

DePauw University  
Department of Political Science

**POLS 150: Comparative Politics and Government**

Fall 2017  
9:10-10:10 MWF  
Asbury 117

Salil D. Benegal  
salilbenegal@depauw.edu  
Office Hours: Asbury 107  
1:00-2:30 MWF

**Course description:**

How do we compare apples and oranges? There are countless ways in which countries differ: electoral systems, political parties, economic institutions, and commitments to democracy are just a few of the factors that vary from one country to another.

Scholars of comparative politics use a variety of methods to compare such political phenomena across different countries, regions, and time periods to better understand their causes and effects. For instance, to understand the result of an election in the UK, it is valuable to study other elections in similar contexts around Western Europe to better identify the different factors that led to that particular outcome.

Comparative politics is an immensely broad and diffuse field that encompasses (but is not limited to) topics of democratic accountability, electoral systems, political economy, and (under)development in different contexts. Over this course, we will explore many of these issues, for example exploring why the US only has two major political parties whereas many Western European democracies have several, or why revolutions in different countries have either succeeded or failed.

**Course requirements and expectations:**

One textbook is required for this class: O'Neil and Rogowski: Essential Readings in Comparative Politics, 4<sup>th</sup> edition

Your grade will be determined by the following:

• **Exams: 55% total** (Final exam 30%, midterm exam 25%)

There will be a midterm and final exam. Both exams will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay sections. The midterm exam is scheduled for Wednesday, October 25, and will take the entire class session.

The final exam is scheduled from 8:30 to 11:30 am on Fri, Dec 15, and cannot be changed or rescheduled except due to specific circumstances defined by university policies (e.g. dean's excused absence, or bunched finals). I advise you to not book travel arrangements that have you leaving before the end of finals week. See the DePauw

academic handbook at <http://www.depauw.edu/files/resources/academic handbook.pdf> for university policies regarding exams.

• **In-class quizzes: 20%**

There will be five quizzes at various points during the semester. These will typically be comprised of multiple choice and short answer questions, and will be based both on readings and in-class lectures.

• **Group project and presentation: 15%**

This course teaches you to compare and contrast political institutions or outcomes in different contexts. This assignment gives you a chance to apply these skills and knowledge in evaluating different political outcomes (e.g. quality of democracy, social welfare policies, or economic development) in different countries. In small groups, you will be expected to write a short paper (approximately 2000 words) on the topic and hold a brief (10-12 minute) PowerPoint presentation in class outlining your assessments. I will give out specifics about the assignment and expectations during the third week of classes.

• **In-class participation: 10%**

While I do not formally take attendance, regular attendance is essential to pass the class as quizzes and exams are based on both in-class lectures and theories from the readings. Your grade will be penalized for more than two unexcused absences from class.

However, attendance alone is not participation: I expect that students who come to class do so having completed the assigned readings, and are willing to participate in a meaningful manner. Your participation grade will be based on the quality as well as the level of participation in class, in terms of adding to discussions or debates with constructive comments and ideas. Simply raising your hand to seek clarification on a topic does not constitute participation; rather, I look for informed comments that actively engage with the lecture topic or readings, or questions that can stimulate or add to ongoing discussions. I also expect that you will also be considerate of others' opinions in the class and respectfully engage with their comments and ideas, whether or not they may share your opinions or political views.

Given that many of the issues covered in this class are a significant part of political and public discourse at this time, I expect students to also remain fairly well informed on these issues in the news. Current political events will regularly become part of class discussions, and I suggest subscribing to a major national daily news source (e.g. *New York Times*, *Washington Post*) for their coverage of political matters in countries such as China, India, UK, or Germany. I would also recommend using other non-American newspapers for broader perspective on these matters; for example, *Indian Express*, *South China Morning Post*, or *The Independent/Guardian*.

• **Grading scale:**

B+: 87.0% to 89.9%	A: 93.0% or above	A-: 90.0% to 92.9%
C+: 77.0% to 79.9%	B: 83.0% to 86.9%	B-: 80.0% to 82.9%
D+: 67.0% to 69.9%	C: 73.0% to 76.9%	C-: 70.0% to 72.9%
F: 59.9% or below	D: 63.0% to 66.9%	D-: 60.0% to 62.9%

**Policies on electronics, slides, communication, and accessibility:**

I do not allow the use of laptops, tablets, cell phones, and other electronic devices in class. Laptop use is often distracting both to the users and those students around them, particularly in a discussion-oriented class such as this. For certain group assignments that require in-class research, I will ask you to bring a laptop or similar device to class, and will notify you of these ahead of time. If you have a documented accommodation that requires you to use a laptop to take notes, please speak to me in office hours about this.

I frequently teach using PowerPoints. I will post these slides on Moodle as study aids. These should help you focus on key points for quizzes/tests when reviewing, but will not serve as a substitute for your own attendance or note-taking.

Notices about assignment guidelines, quiz dates, possible reading changes, and the like will be announced by email via Moodle. I will usually announce these in class as well, but you are responsible for regularly checking both your university email and Moodle on a regular basis. Given that climate change and environmental policy are highly contentious topics in politics today, new policy debates or events may emerge at any point that may require us to deviate from the scheduled topics and readings on the syllabus. As such, I reserve the right to amend the syllabus to add/change assigned readings, or discussion topics in order to best meet the objectives of the course.

The most effective way to reach me is by email: I generally respond to emails within 24 hours.

I normally keep office hours Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays; however, I suggest emailing me to schedule a meeting time. I am happy to meet with any student when available (during scheduled office hours or otherwise), but I will always prioritize a scheduled appointment over a walk-in.

## **Course schedule and readings:**

Wed, Aug 23: Introductions and course expectations

Fri, Aug 25: What do we mean by “comparative” politics?

Textbook chapter: Lichbach and Zuckerman: "Research Traditions and Theory in Comparative Politics"

Mon, Aug 28: Defining democracy

Textbook chapter: Schmitter and Karl: "What Democracy Is... And Is Not."

Wed, Aug 30: Is democracy more than elections?

Collier, David and Steven Levitsky. 1997. "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research." *World Politics* 49(3): 430-451.

Fri, Sep 1: Democratic culture

Inglehart, R., & Welzel, C. (2010). Changing mass priorities: The link between modernization and democracy. *Perspectives on Politics*, 8(02), 551-567.

Mon, Sep 4: Social capital and democracy

Textbook chapter: Putnam

Wed, Sep 6: Democracy and development

Textbook chapter: Acemoglu et al.: “Income and Democracy”

Fri, Sep 8: Oil and democracy

Ross, M. L. (2001). Does oil hinder democracy? *World politics*, 53(3), 325-361.

Textbook chapter: Weinthal and Luong: "Combating the Resource Curse: An Alternative Solution to Managing Mineral Wealth"

Mon, Sep 11: An introduction to non-democratic regimes (Quiz 1)

Textbook chapter: Linz and Stepan: “Modern Nondemocratic Regimes”

Wed, Sep 13: Illiberal democracies

Zakaria, F. (1997). The rise of illiberal democracy. *Foreign affairs*, 22-43.

Fri, Sep 15: Competitive authoritarianism

Textbook chapter: Levitsky and Way: "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism"

Mon, Sep 18: What happens when democratic societies backslide?

Bermeo, N. (2016). On Democratic Backsliding. *Journal of Democracy*, 27(1), 5-19.

Everyday Authoritarianism is Boring and Tolerable:

<https://tompepinsky.com/2017/01/06/everyday-authoritarianism-is-boring-and-tolerable/>

Wed, Sep 20: Democratic backsliding in Turkey

Esen, B., & Gumuscu, S. (2016). Rising competitive authoritarianism in Turkey. *Third World Quarterly*, 37(9), 1581-1606.

Fri, Sep 22: Electoral rules and their implications (Quiz 2)

Lijphart, A. (1999). *Patterns of Democracy*. Chapter 8: Electoral Systems. (PDF on Moodle.)

Mon, Sep 25: Duverger's law and plurality systems

Textbook chapter: Duverger: "The Number of Parties"

Wed, Sep 27: No class - DePauw day of dialogue

Fri, Sep 29: Majority elections of presidents, and the Condorcet ranking method

Shugart, M. S., & Taagepera, R. (1994). Plurality versus majority election of presidents: A proposal for a "double complement rule". *Comparative Political Studies*, 27(3), 323-348.

Mon, Oct 2: The differences between Presidents and Prime Ministers

Linz, J. J. (1990). The Perils of Presidentialism. *Journal of Democracy*, 1(1), 51-69.

Wed, Oct 4: Are presidential systems especially likely to break down?

Horowitz, D. L. (1990). Comparing democratic systems. *Journal of Democracy*, 1(4), 73-79.

Fri, Oct 6: The origins of political party families in Western Europe (Quiz 3)

Kitschelt, H. 2009. "Party Systems," from the Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics

Mon, Oct 9: No class - traveling for a conference

Wed, Oct 11 and Fri, Oct 13: Comparing social revolutions: France and China

Textbook chapter: Skocpol: "France, Russia, China: A Structural Analysis of Social Revolutions"

Oct 14-22 – Fall break (No class)

Mon, Oct 23: Revolution in Eastern Europe

Textbook chapter: Kuran: "Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the Eastern European Revolution of 1989."

**Wed, Oct 25: Midterm exam**

Fri, Oct 27: The Radical Right

Mudde, C. 2017. "An Introduction to the Populist Radical Right," from *The Populist Radical Right*

Mon, Oct 30 and Wed, Nov 1: An introduction to political economy

Textbook chapters: Adam Smith: "An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations"

Daron Acemoglu: "Root Causes: A Historical Approach to Assessing the Role of Institutions in Economic Development"

Fri, Nov 3: Economic institutions

Textbook chapter: North: "Institutions"

Mon, Nov 6: Varieties of capitalism

Hall, P. and Soskice, D. (2001.) "An Introduction to Varieties of Capitalism." in *Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*. pp. 1-68. (PDF on Moodle.)

Wed, Nov 8 and Fri, Nov 10: Welfare states and social policy in CMEs (Quiz 4 11/8)

Textbook chapter: Estevez-Abe et al.: "Social Protection and the Formation of Skills"

Swank, D. (2005). Globalisation, domestic politics, and welfare state retrenchment in capitalist democracies. *Social Policy and Society*, 4(2), 183-195.

Mon, Nov 13 and Wed, Nov 15: Group project presentations

Fri, Nov 17 and Mon, Nov 20: Winner-take-all politics and inequality

Hacker, J. S., & Pierson, P. (2010). Winner-take-all politics: Public policy, political organization, and the precipitous rise of top incomes in the United States. *Politics & Society*, 38(2), 152-204.

Pacek, A., & Radcliff, B. (2008). Assessing the welfare state: The politics of happiness. *Perspectives on Politics*, 6(2), 267-277.

Thanksgiving break - no class

Mon, Nov 27: Ethnicity and political divisions

Posner, D. N. (2004). The political salience of cultural difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are allies in Zambia and adversaries in Malawi. *American Political Science Review*, 98(04), 529-545.

Wed, Nov 29: Inequality and clientelism

Stokes, S. C. (2005). Perverse accountability: A formal model of machine politics with evidence from Argentina. *American Political Science Review*, 99(03), 315-325.

Fri, Dec 1: The problem of underdevelopment (Quiz 5)

Textbook chapter: Collier and Gunning: "Why Has Africa Grown Slowly?"

Mon, Dec 4 and Wed, Dec 6: Dealing with underdevelopment

Textbook chapter: Easterly: "To Help the Poor"

Williamson, John (1993). Democracy and the "Washington consensus". *World development*, 21(8), 1329-1336.

Fri, Dec 8: Review session

**Fri, Dec 15: Final exam 8:30 to 11:30**

**Other policies:**

- Student disability accommodations

It is the policy and practice of DePauw University to provide reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. Written notification from Student Disability Services is required. If you are eligible to receive an accommodation and would like to request it for this course, please contact Student Disability Services. Allow one week advance notice to ensure enough time for reasonable accommodations to be made. Otherwise, it is not guaranteed that the accommodation can be provided on a timely basis. Accommodations are not retroactive. Students who have questions about Student Disability Services or who have, or think they may have, a disability (psychiatric, attentional, learning, vision, hearing, physical, medical, etc.) are invited to contact Student Disability Services for a confidential discussion in Union Building Suite 200 or by phone at 658-6267.

- Academic honesty

All students taking this class must adhere to the standards of academic integrity outlined in the DePauw student code: see the DePauw academic handbook (URL provided on page 2) for the full academic integrity policy. In cases of plagiarism or cheating on quizzes or exams that violate the academic integrity code, students will automatically get a grade of 0 for the assignment or exam with no opportunity to retake it, and may face further sanctioning in accordance with university policy.