Comparative Political Systems

GOVT 040   Summer 2019

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Course Description

This course offers a broad introduction to comparative politics, the subfield of political science concerned mainly with political ideas, institutions, and behavior within states. The course examines such themes as the origins and functions of states, formal institutions such as legislatures and executives, the variety and impact of electoral systems, the nature of democracy and autocracy, internal and external challenges to political order, and the impact of international and domestic factors on state performance. Discussions of theoretical and cross-regional issues will be accompanied by treatment of individual countries and contexts.

Requirements

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm examination</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final examination</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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The midterm covers the material from the first part of the course and consists of one over-arching essay question. The final examination covers the material from the second and third portions of the course and consists of several calculations and a long essay question. Several practice problem sets will be posted to Blackboard in the weeks before the exam. For the research paper (12-15 pages), students choose a country and apply the concepts and formulas learned in class to describe and analyze it. Each paper will have three sections: an introduction with the relevant history; descriptive analysis where the calculations learned in class are applied; and prescriptive analysis in which a challenge is identified and a solution proposed. More details will be posted online. Participation will be assessed in conjunction with the teaching assistants and will be based primarily on students’ performance in the discussion sections. All deadlines are found in the course schedule and are not negotiable.

*** Students must abide by the code of academic conduct as outlined in the Georgetown Honor System ***

Texts
The following required texts are for sale at the bookstore:


Course Schedule

**PART I: CONCEPTS AND THEMES IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS**

1. **A Visit to a Town Called Balgat**
   
   Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society*

2. **Introduction: Comparative Politics**
   
   O’Neil Ch. 1. pp. 2-29; ONR pp.4-15.
   
   King, “How to Think” [Bb]

3. **The State**
   
   O’Neill Ch. 2, pp. 30-61


   Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States*, 1-33, [Bb]


4. **The Nation and Nationalism**

   O’Neil, Ch. 3, pp. 62-95


   Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 1-7 [Bb]

**PART TWO: DEMOCRACY, AUTOCRACY AND IN BETWEEN**

5 & 6. **Regime Types and Political Systems: Democracy**
O’Neil, Ch. 5, pp. 134-171.

Alexis de Tocqueville, “Author’s Introduction,” in ONR, pp 379-386.

Dahl, *Polyarchy*, 1-16, [Bb]


7. **Electoral Systems in Democracies**

King, “Electoral Systems,” 1-6 [Bb]


Soudriette & Ellis, “Electoral Systems Today: A Global Snapshot” [Bb]

8. **Political Cleavages and Parties**


9. **Presidential Versus Parliamentary Systems**


10. **Civil Society**


11. **Regimes Types and Political Systems: Autocracy-Totalitarianism**
O’Neil, pp.172-199.

Linz & Stepan, “Modern Non-Democratic Regimes,” in ONR, 267-278


12. **Hybrid Regimes: Dynamics of Semi-Autocracy**

Larry Diamond, Hybrid Regimes, *Journal of Democracy*

Levitsky and Way, “The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism” in ONR, 303-313

Brumberg, “The Trap of Liberalized Autocracy,” *Journal of Democracy*

III. **TOPICS IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS**

13. and 14. **Military Regimes, Coups and Revolutions**

Samuel Huntington, “Political Order in Changing Societies,” *World Politics*


Skocpol, “France, Russia, China: A Structural Analysis of Social Revolutions” in ONR, 310-327.


16. and 15. **Regimes Transitions**


Huntington, “The Third Wave,”

O’Neil: Focus on the latter half of Chapter 9 on Communism.

John Waterbury, “Democracy Without Democrats?”

17 and 18. **Globalization, Winners and Losers—and Populism**

O’Neil, pp. 338-363.
Francois Bourguignon, “Inequality and Globalization” in ONR, pp 564-566.

Niall Ferguson, “Populism as a Backlash Against Globalization” ONR 657-572.