

POLS 3339: Comparative Political Systems

Dr. Joseph Yingnan Zhou

Fall 2020

Class Hours: New lectures uploaded on T&R
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Course Description

What makes a dictatorship transform to a democracy? Which types of political systems perform better? Is democracy incompatible with certain cultures? These questions are among the important themes that this course will cover. This course will introduce you to the basic concepts, theories, and methods of comparative politics.

Learning Objectives

- Understanding key concepts and issues in comparative politics
- Developing research skills
- Improving writing skills
- UTEP EDGE experiences
 - problem-solving
 - communication
 - global awareness
 - teamwork
 - critical thinking

Required Texts

Comparative Political Systems, Fall 2020

- Rod Hague, Martin Harrop, and John McCormick. 2019. *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction*. 11th ed. New York: Red Globe Press. ISBN: 1352005050
 - Available online or at UTEP Bookstore.

Other readings are available through Blackboard.

Course Format:

This is an asynchronous online course, meaning that lectures are not delivered real-time but are pre-recorded, **with the exception of a live debate scheduled on September 22 from 3 pm to 4:20 pm**. New lectures are normally posted by noon on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Many lectures, including films, have embedded quizzes for you to complete while watching. Discussions are conducted through Blackboard forums. Questions for me or your TA can be asked through email or during virtual office hours.

Asynchronous courses have the obvious advantage of flexibility. No one has to miss a class due to scheduling conflict or logistic difficulty. You can pause and rewind lecture videos at your own pace. Note-taking becomes more manageable. However, this advantage, when taken unwisely, can turn into serious disadvantages. Many students yield to the temptation to procrastinate and quickly become overwhelmed by the remaining work. Without the classroom environment, attention span, which is not known to be long nowadays, may become even shorter. When everything is available “out there,” some people think it needless to take notes, often to their regret.

Therefore, it is critical to stick to a steady and disciplined schedule, be focused, and take good notes. A proven tip for success is finish watching lectures the week they are posted.

Course Requirements

Finishing readings before class is key to success in this class because it underlines your success in all the following class components.

1. In-class Quizzes (10%)

Some of the lecture videos, including assigned films, come with an embedded quiz. The video pauses, a question pops up, you give the answer, and the video will resume. You may be quizzed about assigned readings, previous lectures, or materials covered in the current lecture.

2. Reaction Essay (15%)

You are required to write an essay in response to one reading of your own choosing. The readings available for this task is marked with **[Reaction Essay]** in the timetable. You will be asked

to declare your preference through a survey on Blackboard. Once a reading is selected, you should honor it and its deadlines. I only approve request of switching readings in extraordinary circumstances.

The essay should be 2-3 pages, double-spaced, one-inch margin on all sides, with 12 point Times New Roman font. I believe that best educational results of essay writing are achieved through interactive feedback between students and the instructor, so your essay is completed in two phases. First, you should submit a **first draft** on Blackboard at 1:00 pm the day the reading is scheduled to be covered. I will provide feedback and **the second and final draft** is due **one week** after I provide the feedback. Missing either deadline will result in a 5-point penalty.

In your essay, do not only summarize, but also critique the reading. Do you agree with the author or not? Why? What do you find especially convincing or weak? Does the author provide sufficient support for the arguments? Is the reasoning valid? What do you think the author has missed? What inspires you the most?

I do not require specific styles such as APA or Chicago, but you must have citations that can be traced back to the original sources. **Copying somebody's words without quoting the speaker is plagiarism. Using others' ideas without citing the writers is plagiarism. Plagiarism is strictly prohibited and will be discovered, and it has severe consequences.**

The first and final drafts are worth 5% and 10% of your final grade, respectively.

3. Online Discussions (10%)

You are expected to participate in five online discussions. The topic for each will be posted by a Thursday (see the timetable for the specific dates). You are required to submit at least one post in reply to my topic by **Sunday midnight**, and one post in reply to your classmates' posts by **the next Tuesday midnight**. Your reply to my post should be a minimum of 250 words and a maximum of 500 words. There is no length requirement for your reply to your classmates' posts. The two posts are just the minimum requirement, more are welcome. You are advised to visit the discussion board frequently even after you have already submitted two posts, in order to answer questions others may have for you.

To get a good grade for discussion posts, it is important to base your posts on knowledge gained from this class. It is OK to voice personal opinions but they must be supported by evidence and good arguments. Lively or even heated discussion is encouraged, but civility must always be preserved.

4. In-class Debate (5%)

On **September 22, from 3 pm to 4:20 pm**, you will have a debate on "whether democracy is a better form of government than authoritarianism." Two debaters will be on the pro-side and two on the against-side. You can volunteer to be a debater on a first-come-first-serve basis. The rest of the class will be audience voters. The debate will be conducted through Zoom. **Please mark your calendar for this only live session.** Whether you are a debater or audience voter, you will be graded on how well you play your role. More details about the debate will be announced.

5. Exams (60%)

There are a midterm exam (30%) and a final exam (cumulative, 30%). Both are open-book and conducted on Blackboard. "Open-book" here means you are allowed to use the lecture recordings, your notes, and any assigned readings. **Searching the Internet for answers and collaboration with classmates are strictly forbidden and will be treated as academic misconduct.**

Your letter grade will be assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	
[90, 100]	A
[80, 90)	B
[70, 80)	C
[60, 70)	D
[0, 70)	F

Course Policies

Academic Integrity

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. And, 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 Life for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. Refer to <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html> for further information.

Accommodations for Disabilities

Accommodations will be made for students with disabilities. Please discuss with me in person as soon as possible about any needs you might have. Or you may contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (phone: 5148, Email: cass@utep.edu) at 302 Union East within the first two weeks of classes.

Course Schedule

Tuesday, 8/25: Course Introduction

- Hague et al. Ch. 1

Thursday, 8/27: Basics of Research Methods

- Hague et al. Ch. 3
- Sodaro, Michael. 2004. "Critical Thinking about Politics." *Comparative Politics: A Global Introduction*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill. 56-75.

Tuesday, 9/1: States I

- Wolff, Jonathan. 1996. *In An Introduction to Political Philosophy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Ch. 2. [Reaction Essay]

Thursday, 9/3: States II

- Hague et al. Ch. 4
- Heywood, Andrew. 2015. *Political Theory: An Introduction*. New York, NY: Palgrave. 67-79 & Ch. 4.
- Discussion #1 available

Tuesday, 9/8: Democratic Rule I

- Dahl, Robert. 2005. "What Institutions Does Large-Scale Democracy Require?" *Political Science Quarterly*. 120(2): 187-97. [Reaction Essay]

Thursday, 9/10: Democratic Rule II

- Hague et al. Ch. 5. 70-76.

Tuesday, 9/15: Authoritarian Rule I

- Hauge et al. Ch. 6.
- Svobik, Milan W. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 2.

Thursday, 9/17: Authoritarian Rule II

- Svobik, Milan W. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 1.
- Discussion #2 available

Tuesday, 9/22: In-class Debate

- Is democracy a better form of government than authoritarianism?

Thursday, 9/24: Democracy vs. Authoritarianism

- Wolff, Jonathan. 1996. *In An Introduction to Political Philosophy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Ch. 3.
- Dahl, Robert Alan. 1989. *Democracy and Its Critics*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Ch. 6. [Reaction Essay]

Tuesday, 9/29: Documentary

- *Heaven on Earth*

Thursday, 10/1: Democratization I

- Geddes, Barbara. 2011. "What Causes Democratization" In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. 317-339.

Tuesday, 10/6: Democratization II

- Hague et al. Ch. 5. 77-85.

Thursday, 10/8: Documentary

- *Gate of Heavenly Peace (part 1)*
- Discussion #3 available

Tuesday, 10/13: Documentary

- *Gate of Heavenly Peace (part 2)*

Thursday, 10/15: Presidential vs. Parliamentary Systems I

- Hague et al. Ch. 8.

Tuesday, 10/20: Presidential vs. Parliamentary Systems II

- Linz, Juan. 1990. "The Perils of Presidentialism." *Journal of Democracy*. 1(1): 51-69. [Reaction Essay]
- Mainwaring, Scott and Matthew Shugart. 1997. "Juan Linz, Presidentialism and Democracy: A Critical Appraisal." *Comparative Politics*. 29(4):449-71.

Thursday, 10/22: Electoral Systems

- Hague et al. Ch. 15.
- Lijphart, Arend. 2012. *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-six Democracies*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Ch. 8.
- Discussion #4 available

Tuesday, 10/27: Midterm Exam on Blackboard

- Available from noon to 11:59 pm

Thursday, 10/29: Political Participation I

- Hague et al. Ch. 13.

Tuesday, 11/3: Political Participation II

- Olson, Mancur. 1967. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Action and the Theory of Groups*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 5-16.

Thursday, 11/5: Political Culture I

- Hague et al. Ch. 12.

Tuesday, 11/10: Political Culture II

- Inglehart, Ronald. 2007. "Postmaterialist Values and the Shift from Survival to Self-expression Values." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*, edited by Russell Dalton, J. and H. Klingemann. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Putnam, Robert D. 1995. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." *Journal of Democracy* 6 (1):65-78. **[Reaction Essay]**
- Discussion #5 available

Thursday, 11/12: Political Parties

- Hague et al. Ch. 16.
- Aldrich, John 2008. "The Case for the Importance of Political Parties." In *American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*. edited by Alan Cigler and Burdett A. Loomis. Cengage Learning.

Tuesday, 11/17: Social Movements

- Koopmans, Ruud. 2007. "Social Movements." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*, edited by Russell J. Dalton and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, 1-25. New York: Oxford University Press.

Thursday, 11/19: Documentary

- *A Force More Powerful (part 1)*

Tuesday, 11/24: Political Economy

- Acemoglu, Daron, and James A Robinson. 2012. *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty*. New York, NY: Crown Books. Ch. 1-3.

Thursday, 11/26: No Class

- Happy Thanksgiving!

Tuesday, 12/1: Politics of Inequality

- Wolff, Jonathan. 1996. *In An Introduction to Political Philosophy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Ch. 5.
- Timmons, Jeffrey F. 2010. "Does Democracy Reduce Economic Inequality?" *British Journal of Political Science* 40:741-757.
- An Interview with Adam Przeworski. [Link](#).

Thursday, 12/3: Globalization and Immigration

- Abdelal, Rawi and Adam Segal. 2007. "Has Globalization Passed Its Peak?" *Foreign Affairs* 86(1): 103-114.
- Carens, Joseph H. 1987. "Aliens and Citizens: the Case for Open Borders." *The Review of Politics* 49 (2):251-273.

Thursday, 12/10: Final Exam on Blackboard

- Available from noon to 11:59 pm