

PSCI 2012-300E: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Spring 2022

GUGG 206 | T 5:00-6:30PM (MST)

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Office Hours: Tue & Wed 2-4
Virtual & **by appointment**

COURSE DESCRIPTION



This is an introductory course in the comparative politics (CP) subfield of political science. As political scientists, we are often interested in making comparisons: Why are some countries democratic while others are authoritarian? Why are some countries rich and some countries poor? Why do some people vote while others do not? These are undoubtedly important questions with real world policy implications. However, developing and testing answers to these questions is a difficult task. Unlike a chemist in their laboratory setting, political scientists must grapple with the complexities of the social world where an infinite number of factors could potentially be driving an outcome.

In this course, we will attempt to formulate explanations for important political outcomes as well as test our explanations through use of the comparative method. Since this course is intended as an introduction to CP, the class is designed to cover a wide range of issues, including democratization, political participation, violent conflict, development, inequality, globalization, and more. Considering the diverse array of topics we will cover, this course stresses foundational concepts and fundamental theories over more in-depth analyses of subject areas which are provided in upper-level courses within the Political Science Department.

FORMAT OF THE COURSE

This is a *hybrid* online course. Accordingly, you may choose to attend this lecture in person or virtually. Nevertheless, attendance is mandatory. Every Tuesday starting at 5PM MST, I will record a live lecture in [this Zoom room](#) (password: democracy). If you are attending this class virtually, please mute your microphone, but leave your camera on. During each lecture, I will periodically stop to ask questions or give students a chance to ask me questions. If you would like to participate, please raise your virtual hand (button located on bottom right of screen) and I will call on you. You can then unmute your microphone.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Samuels, David J. 2012. *Comparative Politics (First Edition)*. Pearson: London, UK.
- Samuels, David J. 2012. *Case Studies in Comparative Politics (First Edition)*. Pearson: London, UK.
- I will post all other readings on Canvas. Otherwise, most of these readings are easily accessible through Google Scholar and/or the Norlin Library.

GRADING

Letter grades for the course are computed as follows: **A** = 94-100; **A-** = 90-93; **B+** = 87-89 ; **B** = 83-86; **B-** = 80-82; **C+** = 77-79; **C** = 73-76; **C-** = 70-72 ; **D+** = 67-69; **D** = 63-66; **D-** = 60-62; **F** = <60.

Your grade for the course is comprised of the following criteria:

Midterm Exam (Mar 15)	20%
Final Exam (Apr 26)	20%
Take Home Quiz (Feb 1)	5%
Case Study Exercises	20%
Attendance & Participation	10%
Paper Outline	5%
Comparative Case Study Paper	20%

Exams (20% Each; 40% total). There are two non-cumulative open-book exams for this course (each 20% of your final grade). Both exams will consist of three parts. For the first part, you will answer a series of multiple choice and true/false questions. For the second part, you will be given a set of terms and be asked to define them in 2-3 sentences. For the third part, you will be given a choice of two short response questions to answer in a few paragraphs. Generally, the exams will test your knowledge of key concepts in CP as well as your ability to relate the concepts and readings to real world problems. I will distribute a study guide prior to each exam. Both exams will take place virtually on Canvas (i.e., you do not need to be physically on campus these days).

Take Home Quiz (5%). To assist you in learning the comparative method, all students must complete an open-book quiz on Canvas that will test students' knowledge of the "method of difference" and

“method of agreement” from Chapter 1 of their textbook. The quiz will consist of 6 multiple choice questions and a short answer question. Once opening the quiz, there is no time limit and you may choose to take this quiz during a time of your convenience. However, **you must complete this quiz by Tuesday, February 1st, 5PM MST.**

Case Study Exercises (5% each; 20% total). At different points during the semester, students will read in-depth case studies of four countries (i.e., China; Germany; Iran; and Nigeria) and then complete a series of short answer questions as homework. Generally, students should expect each homework assignment to take them between 2-3 hours (including reading time). The assignment instructions for these exercises will be released two weeks prior to the due date. **Late assignments are penalized a full letter grade per calendar day late.**

Attendance and Participation (10%). You may choose to attend each class virtually or in person. Since we only meet once a week, attendance is essential for doing well in this course. You are permitted *one* absence (excused or unexcused) throughout the entirety of the semester. Following this, I deduct 10 percentage points from your attendance grade per every additional absence. In addition, the quality and quantity of your participation is factored into this portion of your grade. Generally speaking, students that attend class but do not participate can expect to receive a “C” for this portion of their grade.

Comparative Case Study Paper (25% total). Each student is required to write a short analytical paper that explains a particular outcome by comparing two different country cases. For instance, you may be interested in why some countries democratize or why some countries are plagued by civil war. In no more than six double-spaced pages, you will have to select two different countries and develop a political argument that explains each case using the comparative method. You should refer to the separate assignment sheet (posted on Canvas) for more in-depth instructions.

All students must approve a topic with me by submitting a typed bullet-point 1-2 page (double-spaced) outline by Tuesday, February 22. The outline counts as 5% toward your final grade. Your outline should address the following bullet points:

- What is the policy or outcome that your paper seeks to explain (i.e., the *dependent* variable)?
- Why is this policy or outcome important, puzzling, or worth analyzing?
- What is your argument? In other words, what factor (i.e., the *independent* variable) do you think explains the policy or outcome you have chosen and why? You may choose to formulate your own original argument or test existing arguments we discuss in class (e.g., modernization theory, the “resource curse”, etc.).
- Which two countries will you choose to compare and why? For this part, you should refer to either the “Method of Agreement” or “Method of Difference” as discussed in Chapter 1 of your textbook. **You may not choose the U.S. as one of your cases.**
- A preliminary works cited page on the back. Your works cited do *not* count toward the page limit.

Ideally, students at the end of the semester will have a polished writing sample that they can use for applying to internships, jobs, and other opportunities beyond their time at CU. The page limit for final papers is six double-spaced pages. All papers should use 1-inch margins and 12pt Times New Roman font. Papers that exceed the page limit or do not follow these directions will be penalized. **The deadline for papers is Tuesday, April 12.** All papers must be submitted through Canvas. Late papers are penalized a full letter grade per calendar day late.

OFFICE HOURS

I am always happy to provide additional help to students outside of class during office hours. Office hours for the term are virtual and by appointment between 2-4PM MST on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Please use [this link](#) to book me for an office hours appointment. If none of these time slots work for you, please send me an email with some of your available times and we will set up a meeting. Note that any grade disputes cannot be discussed over email and will require a virtual appointment on Zoom.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Both students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote or online. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. For more information, see the policies on classroom behavior and the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution policies on CU's website.

CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

I take cheating and plagiarism very seriously. All written assignments must be submitted electronically through Canvas. The penalty for plagiarism — purposeful or accidental — carries the penalty of a “0” for the assignment. A second violation automatically results in an “F” for the course. If you have any questions concerning the ground rules for what qualifies as plagiarism, please consult me in advance.

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found online.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Requirements for COVID-19

As a matter of public health and safety due to the pandemic, all members of the CU Boulder community and all visitors to campus must follow university, department and building requirements and all public health orders in place to reduce the risk of spreading infectious disease. Students who fail to adhere to these requirements will be asked to leave class, and students who do not leave class when asked or who refuse to comply with these requirements will be referred to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. For more information, see the policy on classroom behavior and the Student Code of Conduct. If you require accommodation because a disability prevents you from fulfilling these safety measures, please follow the steps in the “Accommodation for Disabilities” statement on this syllabus.

As of Aug. 13, 2021, CU Boulder has returned to requiring masks in classrooms and laboratories regardless of vaccination status. This requirement is a temporary precaution during the delta surge to supplement CU Boulder’s COVID-19 vaccine requirement. Exemptions include individuals who cannot medically tolerate a face covering, as well as those who are hearing-impaired or otherwise disabled or who are communicating with someone who is hearing-impaired or otherwise disabled and where the ability to see the mouth is essential to communication. If you qualify for a mask-related accommodation, please follow the steps in the “Accommodation for Disabilities” statement on this syllabus. In addition, vaccinated instructional faculty who are engaged in an indoor instructional activity and are separated by at least 6 feet from the nearest person are exempt from wearing masks if they so choose.

Students who have tested positive for COVID-19, have symptoms of COVID-19, or have had close contact with someone who has tested positive for or had symptoms of COVID-19 must stay home. In this class, if you are sick or quarantined, please notify me over email and we can make necessary arrangements to ensure that you do not fall behind in the course.

Accommodation for Disabilities

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act, students with disabilities should ask for “reasonable and timely” accommodations. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner (for exam accommodations provide your letter at least one week prior to the exam) so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or by e-mail at dsinfo@colorado.edu. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see Temporary Injuries under Quick Links at Disability Services website and discuss your needs with me.

Preferred Student Names and Pronouns

CU Boulder recognizes that students’ legal information doesn’t always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors’ class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student’s legal name.

Religious Holidays

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Students in this situation can ask for “reasonable and timely” accommodations. Please review the syllabus closely and try to find out whether you have time conflicts with any of the assignments. I encourage you to do so in the first two weeks of the semester and inform me about your concerns either during my office hours or after lecture.

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), stalking, or protected-class discrimination or harassment by or against members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or email cureport@colorado.edu. Information about OIEC, university policies, reporting options, and the campus resources can be found on the OIEC website.

Please know that faculty and graduate instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, dating and domestic violence, stalking, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about their rights, support resources, and reporting options.

COURSE SCHEDULE & READINGS

*Note: "Samuels" refers to the textbook. All readings for a given week should be completed **before** lecture begins. Be aware that the schedule and assigned readings are subject to change throughout the semester.*

Week 1 (January 18) — Introduction and the Comparative Method

Key Questions: What is comparative politics? How should we build and test our theories within comparative politics?

- **Readings:**
 - Course Syllabus
 - Samuels, Chapter 1
- **Assignments Due:**
 - None

PART I: POLITICAL REGIMES

Week 2 (January 25) — What is Democracy?

Key Questions: What does it mean to be a "democracy"? How do democracies balance between effective government and limited government?

- **Readings:**
 - Samuels, Chapter 3
 - Gunitsky, Seva. "How Do You Measure 'Democracy'?" *Washington Post*. June 23, 2015.
- **Assignments Due:**
 - None

Week 3 (February 1) — Non-Democracies: The "Residual" Category?

Key Questions: Are all non-democratic regimes alike? How do authoritarian rulers hold on to power?

- **Readings:**
 - Samuels, Chapter 4
 - Levitsky, Steven and Lucan A. Way. 2002. "Elections Without Democracy: The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy* 13 (2): 51-65.
- **Assignments Due:**
 - Take Home Quiz: "Learning the Comparative Method" (through Canvas)

Week 4 (February 8) — The Origins and Elusiveness of Democratization

Key Questions: How have global levels of democracy changed over time? Under what circumstances do countries democratize?

- **Readings:**

- Samuels, Chapter 5, pp. 120-133
- Przeworski, Adam, and Fernando Limongi. 1997. "Modernization: Theory and Facts." *World Politics* 49 (2): 155-183. (You do NOT have to read the appendix)

- **Assignments Due:**

- Case Study Assignment #1: Germany

Week 5 (February 15) — Democratic Backsliding & Populism

Key Questions: Why do some democracies fail? What explains the current rise in populism?

- **Readings:**

- Levitsky, Steven, and Daniel Ziblatt. *How Democracies Die*. Broadway Books, 2018: Chapter 1.
- Przeworski, Adam. *Crises of Democracy*. Cambridge University Press, 2019: Chapter 6.

- **Assignments Due:**

- None

PART II: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Week 6 (February 22) — The Politics of Collective Action

Key Questions: What explains the emergence of social movements, interest groups, and political parties? Why are special interests sometimes over-represented in politics?

- **Readings:**

- Samuels, Chapter 9

- **Assignments Due:**

- Paper Outline Due (through Canvas)

Week 7 (March 1) — Explaining the "Irrationality" of Voters

Key Questions: Why do people vote? Why is voter turnout higher in some democracies compared to others?

- **Readings:**

- Blais, Andre. *To Vote or Not to Vote: The Merits and Limits of Rational Choice Theory*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000: Introduction & Chapter 2.

- **Assignments Due:**

- Case Study Assignment #2: Iran

Week 8 (March 8) — Protest and Violent Conflict

Key Questions: What prompts individuals to protest and/or take up arms against their government? Why do some states experience protracted violent conflicts while others experience peace?

- **Readings:**

- Samuels, Chapter 10

- Assignments:

- None

Week 9 (March 15) — MIDTERM EXAM

- Readings:

- Study Guide (to be released March 8)

- Assignments Due:

- None

PART III: DEVELOPMENT & GLOBALIZATION

Week 10 (March 22) — Explaining the North-South Divide

Key Questions: Why are some countries rich and some countries poor? What role should the state play in promoting economic development?

- Readings:

- Samuels, Chapter 11

- Assignments:

- Case Study Assignment #3: China

Week 11 (March 29) — Spring Break

- No Class

Week 12 (April 5) — The Welfare State

Key Questions: Why do some countries engage in more economic redistribution than others? What causes some individuals to oppose the welfare state?

- Readings:

- Samuels, Chapter 12

- Assignments Due:

- None

Week 13 (April 12) — Inequality

Key Questions: Is economic inequality a threat to democracy/democratization? Does democracy really lead to lower income inequality?

- Readings:

- Scheve, Kenneth and David Stasavage. 2017. "Wealth Inequality and Democracy." *Annual Review of Political Science* 20: 451-468.

- Assignments Due:
 - Final Paper Due (through Canvas)

Week 14 (April 19) — The Globalization Backlash

Key Questions: What is “globalization”? Is globalization compatible with democracy and development?

- Readings:
 - Samuels, Chapter 13
 - Scheve, Kenneth F., and Matthew J. Slaughter. 2018. “How to Save Globalization.” *Foreign Affairs* 97 (6): 98-108.
- Assignments:
 - Case Study Assignment #4: Nigeria

Week 15 (April 26) — FINAL EXAM

Key Questions: “How do I not fail the final exam?!”

- Readings:
 - Study Guide (to be released April 19)
- Assignments Due:
 - None