

Introduction to Comparative Politics

PLSC 3

Thomas Building 101

MoWeFr - 9:05-9:55am

Instructor Information

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Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow

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Pond Lab 303

Office Hours: Monday 1:30pm-4:30pm

Teaching Assistants

Qing Deng

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Pond Lab 214

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Caner Şimsek

Ph.D. Student

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Pond Lab 224

Office Hours: Thursday 11am-noon

Textbook

The following textbook is required reading for the class.

Clark, William, Matt Golder and Sona Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics* (Third Edition). Washington D.C.: CQ Press/Sage.

Course Description

The goals of this class are to introduce the students to the fundamental concepts of comparative politics, and to examine some of the important questions of comparative politics. Throughout the course, we will learn some of the main theoretical and empirical results of the field, and we will familiarize with tools such as game theory and statistical analysis. Some of the questions that we will discuss are the following: How do we define and measure a democratic system? What explains the variation in regime type? What influences the number and the ideological position of political parties in a democratic system? What are the determinants of coalition formation and survival, and the dynamics of policy-making by coalitions? How are economic policies influenced by electoral rules, federalism, and political polarization?

Requirements and Evaluation

Participation - 10 Points

You are expected to attend all classes and read the assigned material before coming to class. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to go over the lecture material, and request class notes from your classmates. The lecture slides will be posted after we finish covering each chapter. It is not possible for the teaching assistants or me to schedule individual make-up lectures for missed classes. That said, **I strongly encourage you to ask any questions you have about the material during lectures as well as during office hours.**

In order to evaluate participation, I will give quizzes during some of the lectures. The quizzes will include questions regarding previous lectures as well as the reading assigned for that week. It is not possible to retake a quiz if you are absent or late to class. In order to make up for such cases, the three lowest quiz grades will be dropped.

Exams

You will have two midterm exams on the dates listed below. The final exam will be during the finals week - I will announce the exact date later in the semester. The final exam conflict filing period is September 24 - October 14. Each midterm exam is worth 25 points, and the final exam is worth 40 points. All exams will be "closed-book." Make-up exams will only be given in cases of health or family emergencies or university-approved events. The requests for make-up exams will only be considered before the exam. The make-up exams will only comprise essay questions.

Use of Technology in Classroom

The use of mobile phones is not allowed during lectures unless there is an emergency. The use of computers should be limited to note taking. Any violation of this policy would result in points deducted from your participation grade.

Extended Absences

During your enrollment at Penn State, unforeseen challenges may arise. If you ever need to miss an extended amount of class in such a circumstance, please notify your professor so you can determine the best course of action to make up missed work. If your situation rises to a level of difficulty you cannot manage on your own with faculty support, reach out to the Student Care & Advocacy office by phone at (814-863-2020) or email them at StudentCare@psu.edu. Office hours are Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Grading scale

Score	Grade	Score	Grade	Score	Grade
≥ 94	A	≥ 83	B	≥ 70	C
≥ 90	A-	≥ 80	B-	≥ 60	D
≥ 87	B+	≥ 75	C+	< 60	F

Academic Integrity

Students with questions about academic integrity should visit <http://www.la.psu.edu/> and then click on "Academic Integrity."

Penn State defines academic integrity as "the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner" ([Senate Policy 49-20](#)). Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without permission from the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Students facing allegations of academic misconduct should not drop the course; those who do will be added to the course again and will be expected to complete course work and meet course deadlines. If the allegations are dismissed, then the drop will be permitted. Students found responsible for academic misconduct often receive academic sanctions, which can be severe, and put themselves at risk for disciplinary sanctions assigned by the University's Office of Student Conduct (see [Senate Policy G-9](#)).

Disability Accommodation

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. Every Penn State campus has an office for students with disabilities. Student Disability Resources (SDR) website provides contact information for every Penn State campus (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/disability-coordinator>). For further information, please visit Student Disability Resources website (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/>).

In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: See documentation guidelines (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/guidelines>). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus disability services office will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early as possible. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.

Counseling and Psychological Services

Many students at Penn State face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

[Counseling and Psychological Services at University Park \(CAPS\)](#): 814-863-0395

[Counseling and Psychological Services at Commonwealth Campuses](#)

Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week): 877-229-6400

Crisis Text Line (24 hours/7 days/week): Text LIONS to 741741

Educational Equity/Report Bias

Penn State University has adopted a "[Protocol for Responding to Bias Motivated Incidents](#)" that is grounded in the policy that the "University is committed to creating an educational environment which is free from intolerance directed toward individuals or groups and strives to create and maintain an environment that fosters respect for others." That policy is embedded within an institution traditionally committed to [academic freedom](#). Bias motivated incidents include conduct that is defined in [University Policy AD 91: Discrimination and Harassment, and Related Inappropriate Conduct](#).

Students, faculty, or staff who experience or witness a possible bias motivated incident are urged to report the incident immediately by doing one of the following:

* Submit a report via the Report Bias webpage <http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/>

* Contact one of the following offices:

University Police Services, University Park: 814-863-1111

Multicultural Resource Center, Diversity Advocate for Students: 814-865-1773

Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity: 814-865-5906

Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs: 814-865-0909

Affirmative Action Office: 814-863-0471

* Dialing 911 in cases where physical injury has occurred or is imminent.

Tentative Schedule

Week 1 - Introduction

August 20 - 24

Clark, Golder and Golder. Chapters 1-2.

Week 2 - What is Politics?

August 27 - 31

Clark, Golder and Golder. Chapter 3.

August 31 - NO CLASS - APSA Annual Meeting

Week 3 - The Origins of the Modern State

September 3 - 7

September 3 - NO CLASS - Labour Day

Clark, Golder and Golder. Chapter 4.

Week 4 - Democracy and Dictatorship

September 10 - 14

Clark, Golder and Golder. Chapter 5.

Week 5 - Determinants of Democracy and Dictatorship

September 17 - 21

Clark, Golder and Golder. Chapters 6-7.

Week 6 - Democratic Transitions
September 24 - 28

September 26 - MIDTERM EXAM 1

Clark, Golder and Golder. Chapter 8.

Week 7 - Consequences of Democracy and Dictatorship
October 1 - 5

Clark, Golder and Golder. Chapter 9.

Week 8 - Varieties of Dictatorship
October 8 - 12

Clark, Golder and Golder. Chapter 10.

Week 9 - Problems with Group Decision Making
October 15 - 19

Clark, Golder and Golder. Chapter 11.

Week 10 - Parliamentary and Presidential Democracies
October 22 - 26

Clark, Golder and Golder. Chapter 12.

Week 11 - Elections and Electoral Systems
October 29 - November 2

October 29 - MIDTERM EXAM 2

Clark, Golder and Golder. Chapter 13.

Week 12 - Social Cleavages and Party Systems
November 5 - November 9

Clark, Golder and Golder. Chapter 14.

Week 13 - Institutional Veto Players
November 12 - November 16

Clark, Golder and Golder. Chapter 15.

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week 14 - Consequences of Democratic Institutions
November 26 - November 30

Clark, Golder and Golder. Chapter 16.

Week 15 - Consequences of Democratic Institutions
November December 3 - December 7

FINAL EXAM (TBD)