

INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS
Political Science 0300
University of Pittsburgh • Fall 2022
Tues. & Thurs. 10-10:50am
120 Lawrence Hall

Professor: Jae-Jae Spoon

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Office Hours: Weds. 3-5pm and by appointment

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*See recitation syllabus for office hours and office location

Course Description

Why are some countries authoritarian regimes while others are democracies? Why do some democracies backslide? Is there a democratic political culture? What's the difference between a president and a prime minister? Why do voters in Europe have so many more options than voters in the US? In this course, you will be introduced to these and other key questions and themes in the study of comparative politics. We will explore regime types, political culture, institutions and political behavior and draw examples from authoritarian states, developing, and developed democracies. We will approach the study of comparative politics through the scientific method which focuses on generalizing across countries, identifying causes and effects, and using empirical evidence. One of the goals of this course is for you to become critical consumers of information about politics. This course will serve as a useful foundation for all future courses you take in comparative politics at Pitt. Introduction to Comparative Politics fulfills two General Education requirements: Social Science and International/Foreign Culture (COM).

General Information

Lecture will take place Tues. and Thurs. from 10-10:50 in 120 Lawrence Hall. Lectures will not be recorded. You are also required to register for and attend one recitation section, which will also not be recorded. All are on Friday. The sections, times, and TAs are below. Check the course guide for room number.

0300-1045	F 10-10:50 am (Melek)	0300-1040	F 10-10:50 am (Yixuan)
0300-1070	F 11-11:50 am (Melek)	0300-1075	F 11-11:50 am (Yixuan)
0300-1065	F 1-1:50 pm (Melek)	0300-1080	F 1-1:50 pm (Yixuan)
0300-1035	F 2-2:50 pm (Melek)	0300-1085	F 2-2:50 pm (Yixuan)

Reading Materials

1) There is one required book for this course, which is available at the Pitt Bookstore and on-line. If you choose to purchase the text on-line, be sure to buy/rent the 12th edition. There is also a copy in Course Reserves at the library.

- John McCormick, Rod Hague and Martin Harrop. 2022. *Comparative Government and Politics*. 12th ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. [Denoted as MHH].

2) You will also be required to read articles (both academic and current event) and other book chapters throughout the semester, all of which will be available on the Canvas site, denoted [C] below, or through on-line links provided.

3) As part of learning about comparative politics, you are strongly encouraged to follow international current events throughout the course. We will be discussing relevant world events in lecture and section and they may appear on the quizzes/exams. There are many great on-line resources for international news, including: *New York Times*—www.nyt.com, *Economist*—www.economist.com, BBC—www.bbc.co.uk, *Der Spiegel*—www.spiegel.de/international; CNN—www.CNN.com; Al Jazeera—www.aljazeera.com. I'd also encourage you to follow these and other news sources on Twitter. Feel free to check out non-English language sources as well. I'd also suggest becoming a regular NPR listener. Our local station is WESA, 90.5 FM—www.wesa.fm/www.npr.org.

Evaluation

Your grade in this course will be comprised of the following. Grades will be calculated on a scale of A-F, broken down as follows:

97-100=A+	87-89=B+	77-79=C+	67-69=D+	59 and below=F
93-96=A	83-86=B	73-76=C	63-66=D	
90-92=A-	80-82=B-	70-72=C-	60-62=D-	

Assessment

Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	25%
Constitution Paper	30%
Weekly Quizzes (10)	15% (1.5% each)
Participation	10%

*All work will be weighted according to the break-down above. Your final grade will thus be out of 100 possible points.

1) Exams. There will be two in-class exams. The exams will be a combination of multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and essay. The midterm will cover all of the material from the first half of the class. The final exam will be cumulative. The midterm will be on Oct. 20th. The final exam will be on Dec. 16th.

2) Constitution Paper. During the second-half of the class, you will be working on a constitution project. This will be a 6-7 pg. paper (plus bibliography) and will be due on Dec. 9th on Canvas. Should you choose to turn in a draft of the paper, it will be due to your TA on Nov. 18th. Details TBA.

3) Quizzes. There will be a short 'check in' quiz each week that you need to login and take on Canvas by **Thurs. at 8pm**. They will be available beginning on Thurs. at 11am. The first quiz will be the week of Sept. 6th. Grades and answers will be available once the quiz closes. We will drop the lowest two (only 10 will be counted). These quizzes will cover material from readings and lecture and current events. They are a way for us to check in and see if you are doing the readings, coming to class, understanding things, and keeping up with the news. You will be allocated a certain amount of time to complete the quiz, which will be no longer than 10 min. You may not take these at an alternate day/time.

4) Recitation. Your recitation grade will be 10% of your total grade and will reflect your participation in recitation sections. Make sure you come to section prepared to participate, ask questions, and discuss the readings and relevant current events. Your TA will provide you with more information about section.

Class Policies

Class Expectations. I expect you to come to class prepared to actively listen (lecture) and participate (section). When you're in class, I expect you to be fully engaged. You may use your laptop or other device to take notes, but if you are using it for something other than taking notes (and distracting other students), we may not allow you to continue using it. Please turn your phone off while you are in class and do not text, check social media or look up information that is not relevant to class. If you plan to come to class to do something else, I suggest that you not come. Please read the textbook and any other assigned lecture readings before lecture and do the recitation readings before your weekly section. Make sure to bring the recitation readings to section each week. You may bring hard copies or have them on your electronic device. To do well in this course, you need come to lecture and section and do the readings.

Attendance. Given the size of the class, attendance will not be taken in lecture. I will not post PowerPoint slides on Canvas and will not provide you with notes. It is also not the responsibility of the TA to provide you with notes, so please don't ask. If you miss lecture or section, please ask a classmate for notes and plan to go to your TA's office hours with questions. You are required to attend your weekly recitation section, where attendance will be taken within the first **10**

minutes of class. Should you arrive after 10 minutes, this will be counted as an absence. You are allowed **two absences** from your recitation during the semester. You do not need to tell the TA why you will be absent or bring any sort of document to justify your absence. Each additional absence will result in a 1% [1 point] deduction from your Recitation/Participation grade. If there is a circumstance in which you will be absent more than twice (e.g. Pitt team travel, Covid-related quarantine or isolation,) please discuss this with your TA **in advance** (or as soon as possible). Should anything else prevent you from attending section, please discuss with your TA and we will determine if any documentation is needed to excuse the additional absences.

Email. Please make sure you check your **Pitt email** regularly. If you do not use your Pitt account, make sure you link your Pitt account to whichever email address you do use. We will send email messages to the class periodically and will use your official Pitt email address. If you want to contact me or your TA, please use our Pitt addresses above.

Canvas. All class materials will be posted here. We will also post announcements and provide links and other useful information on the main course page and on section pages. If you have any questions about using Canvas, check out this resource--
https://canvas.pitt.edu/courses/173838/pages/student-resources-for-using-canvas?module_item_id=3219247.

Extensions and Alternate Dates. In general, we will not allow extensions on assignments or alternate exam dates. However, should you find yourself in a situation where you will not be able to turn an assignment in on-time or be present for an exam, please discuss this with your TA as soon as you can, and not the day the assignment is due or the day of the exam or afterwards.

Late Policy. A late assignment will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each day it is late. After 1 week, it will no longer be accepted.

Grade Appeals. Should you want to appeal a grade you've received, it must be in writing. You will need to explain why you believe you deserve a grade that is different than the one you received. The written appeal should be turned in to your TA, who will then schedule a time to meet with you to discuss your appeal. All final decisions will be made in consultation with me.

Academic Integrity. Students in this course are expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, or other acts of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated by the instructor, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. More information and the complete policy can be found at <http://www.provost.pitt.edu/info/ai1.html>.

Disability Services. If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both me and the Office of Disability Resources and Services (DRS), 140 William Pitt Union, (412-648-7890, 412-228-5347 for P3 ASL users),

drsrecp@pitt.edu, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. For more information, please see <https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/drs/>

Health and Safety: Pitt's current masking policy states that when community levels are **High**, according to the CDC, masks are required indoors. This means that you must wear a face covering that properly covers your nose and mouth when you are in the classroom. If you do not comply, you will be asked to leave class. It is your responsibility to have the required face covering when entering a university building or classroom. You are, of course, free to wear mask at any point, should you choose to. For all Covid-related information, please see <https://www.coronavirus.pitt.edu/>.

Syllabus

Part 1: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Aug. 30. Introduction and Preliminaries

No readings.

Sept. 1. What is Comparative Politics?

MHH, ch. 1 [C]

Recitations (9/2): Introductions, Logistics, and Discussing Comparative Politics

Esther King. "Europe Seeks Own Response to Black Lives Matter." *Politico*. June 11, 2020. <https://www.politico.eu/article/us-style-civil-rights-protests-come-to-europe-george-floyd-black-lives-matter/>

Sept. 6. How do We Study Comparative Politics?

MHH, ch. 2

Recitations (9/9): Does Money Make You Happy?

"Where Money Seems to Talk." *The Economist*. July 14, 2007. Pgs. 63-4. [C]

Part 2: Regimes, Political Culture, and Participation

Sept. 8 & 13. Democracies

MHH, ch. 5 (skip pgs. 111-119)

Robert Dahl. 2005. "What Institutions Does Large-Scale Democracy Require?" *Political Science Quarterly*. 120.2: 187-97. [C]

Sept. 15. Watch *Whisper to a Roar* in class [Prof. Spoon at conference]

Recitations (9/16): What is a Democracy?

Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl. 1991. "What Democracy Is...and Is Not." *Journal of Democracy*. 2.3: 75-88 [C]

"The March of Democracy Slows." *The Economist*. Aug. 20, 2016. [C]

Sept. 20 & 22. Transitions to Democracy and Backsliding

MHH, pgs. 111-119

Peter Krekó and Zsolt Enyedi. 2018. "Orbán's Laboratory of Illiberalism." *Journal of Democracy*. 29.3: 39-51. [C]

Recitations (9/23): How Democracies Die

Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt. 2018. *How Democracies Die*. New York: Crown. Ch. 1, 4, 6. [C]

Sept. 27 & 29. Authoritarian Regimes

MHH, ch. 6, pgs. 355-361, 380-386, 326-334, 455-461.

Recitations (9/30): Life in an Authoritarian Regime

Watch on your own before recitation: *Persepolis (Available on Canvas)*

As background, please read/watch the following:

Joel Krieger, ed. 2001. "Iran." *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, 2nd ed. Pgs. 431-34. [C]

"Iranian Revolution." <https://youtu.be/kY0ixG94cHE> [C]

Marjane Satrapi—Persepolis. "Historical Context." <https://satrapi1.wordpress.com/about/> [C]

Oct. 4 & 6. Political Culture

MHH, ch. 4

Robert Putnam, Robert Leonardi, and Raffaella Nanetti. 1994. *Making Democracy Work*. Chapters 1 & 4 (pp. 3-14 and 83-120). [C]

Recitations (10/7): Is there a clash of cultures?

Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris. 2003. "The True Clash of Civilizations." *Foreign Policy*. March/April. Pgs. 63-70. [C]

World Values Survey On-Line Analysis. <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSONline.jsp>

Oct. 11 & 13. Civil Society and Participation

MHH, ch. 13 & 16 (skip pgs. 320-324, skim pgs. 395-412)

Alan Taylor. "Images from a Worldwide Protest Movement." *The Atlantic*. June 8, 2020. <https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2020/06/images-worldwide-protest-movement/612811/>

Sheri Berman. 1997. "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic." *World Politics*. 49 (April). Pgs. 401-29. [C]

****No recitations on 10/14—Fall Break****

Oct. 18. Midterm Review

Oct. 20. Midterm

Recitations (10/21): Assign Paper, Research and Writing in Political Science

Henry Farrell. 2010. "Good Writing in Political Science: An Undergraduate Student's Short Illustrated Primer." [C]

Part 3: Institutions and Actors

Read the following as an Introduction to Part 3 of the course:

Arend Lijphart. 2012. *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in 36 Countries*, 2nd ed. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Ch. 1. Pgs. 1-8. [C]

Oct. 25 & 27. Multi-Level Governance

MHH, ch. 11

Recitations (10/28): What's Up with Catalonia?

Omar G. Encarnación. 2004. "Democracy and Federalism in Spain." *Mediterranean Quarterly*. 15.1: 58-74. [C]

"Spain and Catalonia: The Trials of Keeping a Country Together." *The Economist*. Nov. 24, 2012. [C]

Miguel Otero-Iglesias. "What Spain's Election Says about Catalan Independence." *The Monkey Cage*. Nov. 21, 2019. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/11/21/what-spains-elections-says-about-catalan-independence/>

Nov. 1. Legislatures (One Chamber or Two?)

MHH, ch. 9

Meg Russell. 2001. "What are Second Chambers for?" *Parliamentary Affairs*. 54: 442-458. [C]

Nov. 3. Executive I: Presidential, Parliamentary and Semi-Presidential Systems

MHH, ch. 8 (skip pgs. 192-196)

Recitations (11/43): Presidents and Prime Ministers: The Good and the Bad

Juan Linz. 1990. "The Perils of Presidentialism." *Journal of Democracy*. 1.1: 51-69. [C]

Article on Brazilian presidential election. TBA.

"Meet Elisabeth Borne, France's New Prime Minister." *The Economist*. May 17, 2022. [C]

Nov. 8 & 10. Executive II: Parliamentary Systems and Government Formation

Review MHH, ch. 8 (focus on pgs. 192-196)

WATCH IN CLASS: British Prime Minister's Question Time
(<https://www.c-span.org/series/?PrimeMinisterQue>)

Recitations (11/11): Forming a Government in Germany/Sweden

Read on-line materials on parties and election results. TBA.

Nov. 15 & 17. Elections and Electoral Systems

MHH, ch. 14 (skip pgs. 352-362)

Recitations (11/18): Why Change the Rules?

David Denemark. 2001. "Choosing MMP in New Zealand: Explaining the 1993 Electoral Reform." In *Mixed-Member Electoral Systems: The Best of Both Worlds?* M.S. Shugart and M.P. Wattenberg, eds. New York: Oxford UP. Pgs. 70-95. [C]

"With Different Rules, Some Big Elections in 2015 Would Have Had Very Different Outcomes." *The Economist*. Dec. 28, 2015. [C]

****Thanksgiving Break—Nov. 21-25**

Nov. 29 & Dec. 1. Political Parties and Party Systems

MHH, ch. 15

"Empty Vessels?" *The Economist*. July 24, 1999. Pgs. 51-2. [C]

Recitations (12/2): Are Party Systems Changing?

Jae-Jae Spoon and Heike Klüver. Dec. 3, 2019. "What Explains Mainstream Party Decline across Europe?" LSE Democratic Audit. <https://www.democraticaudit.com/2019/03/12/what-explains-mainstream-party-decline-across-europe/> [C]

"From Protest to Power: The Stars have Aligned for Germany's Greens." *The Economist*. Jan. 2, 2020. [C]

Dec. 6 & 8 Voting and Voter Turnout

MHH, pgs. 352-357, 320-324

Recitations (12/9): Should Voting be Mandatory?

<https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/voter-turnout/compulsory-voting>

[https://www.fairvote.org/the pros and cons of requiring citizens to vote](https://www.fairvote.org/the_pros_and_cons_of_requiring_citizens_to_vote)

FINAL EXAM – Dec. 16th from 12-1:50pm