

# Comparative Political Systems

GOVT 040 Summer 2022 First Session

Professor Eric Langenbacher  
Lectures: M-R 3:30-5:30 ICC 116  
Office Hours: T, R 2:00-3:00

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## Overview

This course introduces students to the study of comparative politics. The first section looks at the general concepts and processes that characterize politics, such as the state, the nation, democracy and civil society with reference to why these phenomena developed and what functions they fulfill. The second portion delves into the specific elements and institutions of modern political systems, including the executive, parliaments, subnational and supranational governance, political parties and party systems. We also conduct several mathematical calculations to better understand political life. The final section looks at several more specialized topics in comparative politics—such as corruption, political and economic challenges in the developing world and the process of European integration. Overall, the course intends to provide students with an overview of the field of comparative politics, a deeper understanding of modern political systems and a set of skills with which countries can be analyzed.

## Requirements

Midterm examination	30%
Presentation	30%
Final examination	30%
Participation	10%

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 an essay question. For the **presentation** (10 minutes), students will work with a partner to choose a country and apply the concepts and formulas learned in class to describe and analyze it. More information will be posted on-line at the appropriate time.

Attendance to both the lectures and discussion sections is mandatory and students are expected to come fully prepared for class, completing all assigned readings beforehand. All course materials including powerpoints and recorded lectures will be posted on Canvas.

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

## Texts

The following required texts are available through the Georgetown University bookstore. You can order a hardcopy to be delivered or obtain a digital copy.

Lijphart, Arend. *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, second edition. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012.

O’Neil, Patrick. *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, sixth edition. New York: Norton, 2018.

All other readings will be posted to Canvas. Students are also urged to follow current domestic and international events in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Economist*.

## Course Schedule

### Part I: Concepts and Themes in Comparative Politics

1. June 6      **Introduction to Comparative Politics**  
O’Neil Ch. 1.  
**The State**  
O’Neil, Ch 2.  
Vadim Volkov, *Violent Entrepreneurs: The Use of Force in the Making of Russian Capitalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002) 1-26, 155-191  
Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation”
2. June 7      **The Nation and Nationalism**  
O’Neil, Ch. 3, pp. 62-76;  
Yael Tamir, “The Enigma of Nationalism” (Review Essay), *World Politics* 47, No. 3 (1995): 418-440.
3. June 8      **Regime Types**  
O’Neil, Ch. 6; Ch. 9 pp. 266-285  
Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, “Modern Non-democratic Regimes”
4. June 9      **Democracy**  
O’Neil, Ch. 5.  
**Civil Society**  
Michael Foley and Bob Edwards, “The Paradox of Civil Society,” Robert Putnam, “Bowling Alone”  
Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) 1-16, 163-185

5. June 13      **Political Cleavages and Parties**

Otto Kirchheimer, “The Transformation of the Western European Party Systems”

Hanpeter Kriesi, “The transformation of cleavage politics:

The 1997 Stein Rokkan lecture,” *European Journal of Political Research* 33 (1998): 165–185

**Modernization and Postmodernization**

Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, “How Development Leads to Democracy,” *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 2 (2009): 33-48.

6. June 14      **Summary/Discussion**

7. June 15      **MIDTERM**

**Part II: Institutions and Elements of Democratic Systems**

8. June 16      **The Executive**

Lijphart: Ch. 7

Linz and Horowitz, “Presidential v. Parliamentary Democracy: A Debate”

**Parliaments**

Lijphart: Ch 11

9. June 20      **Subnational Governance**

Lijphart: Ch. 10

Alfred Stepan, “Federalism and Democracy: Beyond the US Model”

10. June 21     **Electoral Rules**

Lijphart: Ch. 8

**The Consequences of Electoral Rules**

Calculating Seat Allocation and Proportionality

11. June 22     **Party Systems: Theory**

**Calculating the Effective Number of Parties**

Lijphart: Ch. 5

12. June 23     **Government Formation**

Lijphart: Ch. 6

Coalitions

Calculating Volatility, Coalition Options and Party Power Index

Lijphart: Chs. 14, 15.

**III. Topics in Comparative Politics**

13. June 27     **Challenges of Development**

O'Neill Ch. 10.

14. June 28    **The European Union**  
 Brigitte Young and Willi Semmler, "The European Sovereign Debt Crisis: Is Germany to Blame?" *German Politics and Society*, 29 no. 1 (2011)  
 Andrew Glencross, "Eurozone Crisis as a Challenge to Democracy and Integration in Europe," *Orbis* (Winter 2014)
15. June 29    **Student Presentations**
16. June 30    **Student Presentations**
17. July 5      **Student Presentations**
18. July 6      **Student Presentations**
19. July 7      **Final Examination**

**Title IX Syllabus Statement (endorsed by Faculty Senate)**

Georgetown University and its faculty are committed to supporting survivors and those impacted by sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, and stalking. Georgetown requires faculty members, unless otherwise designated as confidential, to report all disclosures of sexual misconduct to the University Title IX Coordinator or a Deputy Title IX Coordinator. If you disclose an incident of sexual misconduct to a professor in or outside of the classroom (with the exception of disclosures in papers), that faculty member must report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator, or Deputy Title IX Coordinator. The coordinator will, in turn, reach out to the student to provide support, resources, and the option to meet. [Please note that the student is not required to meet with the Title IX coordinator.]. More information about reporting options and resources can be found on the Sexual Misconduct Website: <https://sexualassault.georgetown.edu/resourcecenter>.

If you would prefer to speak to someone confidentially, Georgetown has a number of fully confidential professional resources that can provide support and assistance. These resources include:

Health Education Services for Sexual Assault Response and Prevention: confidential email [sarp@georgetown.edu](mailto:sarp@georgetown.edu)

Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS): 202.687.6985 or after hours, call (833) 960-3006 to reach Fonemed, a telehealth service; individuals may ask for the on-call CAPS clinician

More information about reporting options and resources can be found on the [Sexual Misconduct Website](#).

*(Above statement and TIX faculty resources found at:*

*<https://sexualassault.georgetown.edu/get-help/guidance-for-faculty-and-staff-on-how-to-support-students/>)*

### **Title IX Pregnancy Modifications and Adjustments**

Georgetown University is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive environment for pregnant students. At any point throughout their pregnancy students may request adjustments/modifications based on general pregnancy needs or accommodations based on a pregnancy-related complication or medical need. Students may also request accommodations following labor and delivery based on a complication or medical need.

SCS students must complete the [Pregnancy Adjustment Request Form](https://titleix.georgetown.edu/title-ix-pregnancy/student-pregnancy/) (<https://titleix.georgetown.edu/title-ix-pregnancy/student-pregnancy/>) and submit it to the SCS Deputy Title IX Coordinator at [titleixscs@georgetown.edu](mailto:titleixscs@georgetown.edu). Upon receiving the completed form, the Deputy Title IX Coordinator will schedule a meeting with the student to discuss the requested adjustments and implementation process.

More information about pregnancy modifications can be found on the [Title IX at Georgetown University Website](#).