

PS 50: Introduction to Comparative Politics

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Bunche 4280
Office Hours: T & TH 1:30-2:30pm

Summer 2018, Session C
T & TH 3:15-5:20pm
Haines A25

Comparative politics is the field within political science that tries to explain why countries vary in their domestic political institutions, the political behavior of their leaders and citizens, their levels and rates of development, and their public policies. We will focus on two questions that have long been central to research in the field: (a) the relationship between democratic and economic development, and (b) how countries vary in their political institutions and why these variations matter.

This is an introductory course, designed to teach you concepts and approaches that should be applicable to any upper division political science courses that you might take in the future. Since there is so much to cover, ***it is also a very demanding course***, perhaps more demanding than most upper division political science courses. You will have to read about **50 pages** before each lecture and actively participate in class discussions. You will not finish this course as an expert in the politics of other countries, but you should leave with a set of tools that you can use to further examine the political system and policies of any country anywhere. We will not give you all the answers, but we will teach you a great many of the right questions.

REQUIREMENTS

The course requires a take-home midterm, a comprehensive final, attendance and course participation, and weekly response essays.

- **Midterm (25%):** The take-home midterm exam will be distributed on August 16. The exam is due no later than 12pm, August 21. For each five-minute period after 12pm, August 21 that a paper is late, the grade will be reduced by 1%. No more papers will be accepted after 11:59pm, August 21; any student who has not handed in a paper by that time will receive zero point for the midterm. I recommend you finish the exam and turn it in early to avoid unexpected technical difficulties.
- **Final exam (45%):** The comprehensive final exam will be held in class on the last regularly scheduled meeting. *It will cover both lectures and the readings from the entire course.*
- **Participation (10%):** Attending lectures is required. You are expected to have finished the assigned readings for the week before your section meets and taken notes on them. You are also expected to participate actively in discussions. I expect you to be able to provide informed and insightful understandings or questions about course materials. Full marks will only be given to students who *actively* and *constructively* participate during class discussion through the entire quarter. Mere attendance will result in zero points.

- **Short assignments (20%):** Short assignments are due at the beginning of class on Tuesdays as indicated below. The objective of response essays is to reinforce your understandings about course materials. The assignment will be graded on a 5-point scale. The assignment will be posted on the course webpage on Friday as specified and will be due next Tuesday. Late submission will receive zero points.

READINGS

- Samuels, David J. 2012. *Comparative Politics*. New York: Pearson Press. [Samuels] – **Buy the book.**
- Clark, William Roberts, Matt Golder, and Sona N. Golder. 2018. *Principles of Comparative Politics* (3rd Edition). Washington DC: CQ Press. [CGG] – **Older versions are available as UCLA library course reserves.**
- Additional assigned readings will be posted on the course website.

COURSE MEETINGS

1. Introduction (Aug 7)

Samuels, Ch 1 (entire).

CGG, Ch 2 (pp. 19-34).

“Confucius Says: Go East, Young Man,” *The Washington Post* (November 19, 1995).

“The Man in the Baghdad Café,” *The Economist* (November 9, 1996).

2. Democracy & Development: Geography and Resources (Aug 9)

Samuels, Ch 11 (pp. 304-311).

Weil, *Economic Growth* (3rd Edition), Ch 15 (pp. 432-450).

Collier and Gunning, “Why has Africa Grown Slowly?” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* (Summer 1999).

“The Paradox of Plenty,” *The Economist* (December 20, 2005).

Recommended: Humphreys, Sachs, and Stiglitz, “What is the Problem with Natural Resource Wealth,” *Escaping the Resource Curse* (pp. 1-20).

Assignment: Scientific method in practice. (due Aug 14)

3. Democracy & Development: Corruption and Violence (Aug 14)

Samuels, Ch 2 (pp. 48-50).

Samuels, Ch 10 (entire).

Easterly, *The Elusive Quest for Growth*, Ch 12.

“The Economics of Violence,” *The Economist* (April 14, 2011).

4. Democracy & Development: How They Go Together (Aug 16)

Samuels, Ch 5 (entire).

Samuels, Ch 11 (pp. 293-297).

BdM and Downs, “Development and Democracy,” *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2005).

Recommended: CGG, Chs 6-7 and 9 (entire).

Assignment: Why has China delayed its political reform? (due Aug 21)

5. Competing Visions of Democracy (Aug 21)

Powell, *Elections and Instruments of Democracy*, Chs 1-2.

Skim: Samuels, Ch 3 (pp. 66-89).

6. Executive Structures (Aug 23)

Samuels, Ch 3 (pp. 67-79).

CGG, Ch 12 (pp. 454-457) and Ch 16 (pp. 762-780).

“A Moon among the Lesser Stars,” *The Economist* (September 21, 2000).

7. Political Parties and Elections (Aug 28)

Samuels, Ch 3 (pp. 79-89).

CGG, Ch 14 (pp. 592-640).

“With Different Rules,” *The Economist* (December 28, 2015).

“Imaging a French Electoral College,” *The Economist* (April 26, 2017).

8. Federalism and Bicameralism (Aug 30)

Guest Lecture by Dr. Kathryn Wainfan.

CGG, Ch 15 (pp. 646-670).

"Italy Senate Votes to Surrender Powers in Victory for Renzi," *Bloomberg* (August 8, 2014).

"Let England Shake," *The Economist* (September 27, 2014).

"President's Rule in India," *The Economist* (April 4, 2016).

Assignment: How electoral systems matter (due Sep 4)

9. Government Formation (Sep 4)

CGG, Ch 12 (pp. 458-480).

"Why is it So Hard to Form a Government in Italy?" *The Economist* (April 24, 2013).

"How a Minority Government does (not) Work," *The Economist* (June 9, 2017).

"German Politics has Become Much More Complicated," *The Economist* (April 14, 2018).

10. Democracy in Plural Societies (Sep 6)

Samuels, Ch 6 (entire).

CGG, Ch 16 (pp. 746-762).

"India's Muslims: An Uncertain Community," *The Economist* (October 29, 2016).

"Ethiopia's Ethnic Federalism is Being Tested," *The Economist* (October 7, 2017).

Assignment: Ethnic diversity and democratic stability in Papua New Guinea. (due Sep 11)

11. Authoritarian Regimes (Sep 11)

Samuels, Ch 4 (entire).

BdM and Smith, *The Dictator's Handbook*, Ch 1 (pp. 1-20).

Kendall-Taylor and Frantz, "How Democratic Institutions are Making Dictatorships More Durable," *Monkey Cage* (March 19, 2015).

Pepinsky, "Life in Authoritarian States is Mostly Boring and Tolerable," *Vox* (January 9, 2017).

Recommended: CGG, Ch 10 (entire).

12. In-Class Final Exam (Sep 14)

COURSE POLICIES

- *Electronic devices.* The use of laptops, smart phones, or any other electronic devices is not allowed in class. Students are expected to engage in discussions and learn to handwrite class notes efficiently.
- *Excused absence.* Absences are excused only if they are accompanied by a doctor's note or written evidence of a personal/family emergency. Religious holidays and travel associated with official UCLA activities will also be excused, but you have to inform me beforehand with proper documentation. **You need to provide all required documentation within a week of notification.**
- *Grade appeals.* If you would like to appeal your grade, you need to hand me a one-page typewritten note in which you carefully argue why you deserve more points. Per University's regulation, the instructor will not discuss your grades via emails. **You need to submit your appeal within a week following the release of your grade.**

CAMPUS RESOURCES

- Academic dishonesty is a violation of university policies and will be reported to the Dean. Study groups are encouraged but you still need to complete all assignments by yourself. Please visit the link below to review what constitutes academic dishonesty: <https://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/portals/16/documents/studentguide.pdf>.
- If you have concerns about difficulty with academic writing, you can visit the undergraduate writing center. More information is available at <http://wp.ucla.edu/index.php/home>.
- If you have general academic concerns, you can contact the academic counseling office for help. More information is available at <http://www.ugeducation.ucla.edu/counseling/contact-us.html>.
- If you want to speak to a therapist or psychological counselor, you can contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at <http://www.counseling.ucla.edu/>.
- Please note that under University policy, all TAs are mandated Title IX reporters. If I am informed of or witness sexual violence or harassment, I am required to report this to UCLA's Title IX coordinator. Both the Title IX coordinator and I are committed to maintaining the anonymity victims.