

# POLS 3339: Comparative Political Systems

Dr. Joseph Yingnan Zhou

Fall 2022

Class Hours: New lectures posted on T&R    Virtual Office Hours: by appointment only  
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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 skills
  - problem-solving
  - communication
  - global awareness
  - teamwork
  - critical thinking

## Required Texts

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

Other readings are available through Blackboard.

## Course Format:

This is an asynchronous online course, meaning that lectures are not delivered live but are pre-recorded and posted on Blackboard. Class attendance and participation are evaluated through embedded quizzes. Discussions are conducted on Blackboard forums. You can communicate with me through Email or 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 wasn't long to begin with, 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 the recommended timetable, be focused, and take good notes.

## 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 (15%)

Most of the lecture videos come with embedded quizzes. The video pauses, a question pops up, you select the answer, and the video resumes. Normally you will be quizzed about the lecture you are watching.

### 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 choice in the first weeks of the semester. Once a reading is selected, you should honor your choice. I only allow change of reading in exceptional 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 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 by 12:59 pm on 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. Your 2nd draft will be graded partly by how you respond to my comments and suggestions.

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 detected and handled as academic misconduct.**

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

### 3. Online Discussions (15%)

You will have five online discussions. To make the discussions more manageable and effective, I break the whole class into small groups. **You will conduct the discussions only within your small group.** I will post your groups before Discussion 1, the self-introduction.

In Discussion #2-5, which have substantive topics, you are required to submit **at least one post in reply to my topic and one post in reply to your classmates' posts. Your first post should be between 250 and 500 words.** There is no length requirement for your second post. You are welcome to post more than two posts. Please check ongoing discussions frequently in case some posts demand your replies.

**The first post is due at midnight the day after the discussion becomes available. The second post is due at midnight the second day after the discussion becomes available.** For example, if a discussion becomes available on Monday, your first post is due at midnight Tuesday and second post is due at midnight Wednesday.

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 discussion is desired, but civility must always be preserved. I will post my grading rubric for online discussions.

### 4. In-class Debate (5%)

The debate will be take place live on Blackboard on Tuesday, November 29. The specifics of the debate, including its format and time, will be announced later.

### 5. Exams (50%)

There are a midterm exam (25%) and a final exam (cumulative, 25%). 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. Make sure you use your own words to answer short-answer questions. Direct copy and paste from the slides will be penalized. **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:

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

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## 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](mailto:cass@utep.edu)) at 302 Union East within the first two weeks of classes.

### COVID-19 Precaution

Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. 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](mailto: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 Center 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. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area, and will be available at no charge on campus during the first week of classes. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit [epstrong.org](http://epstrong.org).

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## **Important Dates (Put us on your calendar!)**

Thursday 8/25: Discussion #1 available (1st post due on 8/26, 2nd post due on 8/27)

Tuesday 9/6: Discussion #2 available (1st post due on 9/7, 2nd post due on 9/8)

Thursday 9/20: Discussion #3 available (1st post due on 9/21, 2nd post due on 9/22)

Thursday 10/11: Discussion #4 available (1st post due on 10/12, 2nd post due on 10/13)

Tuesday 10/18: Midterm exam live Q&A: 11 am -12 pm on Blackboard

Thursday 10/20: Midterm exam on Blackboard from noon to 11:59 pm

Thursday 10/27: Discussion #5 available (1st post due on 10/28, 2nd post due on 10/29)

Friday 10/28: Drop/Withdrawal Deadline

Tuesday 11/29: Live debate (all students participate online)

Thursday 12/1 Final exam live Q&A: 11 am -12 pm on Blackboard

Tuesday 12/6: Final exam on Blackboard from noon to 11:59 pm

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## Course Schedule

### Tuesday, 8/23: Course Introduction

- Hague et al. Ch. 1

### Thursday, 8/25: 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.
- Discussion #1 available (self-introduction)

### Tuesday, 8/30: States I

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

### Thursday, 9/1: States II

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

### Tuesday, 9/6: Democratic Rule I

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

### Thursday, 9/8: Democratic Rule II

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

### Tuesday, 9/13: Authoritarian Rule I

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

### Thursday, 9/15: Authoritarian Rule II

- Svoblik, Milan W. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 1.

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**Tuesday, 9/20: 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]
- Discussion #3 available

**Thursday, 9/22: Documentary on communism**

**Tuesday, 9/27: Democratization I**

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

**Thursday, 9/29: Democratization II**

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

**Tuesday, 10/4: Documentary on democratization (part 1)**

**Thursday, 10/6: Documentary on democratization (part 2)**

**Tuesday, 10/11: Presidential vs. Parliamentary Systems I**

- Hague et al. Ch. 8.
- Discussion #4 available

**Thursday, 10/13: 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.

**Tuesday, 10/18: 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.
- Live Q&A on Blackboard from 11 am to noon



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**Thursday, 10/20: Midterm Exam on Blackboard**

- Available from noon to 11:59 pm

**Tuesday, 10/25: Political Participation I**

- Hague et al. Ch. 13.

**Thursday, 10/27: 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.
- Discussion #5 available

**Tuesday, 11/1: Political Culture I**

- Hague et al. Ch. 12.

**Thursday, 11/3: 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]

**Tuesday, 11/8: 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.

**Thursday, 11/10: 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.

**Tuesday, 11/15: Documentary on social movements**

**Thursday, 11/17: 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.

**Tuesday, 11/22: 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, 11/24: No Class, Happy Thanksgiving!**

**Tuesday, 11/29: Live Debate**

- On Blackboard, time to be announced
- All students participate online

**Thursday, 12/1: 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.
- Live Q&A on Blackboard from 11 am to noon

**Tuesday, 12/6: Final Exam on Blackboard**

- Available from noon to 11:59 pm