POLS 5334 Seminar in Comparative Political Development

Spring 2023

Instructor: Dr. Taeko Hiroi
E-mail: thiroi@utep.edu
Format: Seminar—49% or less online instruction
Class Time/Location: Tuesdays 6:00-8:50 pm in BEND205
Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:00-11:00 am (in-person and virtual)—by appointment only

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This graduate seminar examines the development, stability, and breakdowns of political regimes in comparative perspective. The study of political development, of which democracy and democratization are central components, has a long history in the discipline of political science. We will explore theoretical, methodological, and empirical questions on political development with an emphasis on the scholarship that has emerged in response to a number of democratic transitions since the last quarter of the 20th century.

Since the 1970s, the number of democracies in the world dramatically increased. Many seem to have successfully completed the transition to democracy while others have been struggling to maintain and consolidate their fledgling democratic institutions. Some have experienced democratic reversals. Certain authoritarian regimes seem quite stable, but others are marred with political instability. These political developments have led comparative politics scholars to ask such questions as: (1) What accounts for democratization and democratic stability? (2) Why do some autocratic regimes persist but others are unstable? (3) How does one design democratic institutions given a particular society’s problems and goals? (4) What are the consequences of these democratic institutions for the quality and stability of democracy?

The course is organized around thematic topics rather than geographic areas, but we will also discuss specific examples from around the world. Students are encouraged to develop thematic and regional expertise with their research papers.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon a successful completion of the course, you will be able to:

1) define the principal elements of democracy and autocracy;
2) evaluate alternative indices of political regimes;
3) explain the causes of regime transitions and (in)stability;
4) assess the quality of democracy and democratic processes;
5) design democratic political institutions; and
6) have an early start on your Master’s thesis or research paper on democratization, regime breakdown, or consolidation (if you so choose).
COURSE COMMUNICATION AND ASSISTANCE

If you have a question regarding or need help with technological issues, contact UTEP’s Technology Help Desk (see the section on UTEP Technology Support Help Desk).

If you have a question regarding a course material or assignment, please post it on the Help Board on the course’s Blackboard homepage. Please make sure that your question is not addressed by the syllabus. If it is, I will simply refer you to the syllabus.

If you need to contact me regarding your personal matters (e.g., your performance, request for a make-up exam due to documented, severe, and unexpected illness, etc.), UTEP email is the best way to reach me. I will make every effort to respond to your email within 24-48 hours of receipt during weekdays. I will try to respond to weekend messages by Monday. Please use your UTEP email address when you email me. Your email should include the course number in the subject line and your name and UTEP ID number in the body of your email.

I am also available during my office hours virtually or in-person. Meetings during office hours are a great way to discuss your research paper. Please email me to schedule an appointment. Please be aware that virtual meetings during regular office hours are not private. Please notify me if you would like to have a private virtual meeting.

COVID-19 PRECAUTION STATEMENT

You must STAY AT HOME and REPORT if you (1) have been diagnosed with COVID-19, (2) are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or (3) have had recent contact with a person who has received a positive coronavirus test. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to covidaction@utep.edu, so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID-19 testing. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine and wear masks. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit epstrong.org.

REQUIRED BOOKS


Other assigned readings are available through the UTEP library, e-journal, and/or on Blackboard. Make sure to connect to a UTEP VPN to access e-journal articles.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1) Assigned Readings
You need to spend enough time to read each reading critically and analytically. Each assigned reading is important, and I absolutely expect everyone to have completed the assigned readings before each class meeting, post analytic discussion questions on the discussion board (see the section on participation), and bring important questions to discuss to class meetings. You need to take good notes for each assigned reading and review your notes before coming to class meetings. The course schedule at the end of the syllabus includes information on assigned readings.

2) Class Participation
This seminar has both face-to-face and online components. Most of the seminar meetings will be conducted in-person in the classroom. The course’s Blackboard page will provide a Zoom meeting link for virtual sessions.

Since this is a graduate seminar, the success of the class critically depends on every student’s commitment to making class discussions intellectually stimulating and rewarding. Do not expect a lecture. I may occasionally provide brief lectures on certain topics to facilitate class discussion and learning, but the large part of the quality of the seminar is determined by each student contributing to collective learning by coming to every class, having completed assigned readings and actively discussing them. You will be evaluated on both the quality and quantity of your participation. Note that you cannot possibly participate in discussions if you miss a class, and unjustified absences will significantly affect your participation grade. Specifically, you will lose 25 percent of the participation grade for each unjustified absence.

Engagement is an important part of your participation. To prepare for class discussions and to facilitate everyone’s involvement, for each week every student must prepare at least two discussion questions based on the week’s readings. These questions should focus on concepts, theories, methodologies, data, and other key questions in the literature. Questions involving comparisons of various readings are welcome. You need to post discussion questions in the designated space on the discussion board in the course’s Blackboard page no later than 10 pm of Sunday before each class meeting. Those questions must be sufficiently different. Please create a new thread for each of the discussion questions you post. The quality and quantity of these questions and their punctual submission will be graded. Good questions will be rewarded with higher grades. You should respond to some of the questions posted on the discussion board prior to the meeting. Good, thoughtful responses and comments will be rewarded with higher participation grades. All students should review posted questions and comments prior to coming to class. Please keep in mind that you must post at least two questions for each week regardless of whether you attend the seminar in that week. Each missed question will result in the loss of 2 percentage points of the participation grade.

3) Critical Reviews
You will write three critical reviews of the assigned weekly readings. Critical reviews are due at 6:00 pm in the following week. For example, if you choose to write a critical review of the readings assigned for week 2, your review is due in week 3 at 6:00 pm. Please submit critical reviews via designated submission windows on Bb.
Critical reviews should cover all the readings for the week. They should not merely summarize them. You should identify and discuss the main debates in the literature and critically analyze the week’s readings. For example, what are the central questions and central controversies, and how does each reading approach them? What evidence do authors provide? What are their strengths and weaknesses, and how might you improve their theories and empirical research? Emphasize theories, research designs, and methods. Focus on the content. Critical reviews should be 3 to 4 pages (no more than 4 pages), typed using Times New Roman 12 pt. font size, double-spaced, paged consecutively, and with the standard one-inch margin on all four sides. All references must be appropriately cited. I will stop reading reviews at the end of the fourth page if they are longer than the maximum length.

In general, no late review will be accepted. The submission windows will close after each deadline. You have an entire semester to choose from to write your reviews. If you cannot submit one on time, you just need to write another one. Since unexpected emergencies do happen, I strongly encourage you to submit your critical reviews early in the semester. Your first review is due no later than February 28. Please do not email me your reviews.

4) Discussion Leader
We will have at least one discussion leader each week. Assignments for discussion leaders will be made during the first class meeting. Your role as a discussion leader will be graded. Discussion leaders will provide a brief (2-3 minutes) summary of each reading and actively raise and respond to discussion questions both on the discussion board and during seminar meetings. By being a discussion leader, you are not asked to lecture for the class. Your role is, jointly with me, to facilitate and stimulate class discussions.

5) Research Paper
Your research paper should address an important question in political development. Please discuss your ideas with me and obtain my approval for your research topic before you submit your research proposal. Your research paper should be empirical and conform to the expectations of social science research. That means that it begins with a research question, followed by a theory and a hypothesis or hypotheses, and evaluating them with real world observations (a.k.a. data). Merely descriptive studies are not acceptable as graduate research papers.

This assignment is evaluated in two phases. The first phase involves writing a research proposal. It should include a research question, significance of the project, literature review, theory and hypotheses, research design and methodology, and expected findings. As stated above, you need to obtain my approval for your research topic. Approval of your topic will require, at minimum, that you articulate your research question and a hypothesis (or hypotheses) and that you be able to discuss the sources of the data/information that you intend to use.

Your research paper proposal is due on Tuesday, March 28 at 6 pm. Post an electronic copy in the designated space on Blackboard’s discussion board to receive feedback from fellow students. Submit your proposal to me via Blackboard’s research proposal submission window.

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1 Critiques in critical reviews should not focus on writing or presentation styles of the authors but rather emphasize the content of their studies.
You need to read all other students’ proposals and give them substantive feedback on the discussion board by Friday, March 31 at 6 pm. This constitutes reading assignments and seminar participation for the week.

Your final research paper must be complete and will be between 15 and 25 pages, including notes, tables, figures, and a bibliography. It should include the following sections: introduction, literature review, theory and hypotheses, research design and methodology, analysis and findings, and conclusions. Please submit your research paper by Tuesday, May 2 at 6 pm via the designated submission window on Bb.

Your paper should follow the standard paper requirements, i.e., it should be typed, using Times New Roman 12 pt. font size, double-spaced, and paged with the standard one-inch margin on all four sides. All references should be appropriately cited both in the body of the text and in the bibliography. Please refer to APSA’s style manual for stylistic guidance. The style manual is available at https://connect.apsanet.org/stylemanual/.

You will present your research paper on May 2. Each presentation should be approximately 15 minutes (and no longer than 15 minutes) and use PowerPoint.

**GRADES**

Final grades are determined as follows:

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<th>Course Requirement</th>
<th>WEIGHT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reading &amp; Participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Reviews</td>
<td>30% (each review is 10%)</td>
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<td>Discussion Leader</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>35% (proposal 5%; paper presentation 5%; paper 25%)</td>
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<th>Final Grade Scale</th>
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<tr>
<td>90% ≤</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>80% ≤ &amp; &lt; 90%</td>
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<td>70% ≤ &amp; &lt; 80%</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>60% ≤ &amp; &lt; 70%</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>&lt;60%</td>
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2 Simple comments and questions, such as “great proposal,” “interesting,” “why did you choose this topic?” and the like, are not substantive feedback. Substantive feedback includes comments, questions, and suggestions aimed to help improve theory, research design, methodology, and other aspects of the substantive content of the paper. Feedback should be constructive.
COURSE POLICY

- **Please be on time** to attend class meetings and stay through the end of the class. You need to **enable your webcam** during virtual class sessions. If your webcam is off, I will consider that you are absent. If you cannot use your webcam for an excusable reason, please contact me prior to the class meeting. Please know that if you do not respond when you are called while your webcam is off, it will count as an absence.

- Please stay focused on the class during virtual and face-to-face class meetings. Do not browse the internet, text, email, or make noise.

- **Please maintain respectful and appropriate behavior.** Meaningful and constructive dialogue is encouraged in this class, which requires mutual respect, willingness to listen, and tolerance of opposing points of view. Respect for individual differences and alternative viewpoints will be maintained at all times. One’s words and use of language should be temperate and within acceptable bounds of civility and decency. Disruptive behaviors, including excessive talking, arriving late to class, leaving class early, sleeping, reading newspapers or books, and using unauthorized electronic devices (including taking pictures or video- or voice-recording) during class meetings, are not permitted. Repetitive and/or seriously disruptive behavior, including, but not limited to, fighting, using profanity, personal or physical threats or insults, displaying hostility or rudeness towards other students or the professor, and damaging property, may result in your removal from class, and reporting to the Dean of Students and/or the police. Expectation of respectful and appropriate behavior extends beyond the physical classroom.

- **You are not allowed to record our class meetings.** If you have a legitimate reason to record our class meetings, you need to obtain my prior approval. You must not share video- or voice-recordings with others or post them on the Internet. You are also prohibited to share materials obtained or accessed through this course with people who are not enrolled in this course or post them online. Such information is protected by law.

- At times it may be necessary to make adjustments to reading assignments and course schedule. I will make such announcements in class and/or on Blackboard. If you miss a class when these announcements are made, you are responsible for obtaining such information.

- **Please check Blackboard on a regular basis.**

- **All assignments and papers need to be professionally written.** They must be typed with standard citation and writing styles (see APSA’s style manual) and standard margins of one inch on all four sides. All pages must be numbered consecutively (except for the title page). Where there is a page limit, you must follow it. All assignments and papers must be **proofread before submission.** If you need assistance in writing, I encourage you to go to the UTEP writing center. NEVER turn in your first draft: there is no excuse for turning in an unedited paper! Depending on the extent of editorial problems, your assignment’s grade will be lowered by one-third of a letter grade to one full letter grade.

- **Please do not email assignments. Submit them on Bb.**
ACCOMMODATIONS

If you have a disability and need accommodations, please contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass. CASS’ Staff are the only individuals who can validate and, if need be, authorize accommodations for students with disabilities.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another person's as one’s own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. Refer to http://www.utep.edu/dos/acadintg.htm for further information.

COPYRIGHT AND FAIR USE REQUIREMENTS

Students also need be aware of the copyright and fair use requirements. The University requires all members of its community to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The University will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for student violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies.

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT FOR COURSE MATERIALS

All materials used in this course are protected by copyright law. The course materials are only for the use of students currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. Students who wish to use any portion of the course materials for purposes other than the work in this course shall make a formal written request to obtain an explicit written authorization for requested use. Unauthorized use or dissemination of the course materials is strictly prohibited.

EFFECTIVE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION (NETIQUETTE)

All students are expected to adhere to professionalism and demonstrate mutual respect at all times in their communication with fellow students and the professor. You need to take greater care in electronic communication. Without the aid of body language and voice tones, your words are more prone to misinterpretation, and you may offend someone unintentionally. You should avoid unnecessary provocations or arguments. No personal attack is permitted. Always be courteous and respectful when communicating with fellow students and the professor and proofread your post to ensure that it is written professionally and without any hint of incitement or insult.
No inappropriate behavior will be tolerated. Inappropriate student behavior will be reported to and handled by the University. The professor retains the discretion to drop students from the course for any inappropriate behavior.

Please keep in mind the following netiquette rules:

- Always consider audience. Remember that members of the class and the professor will be reading your posts.
- Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and to the professor at all times. No harassment, flaming, or inappropriate posts will be tolerated.
- Do not use inappropriate language, all capital letters, or language short cuts. Online entries should be written in standard English with edited spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- When reacting to someone else's message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face-to-face situation.

Here are some useful tips for effective online communication and interaction.

**Language:** Given the absence of face-to-face clues, written text can easily be misinterpreted. Avoid the use of strong or offensive language and the excessive use of exclamation points. If you feel particularly strongly about a point, it may be best to write it first as a draft and then review it before posting it in order to remove any strong language.

**Be Forgiving:** If someone states something that you find offensive, mention this directly to the professor. Remember that the person contributing to the discussion is also new to this form of communication. What you find offensive may quite possibly have been unintended and can best be cleared up by the professor.

**This is Permanent:** Think carefully about the content of your post before contributing it. Once sent to the group, there is no taking it back. Poor writing does not reflect well on you, and your audience might not be able to decode misspelled words or poorly constructed sentences. It is a good practice to compose and check your comments in a word-processor before posting them.

**Test for Clarity:** Your text may often appear perfectly clear to you as you compose them but turn out to be obtuse to your reader. One way to test for clarity is to read your text aloud to see if it flows smoothly. If you can read it to another person before posting it, it is even better.

**Remember Your Place:** A Web-based classroom is still a classroom, and comments that would be inappropriate in a regular classroom are likely to be inappropriate in a Web-based course as well. Treat your professor and your fellow students with respect.

**Follow the Parameters/ Stick to the Point:** Follow the posting requirements and parameters set up by your professor. Contributions to a discussion should have a clear
subject header, and you need to stick to the subject. Don't waste others' time by going off on irrelevant tangents.

**Read First, Write Later:** Don't add your comments to a discussion before reading the comments of other students unless the assignment specifically asks you to. Doing so is tantamount to ignoring your fellow students and is rude. Comments related to the content of previous messages should be posted under them to keep related topics organized, and you should specify the person and the particular point you are following up on.

**UTEP VIRTUAL PRIVATE NETWORK**

UTEP’s electronic resources, such as electronic books and articles from the library, are available to registered students when working from outside the campus network. In order to access these resources, you will need to set up a Virtual Private Network (VPN) that recognizes that you are a UTEP student. Go to the University’s [VPN webpage](#) for instructions.
## COURSE SCHEDULE

The following is a *tentative* schedule. You will be notified of any changes made to this schedule.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics and Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 17</td>
<td><strong>Course Overview</strong>&lt;br&gt;Reading&lt;br&gt;• Clark, Golder &amp; Golder, Chs. 1-2.</td>
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<td>Assignment of discussion leading weeks</td>
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<td>Jan 24</td>
<td><strong>Politics and the Modern State—Game Theoretic Perspective</strong>&lt;br&gt;Reading&lt;br&gt;• Clark, Golder &amp; Golder, Chs. 3-4.</td>
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<td>Feb 7</td>
<td><strong>Measuring Democracy</strong>&lt;br&gt;Reading:&lt;br&gt;• Clark, Golder &amp; Golder, Ch. 5, pp. 154-173.&lt;br&gt;• José Antonio Cheibub, Jennifer Gandhi, and James Raymond Vreeland. 2010. “Democracy and dictatorship revisited.” <em>Public Choice</em> 143 (1/2): 67-101.&lt;br&gt;  o Examine the dataset and codebook (click <a href="#">here</a>). If this link does not work for you, you can search by the article’s title and key words, such as dataset.&lt;br&gt;• Freedom House, “<em>Freedom in the World Research Methodology</em>” available at <a href="https://freedomhouse.org/reports/freedom-world/freedom-world-research-methodology">https://freedomhouse.org/reports/freedom-world/freedom-world-research-methodology</a>.&lt;br&gt;  o Examine the data resources (scroll down)&lt;br&gt;• The Center for Systemic Peace, <em>The Polity Project</em> (<a href="https://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html">https://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html</a>)&lt;br&gt;  o Examine the user’s manual and Polity5: Regime Authority Characteristics and Transitions Datasets.&lt;br&gt;• Gerardo L. Munck and Jay Verkuilen. 2002. “Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices.” <em>Comparative Political Studies</em> 35(1): 5-34.</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>Feb 14</td>
<td>Democratic Transitions</td>
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<td>Feb 21</td>
<td>The Economic &amp; Cultural Determinants of Democracy</td>
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<td>Feb 28</td>
<td>Varieties of Dictatorship</td>
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<td>March 7</td>
<td>Research Paper Workshop</td>
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<td>March 14</td>
<td>Spring Break (March 13-16)</td>
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| March 21 | **Electoral Systems and Political Parties**  
Reading:  
- Clark, Golder & Golder, Chs. 11, 13 (except sections on electoral integrity) & 14.  

| March 28 | **Research Paper Proposal**  
Online session via Discussion Board  
- Post an electronic copy in the designated space on Blackboard’s discussion board. Submit a copy to me via the submission window on Bb *(due Tuesday, March 28 at 6 pm)*  
- You need to read all other students’ proposals and give them substantive feedback on the discussion board *(due Friday, March 31 at 6 pm)* |

| April 4 | **Issues in Elections (Electoral Integrity, Malapportionment, etc.)**  
Reading:  
- Clark, Golder & Golder, Ch. 13 (read sections on electoral integrity, pp. 522-533)  

| April 11 | **Systems of Government (Presidential vs. Parliamentary Democracy; Majoritarian vs. Consensus Democracy)**  
Reading:  
- Clark, Golder & Golder, Chs. 12&16.  
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| April 18 | Veto Players—Federalism, Bicameralism, and the Court | - Clark, Golder & Golder, Ch. 15.  
| May 2   | Research Presentations                              | Students will present their research paper using Power Point. The presentation should not exceed 15 minutes. See the section on *Research Paper* for more instructions.  
Please submit an electronic copy to me via its submission window on Bb |