

Comparative Politics Field Seminar
PS 2301
University of Pittsburgh • Spring 2025

Professor Jae-Jae Spoon

Email: spoonj@pitt.edu

Web: www.jaejaespoon.com

Office Hours: Thurs. 12-1:30pm or by appointment in 4441 Posvar.

Description

In this class, you will be introduced to a broad cross-section of research in comparative politics. There are two major goals for this course. First, this course is designed to provide you with a foundation for taking advanced classes in comparative politics and an understanding of the intersection of comparative politics with other sub-fields. Second, this course will help you prepare for the comparative politics comprehensive exam. The structure of the course largely follows that of the CP exam reading list. We will focus both on the classics and on recent debates and advances in the literature. Each week will focus on a broad topic. For your research designs, you will have the opportunity to delve into a topic that most interests you.

Course Information and Policies
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Course Materials

The majority of the readings are either available on-line (articles) or on Canvas (book chapters or articles not available on-line). These are denoted as [C]. We will be reading more than half of the following two books, which I would encourage you to purchase. Used paperbacks of each are available for under \$20 from your favorite Internet sites. In lieu of listing additional recommended readings for each week, please consult the updated CP comprehensive exam reading list, available on Canvas.

Hirschman, Albert. 1970. *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Putnam, Robert, Robert Leonardi, and Raffaella Y. Nanetti. 1993. *Making Democracy Work. Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Assessments

Reading and Participation. Do the readings and come to class prepared to discuss, debate, ask questions. Participation is 20% of your grade, which includes leading discussion twice (10% of

your participation grade). For the weeks that you are the discussion leader, please post your questions on Canvas (Discussions) by 5pm on Weds. Make sure you review the discussion leader's questions each week before class. We will determine the discussion schedule on the first day of class.

Response Papers. 3 (4-5 pages double-spaced) reading response papers—30% of your grade (each paper is worth 10%). You may choose the weeks you wish to work on. We will select weeks the first day of class. At least one of these needs to be completed by Week 7. Papers will be due before class that week on Canvas (Assignments). No exceptions. These papers are meant to be analytical response papers and not simply restatements of the readings. You should work to synthesize the readings by focusing on one issue, debate, concept, etc. in the readings. You do not need to include all of the readings for a given week, but cannot just focus on 1 or 2. You should coordinate the days you sign-up to lead discussion with two of the weeks you plan to write a response paper. You may choose to write four papers. Should you do this, I will count the best three.

Research Design. (15 double-spaced pages)—30% of your grade. The goal of the research design is to give you an opportunity to focus in depth on a question related to comparative politics and how you would design a project to study this. The paper will take the form of an empirical journal article or conference paper and have a research question, brief literature review, hypotheses, discussion of the research method and data you would use to answer your question. Some preliminary analysis can also be included, though is not required. **Please note:** This paper should be *distinct* from those you've written (or are writing for) other classes. It can, however, build on (or relate to) something you've written/are writing, especially for 2nd year Political Science students. The proposal (about a paragraph with a preliminary hypothesis and some data ideas) for the project is due Feb. 6th. Paper drafts are to be circulated to me and your assigned reader no later than April 14th. The paper will be due **April 21st at 5pm.**

Final Exam. 20% of your grade. The exam is meant to simulate a comprehensive exam. The exam will be 'take-home' and you will have 8 hours to answer 3 questions. The exam will be open book/article and open note. It is scheduled for **April 24th from 9am-5pm.** Please plan accordingly and let me know as soon as possible if you have a conflict with a class for which you are the TA or other exams. Non-Political Science students may opt to not take the exam and can work individually with Prof. Spoon to determine what the substitute work will be. Please make these arrangements within the first couple of weeks of the semester.

Evaluation

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

3 Response Papers (10% each)	30%
Research Design	30%
Final Exam	20%
Participation (includes 10% for leading 2 discussions)	20%

Grades will be calculated on a scale of A-B, etc. broken down as follows: 93-100=A; 90-92=A-; 87-89=B+; 83-86=B; 80-82=B-...

Class Policies

Expectations. I expect you to come to class prepared to participate. Please have all readings with you and make sure you have looked at (and thought about) the discussion questions before class. When you're in class, I expect you to be fully engaged. .

Attendance. As this is a graduate seminar, I expect you to attend *all* sessions. Should something come up that will prevent you from attending class, please let me know in advance or as soon as you can. We will make arrangements to meet outside of class to discuss the material.

Communication. Please make sure you check your Pitt email regularly. This is how I will communicate with you. Should you need to reach me, please email me directly. I will typically respond within a few hours (as long as it's not the middle of the night).

Extensions and Alternate Dates. In general, I will not allow extensions on assignments. However, should you find yourself in a situation where you will not be able to turn an assignment in on-time, please advise me of this as soon as you can, and not the day the assignment is due. We will work together to come up with a solution.

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

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.

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>.

Classroom Recording. To ensure free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance permission of the instructor. Any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

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/>

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. The University of Pittsburgh does not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation based on disability, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, genetic information, marital status, familial status, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status or gender identity or other factors as stated in the University's Title IX policy. The University is committed to taking prompt action to end a hostile environment that interferes with the University's mission. For more information about policies, procedures, and practices, please visit <https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/civil-rights-title-ix-compliance>.

I ask that everyone in the class strive to help ensure that other members of this class can learn in a supportive and respectful environment. If there are instances of the aforementioned issues, please contact the Title IX Coordinator, by calling 412-648-7860, or e-mailing titleixcoordinator@pitt.edu. Reports can also be [filed online](#). You may also choose to report this to a faculty/staff member; they are required to communicate this to the University's Office of Diversity and Inclusion. If you wish to maintain complete confidentiality, you may also contact the University Counseling Center (412-648-7930).

Syllabus

Week 1 (Jan. 9): Diving Into CP: Questions and Methods

Lijphart, Arend. 1971. "Comparative Politics and Comparative Method." *American Political Science Review*. 65.3: 682-693.

Geddes, Barbara. 1990. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." *Political Analysis* 2.1:131-150.

Coppedge, Michael. 1999. "Thickening Thin Concepts and Theories: Combining Large N and Small in Comparative Politics." *Comparative Politics* 31.4: 465-476.

Slater, Dan, and Daniel Ziblatt. 2013. "The Enduring Indispensability of the Controlled Comparison." *Comparative Political Studies* 46.10: 1301-1327.

Pepinsky, Thomas B. 2019. "The Return of the Single-Country Study." *Annual Review of Political Science*. 22: 187-203.

Week 2 (Jan. 16): States and State Building

Skocpol, Theda. 1979. *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 3-43 and 284-293. [C]

Tilly, Charles. 1985. "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime." In Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds. *Bringing the State Back In*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 169-191. [C]

Centeno, Miguel. 1997. "Blood and Debt: War and Taxation in Nineteenth Century Latin America." *American Journal of Sociology*. 102.6: 1565-1605.

Herbst, Jeffrey. 2000. *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Ch. 1. [C]

Grzymala-Busse, Anna. 2024. "Tilly Goes to Church: The Religious and Medieval Roots of European State Fragmentation." *American Political Science Review*. 118.1: 88-107.

Ding, Iza. 2020. "Performative Governance." *World Politics*. 72.4: 525-556.

Week 3 (Jan. 23): Comparative Political Economy of Development

Deutsch, Karl W. 1961. "Social Mobilization and Political Development." *American Political Science Review* 55: 493-514.

Valenzuela, J. Samuel and Arturo Valenzuela. 1978. "Modernization and Dependency: Alternative Perspectives in the Study of Latin American Underdevelopment." *Comparative Politics*. 10: 535-557.

Remmer, Karen. 1997. "Theoretical Decay and Theoretical Development: The Resurgence of Institutional Analysis." *World Politics*. 50.1 : 34-61.

Przeworski, Adam and Fernando Limongi. 1997. "Modernization: Theories and Facts." *World Politics*. 49.2: 155-183.

Boix, Carles and Susan Stokes. 2003. "Endogenous Democratization." *World Politics*. 55.4: 517-549.

Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson and James Robinson. 2001. "The Colonial Origin of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation." *American Economic Review*. 91.5: 1369-1401.

Week 4 (Jan. 30): Democratization and Democratic Consolidation

Dahl, Robert. 1971. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Ch. 1-2. [C]

Przeworski, Adam. 1991. *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 2, and 4. [C]

Przeworski, Adam, Michael Alvarez, José Antonio Cheibub and Fernando Limongi. 1996. "What Makes Democracies Endure?" *Journal of Democracy*. 7.1: 39-55

Brooks, Sarah M. and Marcus J. Kurtz. 2016. "Oil and Democracy: Endogenous Natural Resources and the Political 'Resource Curse'." *International Organization*. 70.2: 279-311.

Acemoglu, Daron and James Robinson. 2006. *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 2-3. [C]

Riedl, Rachel Beatty, Dan Slater, Joseph Wong, and Daniel Ziblatt. 2020. "Authoritarian-Led Democratization." *Annual Review of Political Science*. 23.1: 315-332.

Week 5 (Feb. 6): Political Culture and Political Attitudes

Almond, Gabriel and Sidney Verba. 1965. *The Civic Culture. Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Boston, MA: Little Brown and Company. Chapters 1, 12, 13. [C]

Inglehart, Ronald and Christian Welzel. 2005. *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. Chapters 1-6. [C]

Swidler, Ann. 1986. "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies." *American Sociological Review*. 51: 273-286.

Elkins, David J. and Richard E.B. Simeon. 1979. "A Cause in Search of Its Effects, or What Does Political Culture Explain?" *Comparative Politics*. 11: 127-146.

Alesina, Alberto and Paola Giuliano. 2015. "Culture and Institutions." *Journal of Economic Literature*. 53.4: 898-944.

Nunn, Nathan, and Leonard Wantchekon. 2011. "The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa." *American Economic Review*. 101.7: 3221-3252.

Week 6 (Feb. 13): Civil Society

Putnam, Robert, Robert Leonardi, and Raffaella Y. Nanetti. 1993. *Making Democracy Work. Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1-4.

Tarrow, Sidney. 1996. "Making Social Science Work Across Space and Time: A Critical Reflection on Robert Putnam's *Making Democracy Work*." *American Political Science Review*. 90.2: 389-397.

Berman, Sheri. 1997. "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic." *World Politics*. 49.3: 401-429.

Satyanath, Shanker, Nico Voigtländer and Hans-Joachim Voth. 2017. "Bowling for Fascism: Social Capital and the Rise of the Nazi Party." *Journal of Political Economy*. 125.2: 478-526.

Booth, John and Patricia Beyer Richard. 1998. "Civil Society, Political Capital, and Democratization in Central America." *Journal of Politics*. 60.3: 780-800.

Varshney, Ashutosh. 2001. "Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society: India and Beyond." *World Politics*. 53.3: 362-398.

Week 7 (Feb. 20): Ethnic and Identity and Politics

Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: Verso. Pgs. 36-46. [C]

Chandra, Kanchan. 2006. "What is Ethnic Identity and Does it Matter?" *Annual Review of Political Science*. 9: 397-424.

Horowitz, Donald. 1993. "The Challenge of Ethnic Conflict: Democracy in Divided Societies." *Journal of Democracy*. 4.4: 18-38.

Fearon, James D. and David D. Laitin. 1996. "Explaining Interethnic Cooperation." *American Political Science Review*. 90.4: 715-35.

Posner, Daniel. 2004. "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi." *American Political Science Review*. 98.4: 529-545.

Conroy-Krutz, Jeffrey. 2012. "Information and Ethnic Politics in Africa." *British Journal of Political Science*. 43.2: 345-373.

Choi, Donghyun Danny, Mathias Poertner, and Nicholas Sambanis. 2023. "The Hijab Penalty:

Feminist Backlash to Muslim Immigration." *American Journal of Political Science*. 67.2: 291-306.

Week 8 (Feb. 27). Political Participation and Voting Behavior

Brady, Henry, Sidney Verba and Kay Schlozman. 1995. "Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation." *American Political Science Review*. 89.2: 271-294.

Kasara, Kimuli and Pavithra Suryanarayan. 2015. "When Do the Rich Vote Less Than the Poor and Why? Explaining Turnout Inequality across the World." *American Journal of Political Science*. 59.3: 613-627.

Croke, Kevin, Guy Grossman, Horacio A. Larreguy, and John Marshall. 2016. "Deliberate Disengagement: How Education Can Decrease Political Participation in Electoral Authoritarian Regimes." *American Political Science Review* 110.3: 579-600.

Gerber, Alan, Gregory Huber, David Doherty and Conor Dowling. 2016. "Why People Vote: Estimating the Social Return to Voting." *British Journal of Political Science*. 46.2: 241-264.

Huber, John D., Georgia Kernell, and Eduardo L. Leoni. 2005. "Institutional Context, Cognitive Resources, and Party Attachments across Democracies." *Political Analysis*. 13: 365-386.

Powell, G. Bingham, Jr. and Guy D. Whitten. 1993. "A Cross-National Analysis of Economic Voting: Taking Account of the Political Context." *American Journal of Political Science* 37: 391- 414.

Week 9. Spring Break (March 6) – No Class

Week 10 (March 13): Collective Action and Social Movements

Hirschman, Albert. 1970. *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapters 1-4, 7, 9.

Olson, Mancur. 1965. *Logic of Collective Action*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Ch. 1-2. [C]

Tarrow. 2022 (1994). *Power in Movement. Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. 4th ed. New York: Cambridge University Press. Introduction- Ch. 3. [C]

Week 11 (March 20): Political Parties and Party Systems

Lipset, Seymour Martin and Stein Rokkan. 1990 (1967). "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments." In *The West European Party System*, ed. Peter Mair. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 91-138. [C]

Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Boston: Harper Collins. Ch. 2, 7-8. [C]

Aldrich, John. 2011. *Why Parties?: The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America. A Second Look*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Ch. 1-2. [C]

Meguid, Bonnie. 2005. "Competition between Unequals: The Role of Mainstream Party Strategy in Niche Party Success." *American Political Science Review*. 99.3: 347-359.

Klüver, Heike and Jae-Jae Spoon. 2016. "Who Responds? Voters, Parties, and Issue Attention." *British Journal of Political Science*. 46.3: 633-654.

Thachil, Tariq. 2014. "Elite Parties, Poor Voters: Theory and Evidence from India." *American Political Science Review*. 108.2: 454-477.

Lupu, Noam. 2014. "Brand Dilution and the Breakdown of Political Parties in Latin America." *World Politics*. 66.4: 561-602.

Week 12 (March 27): Electoral Systems and the Rules of the Game

*If you need a primer on electoral systems: Clark, William Roberts, Matt Golder and Sona Nadenichek Golder. 2018. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Ch. 13. [C]

Powell, G. Bingham. 2000. *Elections as Instruments of Democracy: Majoritarian and Proportional Visions*. New Haven: Yale UP. Ch. 1-2. [C]

Cox, Gary. 1997. *Making Votes Count*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chaps. 2-3. [C]

Clark, William Roberts and Matt Golder. 2006. "Rehabilitating Duverger's Theory: Testing the Mechanical and Strategic Modifying Effects of Electoral Laws." *Comparative Political Studies*. 39.6: 679-708.

Moser, Robert. 1999. "Electoral Systems and the Number of Parties in Postcommunist States." *World Politics*. 51.3: 359-384.

Boix, Carles. 1999. "Setting the Rules of the Game: The Choice of Electoral Systems in Advanced Democracies." *American Political Science Review*. 93.3: 609-624.

Cusack, Thomas, Torben Iversen, and David Soskice. 2007. "Economic Interests and the Origins of Electoral Systems." *American Political Science Review*. 101.3: 373-391.

Week 13 (April 3): No Class—MP SA

Week 14 (April 10): Institutionalism, Democratic Institutions and Their Outcomes

Hall, Peter and Rosemary Taylor. 1999. "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms." *Political Studies* 44: 936-958.

Helmke, Gretchen. and Steven Levitsky. 2004. "Informal Institutions and Comparative Politics: A Research Agenda." *Perspectives on Politics*. 2.4:725-740.

Lijphart, Arend. 2012. *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. 2nd ed. New Haven, CT: Yale UP. Chapters 1-3. [C]

Mainwaring, Scott and Matthew S. Shugart. 1997. "Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy: A Critical Appraisal." *Comparative Politics*. 29.4: 449-471.

Cheibub, José Antonio, Adam Przeworski, and Sebastian Saiegh. 2004. "Government Coalitions and Legislative Success under Presidentialism and Parliamentarism." *British Journal of Political Science*. 34.4: 565-587.

Tsebelis, George. 1995. "Decision Making in Political Systems: Veto Players in Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, Multicameralism and Multipartyism." *British Journal of Political Science*. 25.3: 289-325.

Bednar, Jenna. 2011. "The Political Science of Federalism." *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*. 7: 269-288.

Week 15 (April 17): Comparative Political Economy of Developed Democracies

Esping-Andersen, Gøsta. 1990. *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP. Ch. 1. [C]

Hall, Peter and David Soskice. 2001. "An Introduction to Varieties of Capitalism," in Peter A. Hall and David Soskice, eds. 2001. *Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of*

Comparative Advantage. New York: Oxford University Press. [C]

Thelen, Kathleen. 2014. *Varieties of Liberalization and the New Politics of Social Solidarity*. New York: Cambridge UP. Ch. 1. [C]

Lupu, Noam and Jonas Pontusson. 2011. "The Structure of Inequality and the Politics of Redistribution." *American Political Science Review*. 105.2: 316-336.

Anderson, Christopher J. and Pablo Beramendi. 2012. "Left Parties, Poor Voters and Electoral Participation in Advanced Industrial Societies." *Comparative Political Studies*. 45.6:714-746.

Hays, Jude. 2022. "Taxing the Tails in a Global Economy: How Electoral, Party and Wage Bargaining Systems Interact to Determine the Taxes Paid by the Poor and Rich." *British Journal of Political Science*. 52.3: 1276-1295.

Coming Up:

- **Research designs are due on April 21st at 5pm**
- **Take home exam is on April 24th from 9am-5pm**