

Government  
Introduction to Comparative Politics  
Unique Number  
Semester Year

Instructor: Dr. Rachel Navarre	email
Office:	Class Time:
Office Hours:	Class Location:

Teaching Assistants:

**Course Description:** Why do countries have different political institutions? What is the relationship between economic and political development? How, and why, do public policies vary over countries? These are some of the basic questions that comparative politics seeks to answer. The objective of the course is to introduce students to the major theories and approaches of comparative politics. Using case studies, this class will also examine political processes and institutions across a variety of countries.

Some of the questions we will explore include the following:

- Why are some countries democratic and others are not?
- What makes a country a democracy?
- Why do democracies vary in their electoral system and what effect does changing the electoral system have?
- Is the design of political institutions the result of culture, economic development or something else?
- Why are there variations in the welfare state?
- What effect will globalization have on the nation state?

By the end of the class, students should be able to understand the major theoretical approaches in comparative politics and be able to utilize this information to analyze current events. They will also demonstrate research and critical thinking skills by producing written papers.

**Prerequisites:** To be entered as needed

**Course Requirements:**

Students are required to attend each lecture and complete the assigned readings before each meeting of the class. As the class will be concerned with political institutions and politics, students are highly advised to follow international news and current events. In order to facilitate class discussions students will be periodically assigned readings from blogs and national news sources. These readings will be mentioned in class, and distributed through email and Canvas.

### **Required Text & Materials**

1. Caramani, Daniele, ed. (2014). *Comparative Politics*. Third Edition. Oxford: UK.
2. Smith, Raymond A. (2014). *The American Anomaly: US Politics and Government in Comparative Perspective*. Third Edition. Routledge: New York.
3. Readings posted on Canvas.

### **Class Communication:**

In this class, I will use Canvas (a web-based course management system) accessed at <http://canvas.utexas.edu>. The syllabus, additional readings, and announcements will be posted on Canvas. Students are expected to check Canvas on a regular basis. Please refer to the ITS Help Desk at 512-475-9400 to find support in using Canvas. Important announcements may also be made during class, without other notice.

### **Class Email Policy:**

Before contacting the instructor about questions regarding class policies, please re-check the syllabus. I will only answer emails during my normal business hours, typically Monday-Friday 9 am-5 pm. Please be aware that depending on the time you send me an email, and the time I check my email, you may receive an answer the following **business** day.

Email will be used to communicate class changes through Canvas. All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html>.

### **The University of Texas Code of Conduct**

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

### **Scholastic Dishonesty**

According to the University, "Academic dishonesty" or 'scholastic dishonesty' includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts, and any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two classes without the prior permission of the instructor), or the attempt to commit such an act" (General Information Catalogue Sec. 11-402. *Academic Dishonesty*).

By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to avoid academic and scholastic dishonesty as outlined in the General Information Catalogue. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. For more information on scholastic dishonesty, please visit the Student Judicial services Web site at

[http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint\\_student.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php)

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>. If you require accommodation, it is your responsibility to bring your accommodation letter to me early in the semester so we can work out arrangements. It is also the student's responsibility to schedule exams with SSD.

### **Other Resources for Students**

At UT, there are many resources for students dealing with academic or personal concerns. This website <http://www.utexas.edu/students/> provides links to many of these resources, including (but not limited to) Veteran Support Services, Diversity Services, the UT Campus Climate Response Team, the Sanger Learning Center for Academic Support and the Writing Center. These services are for you as a student, and I encourage you to use them as needed.

The Behavioral Concerns Line (BCAL) number is 512-232-5050.

### **Religious Holy Days**

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class or an examination in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

### **Emergency Evacuation**

Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.

Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office. Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at <http://www.utexas.edu/emergency>.

### **Grading**

This course will use plus/minus grades. Scores of 0.50 and higher will be rounded up, and scores that are 0.49 or lower will be rounded down.

Your final grade will be made up of the following:

Exam One (30%)

Exam Two (30%)

2 Short Papers (40%)

Your final grade will be calculated and converted into a letter grade using the following percentages:

A >93	B- 80-82	D+ 67-69
A- 90-92	C+ 77-79	D 63-66
B+ 87-89	C 73-76	D- 60-62
B 83-86	C- 70-72	F <60

### **Exams**

There will be two in-class exams in this course. Each exam will be based both on readings and in class lectures. Exams will not be cumulative. Each exam is worth 30% of your grade and will be a mixture of multiple choice and short answer questions. You will be required to bring a number 2 pencil to the exam. Paper will be provided for the short answers.

### **Short Papers**

There will be two short papers assigned in this course. Each will be worth 20% of your grade. The first paper will be on Constitutional Design. The second is related to voting and electoral systems. In 2011, New Zealand held a referendum to decide if it should keep its voting system or change to another (<http://www.elections.org.nz/events/past-events/2011-referendum-voting-system>). To help educate the public, the government posted a series of videos that explained the options to citizens. After watching these videos, you will be required to compare and contrast two of these voting systems, using case studies to explore how they are used in practice. Both papers will be discussed in detail in class.

### **Grading Appeals/Questions**

After I have returned or made the grades available to the class on Canvas, you have one week from that day to question the grade. If you wish to appeal the grading on a question you must submit an appeal **in writing via email** that outlines your concerns, and why you think re-grading is required. Grades are confidential. If you wish to discuss your grades, please contact me to schedule an appointment or visit me during my office hours.

### **Absences/Makeup Exam Policies**

You are required to attend exams. Unexcused absences from examinations will result in a score of zero for that exam. Make-ups will only be allowed under extreme emergencies (accident, illness, or university or legal obligation per the University Handbook). You must present prior documentation, such as a letter from your doctor, or a letter from the appropriate university authority for university events if you need to take the make-up exam.

It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor about a missed exam. With the

exception of documented hospitalization or other extreme circumstances, students are required to contact the instructor before the missed exam. In case of unexpected emergencies, the student must contact the instructor within three (3) days of missing the scheduled exam. If the student fails to do so, they will be assigned a zero for that exam. The instructor reserves the right to change the format of the exam for any exam given outside of normally scheduled exam times. The instructor will inform the student of the time and date of makeups.

### **Class Calendar and Reading Assignments**

I reserve the right to adjust the schedule as needed. The readings across from each day should be read prior to that day in class. All readings from the *Comparative Politics* book are marked as CP. Any reading not in the *Comparative Politics* or Smith text will be posted on Canvas.

### **WEEK 1- Introduction- Why study Comparative Politics**

8/27 - Course Introduction

### **WEEK 2 – Theories, testing, and critical thinking**

9/1– What is Comparative Political Science? Critical Thinking and Theories

- CP 19- 33

9/3- Critical thinking and Theories

- CP 34-46
- Gary Gutting (2013) “What Do Scientific Studies Show?” *The New York Times*

### **WEEK 3 – Regime Types: Democracy**

9/ 8 – What is a democracy?

- CP 79-94

9/10 – Democracy with Adjectives

- CP 79-94
- Boris Muñoz “In the Shadow of Chavez” *The New Yorker*

### **WEEK 4 - Regime Types: Authoritarianism**

9/15 - Who rules? Why and How

- CP 96-110

9/17 – **Short Paper 1 Assigned in Class**

Flavors of Authoritarianism, Failed States

- The Economist. 2011 “Where Life is Cheap and Talk is Loose: Modish Jargon or a Useful Category? The Term ‘Failed State’ Conceals Many Tangles.”
- Fareed Zakaria (1994) “A Conversation with Lee Kuan Yew.” *Foreign Affairs*

### **WEEK 5 - Structures of Governance: Constitutions**

9/22 -Constitutions

- CP 150-164
- Explore The Constitute Project (<https://www.constituteproject.org>) and read “Can (and should) we write a Constitution on Google Docs?”

9/24- Case Study Constitutions- The U.S. and South African Constitution of 1996

- Smith 17-26

### **WEEK 5 – Structures of Governance: Judiciary and Legislatures**

9/29- Case Study Judiciary - France

- Smith 91-100

10/1 – **Short Paper 1 Due**

Legislatures

- CP 113-129

### **WEEK 6- Institutions in Democracy: Legislatures continued and the Executive**

10/6 –Legislatures-Case Studies

- Smith 77- 90
- Cameron Abadi. (2011) “Parliamentary Funk” *Foreign Policy*

10/8 The Executive

- Smith 61-76

### **WEEK 7- Levels of Governance: Federalism and Unitary States**

10/13 – Federalism and Local Governance

- CP 181-196

10/15- Federalism- Case Studies

- Smith 28-38
- Sean Kane, Joost R. Hiltermann and Raad Alkadiri (2012). “Iraq’s Federalism Quandary” *The National Interest*.

### **WEEK 8 -EXAM and Elections**

10/13- EXAM

10/15- Elections

- CP 166-179
- Explore [aceproject.org](http://aceproject.org) and [www.idea.int](http://www.idea.int)

### **WEEK 9- Electoral Systems and Parties**

10/20- Case Studies - Elections

- Smith 119- 137
- Videos on Electoral Systems

10/22- Political Parties

- CP 199-235

### **WEEK 10 –Participation**

10/27 – Political Parties and Party Systems

- CP 216- 235, Smith 138-150
- Timothy M. Meisburger (2012) “Getting Majoritarianism Right” *Journal of Democracy* 23:1 (155-163).
- Andrew Reynolds and John M. Carey (2012) “Getting Elections Wrong.” *Journal of Democracy* 23:1.

10/29 - Interest Groups

- CP 237-250
- The Economist, “Interest Groups: Ex Uno, Plures,”

### **WEEK 11- Social Movements and Participation**

#### **11/3 Second Paper Assigned**

##### Political Participation

- CP 302-317
- Pippa Norris “Political Participation” *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*

#### 11/5 -Social Movements

- CP 267-281
- Smith 106-117
- Tarrow and Tilly “Social Movements and Contentious Politics” *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*.

### **WEEK 12- Contentious politics**

#### 11/10 - Revolutions and Protests

- James Fallow (2011) “The Arab Spring, Chinese Winter.” *The Atlantic*
- S. Pincus “Revolutions” *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*

#### 11/12 - Nationalism and National Ethnic Conflict

- *The Economist* “Language and Nationalism: Catalanian Confusion”
- Stefan Wolf (2008) “Conflicts without Borders.” *The National Interest*
- A. Varshney “Nationalism and National Movements” *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*

### **WEEK 13- Development and Democratization**

#### 11/17 Development: Institutions, Geography or Culture?

- Phil Keefer “The Political Economy of Development.” *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Science*
- Excerpts from *Current Debates in Comparative Politics*

#### 11/19 Democratization

- Acemoglu, Daron (2013) “Development Won’t Ensure Democracy in Turkey.”
- Alfred Stepan and Juan J. Lin (2013) “Democratization Theory and the ‘Arab Spring’.” *The Journal of Democracy* 24:2
- B. Geddes “Democratization Theory” *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Science*

### **WEEK 14- Welfare State Across Nations**

#### 11/24 The Welfare State

- CP 349-365
- The Economist (2012) “Rethinking the Welfare State”

#### 11/26 NO CLASS

### **WEEK 15- Globalization**

#### 12/1 What is Globalization?

- Pankaj Ghemawat (2007) “Why the World isn’t Flat” *Foreign Policy*
- CP 407-420
- Jagdish Bhagwati (2002) “Coping with Anti-globalization” *Foreign Affairs*.

12/3 Class Wrap- Up

**2<sup>nd</sup> SHORT PAPER DUE**

- John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge (2014) “The State of the State”  
*Foreign Affairs*.

**FINAL EXAM TBD**