az.php?a=e>
- National Public Radio (WKSU 89.7 FM) broadcasts brief news updates at the top of the hour and news analyses throughout the day. See www.wksu.org for the schedule, recordings, 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 class the week they are assigned, and 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—including COVID-19 illness, quarantine, or isolation—absenteeism will negatively affect students' final grades. If you must quarantine or isolate for COVID-19, please request notes from a classmate.

Theories Week Papers and Examples Week Papers: In addition to reading course materials and participating in class, students will write a theories week paper for three of the six "Theories" weeks and an examples week paper for two of the six "Examples" weeks. The purpose of these papers is to help students understand, critique, and integrate the readings and prepare to pose questions for discussion in class.

For both types of papers, students should develop an argument related to an analytical question, such as what role do masses and elites play in democratization, for a theories week paper, or how did international factors influence the transformation of Eastern Europe in 1989, for an examples week paper. The strongest papers typically introduce the argument in the first paragraph and then use evidence from the readings throughout the remainder of the paper to defend the argument. They also usually incorporate ideas from each reading for that week and perhaps draw on ideas from previous readings as well. Differences between the two papers include the nature of the assigned materials from which they draw (i.e. theories vs. examples) and the lengths of the papers. Theories week papers should be between one and a half to two pages double-spaced; examples week papers should be between two and two and a half pages double-spaced. Finally, the strongest examples week papers typically draw on the theories from the week before.

Students may choose which weeks to write theories week papers and examples week papers; however, they may not write a theories week paper and an examples week paper on the same topic. For example, if a student writes a theories week paper on democratization, they cannot write an examples week paper on democratization. Papers must be submitted as Word files by email to the instructor (kelly.mcmann@case.edu) before the beginning of the first class of the week the analyzed materials are assigned.

Evaluation of the papers will take into account, in order of priority, the use of assigned materials, the degree of independent thinking, and the quality of writing. Here is the detailed grading rubric the instructor uses:

Assume each student begins with an A and then subtract as follows:

Assignment instructions

No evidence that read the current week's readings >>>	minus three letter grades
No original thought >>>	minus two letter grades
No argument >>>	minus a letter grade
No support (facts or logic) for argument >>>	minus a letter grade

Structural problems (argument not introduced at beginning, paper not ordered by argument subpoints, poor transitions, superfluous material)

One or two types of structural problems >>>	minus a half a letter grade
Three or more types of structural problems >>>	minus a letter grade

Writing errors (punctuation, spelling, word meaning)

Clear but writing errors >>>	minus a half a letter grade
Only 80 percent clear because of writing errors >>>	minus a letter grade
Only 50 percent clear because of writing errors >>>	minus two letter grades
Not clear >>>	minus three letter grades

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 six political phenomena. Assignments will be distributed electronically at the end of class Wednesday, December 6, and a completed assignment must be emailed as a single Word file to the instructor (kelly.mcmann@case.edu) by 3:20 pm EST Monday, December 11. Students should plan their schedules accordingly and organize and review their notes in advance.

All written work should be carefully structured and grammatically correct. Computers can be used to check spelling and grammar, but not for other tasks, including, but not limited to, generating essay topics, outline content, or paper content or answering final assignment questions. Informal citations—phrases like “as Bellin argues”—are acceptable. To avoid plagiarism, students should review “Plagiarism: What It is and How to Recognize and Avoid It,” posted on the Canvas course site. Class meetings may not be recorded. Cases of plagiarism, prohibited computer assistance, 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, theories and examples weeks papers for 55 percent, and the final assignment for 30 percent. Students will lose a half a grade on any assignment for each day it is late, except when experiencing extraordinary circumstances.

Course Schedule and Readings

Day 1 (August 28): Introduction to Course and Comparative Politics

NO CLASS August 30, September 4

REGIME TYPES

Week 1 (September 6): Theories

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.

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

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.

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.

Andreas Schedler. "Elections Without Democracy: The Menu of Manipulation." *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 2 (2002), 36-50.

Week 2 (September 11, 13): Examples

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

Eva Bellin. "Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring." *Comparative Politics* 44, no. 2 (January 2012), 127-149.

Péter Krekó and Zsolt Enyedi. "Explaining Eastern Europe: Orbán's Laboratory of Illiberalism." *Journal of Democracy*, 29, no. 3 (July 2018), 39-51.

William Finnegan. "Venezuela, A Failing State." *The New Yorker*, November 7, 2016, electronic version.

DEMOCRATIZATION

Week 3 (September 18, 20): Theories

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

Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986. Read "Opening (and Undermining) Authoritarian Regimes," "Negotiating (and Renegotiating) Pacts," "Resurrecting Civil Society (and Restructuring Public Space)," 15-36, 37-39, 48-56, 57-64, 74-78.

Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson. *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Read "Paths of Political Development" and "Our Argument" [part]. 15-43. Stop at "8. Democracy in a Picture."

Week 4 (September 25, 27): 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 "Witness and History" [part], "Warsaw: The First Election," "Budapest: The Last Funeral," "Berlin: Wall's End," 11-20, 25-78.

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. "Prague: Inside the Magic Lantern," 78-130.

CIVIL WARS

Week 5 (October 2, 4) Theories

James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review*, 97, no. 1 (2003), 75-90.

Michael L. Ross. "What Do We Know About Natural Resources and Civil War." *Journal of Peace Research*, 41, no. 3 (2004), 337-356.

October 4 and 5: Individual meetings with instructor to discuss writing and progress in course. We will not meet as a class October 4.

Week 6 (October 9, 11) Examples

International Crisis Group. *Curbing Violence in Nigeria: The Boko Haram Insurgency*. Africa Report No. 216. April 3, 2014. Read 1-26, 45-46.

Dionne Searcey. "Boko Haram is Back: With Better Drones." *The New York Times* (September 13, 2019). <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/13/world/africa/nigeria-boko-haram.html?searchResultPosition=24>. Read online to see photos.

International Crisis Group. *Facing the Challenge of the Islamic State in West Africa Province*. Africa Report No. 273. May 16, 2019. Read 1-22. See map on page 26.

PARTICIPATION and ACTIVISM

Week 7 (October 16, 18): Theories

Sidney G. Tarrow. *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. 3rd edition. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Read “Capitalism, States, and Social Movements,” “Organizations, Networks, and Hybrids,” “How Movements Make Meanings,” “Regimes, Opportunities, and Threats,” 49-72, 101-120, 121-139, 140-167.

NO CLASS October 23

Week 8 (October 25): Examples

Farnaz Fassihi. “Protests Erupt in Iranian Cities After Woman’s Death in Custody.” *The New York Times* (September 20, 2022).
<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/world/middleeast/iran-protests-mahsa-amini.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article>. Read online to see photo and brief video.

Cora Engelbrecht and Farnaz Fassihi. “Protests Intensify in Iran Over Woman Who Died in Custody.” *The New York Times* (September 22, 2022).
<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/21/world/middleeast/iran-protests-mahsa-amini.html>. Read online to see photos and brief video.

Farnaz Fassihi. “Dreaming of a New Iran: Diaries from Three Young Women.” *The New York Times* (June 14, 2023).
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/06/14/magazine/iran-women-protests.html?searchResultPosition=1>. Read online to see artwork. This reading is optional if you are short on time, but it is useful and moving to read to understand the aftermath of the protests, including the ongoing resistance, and the perspectives of three Iranians (close to) your age.

Marcia Clemmitt. “‘Alt-Right’ Movement.” *CQ Researcher*, 27, 11 (2017), 241-264. 241-256, 258-259.

ETHNIC VOTING and PARTIES

Week 9 (October 30, November 1): Theories

Anthony D. Smith. *National Identity*. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991. Read section defining ethnicity, 20-23.

Donald L. Horowitz. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985. Read “Ethnic Parties and Party Systems,” 291-310, 318-332. Optional: 310-318; read if you would like to learn more about Guyana and Trinidad, two examples Horowitz uses.

Dominka Koter. “King Makers: Local Leaders and Ethnic Politics in Africa.” *World Politics*, 65, no. 2 (2013), 187-232.

Week 10 (November 6, 8): Examples

Ashutosh Varshney. “How India’s Ruling Party Erodes Democracy.” *Journal of Democracy*, 33, 4 (2022), 104-118.

Raphaël Franck and Ilia Rainer. “Does the Leader’s Ethnicity Matter? Ethnic Favoritism, Education, and Health in Sub-Saharan Africa.” *American Political Science Review*, 106, no. 2 (2012), 294-323.

INEQUALITY

Week 11 (November 13, 15): Theories

Thomas Piketty. *The Economics of Inequality*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2015. Read “The Measurement of Inequality and Its Evolution.” 5-25

Kenneth Scheve and David Stasavage. “Wealth Inequality and Democracy.” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 20, (2017), 451-468.

NO CLASS November 20, 22

Week 12 (November 27, 29): Examples

Matthew Desmond. *Poverty, by America*. New York: Crown, 2023.

Conclusion (December 4, 6) Integrating the Phenomena

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

DUE: Final Assignment—Due Monday, December 11 at 3:20 pm EST by email