

CPO 2001 – Introduction to Comparative Politics

Class Meeting Time: Monday, Wednesday 11:45 AM – 12:35 PM
Sections (various)
Class Venue: Pugh Hall 170
Professor: Dr. Sebastian Elischer
Office: Anderson Hall 212
Office Hours: Monday 4 PM to 6 PM and Wednesday 11 AM to 12 PM.
Email: selischer@ufl.edu
Phone: 352-273-2359

Course Outline

In this course, we explore questions in contemporary comparative politics. We focus on several questions that have long been central to research in comparative politics, including the challenges for democratization and democratic stability in certain social and economic contexts, how countries vary in their political institutions (constitutional, electoral, administrative, and party systems) and why these variations matter, and what explains the persistence of ethnicity and causes of civil conflict. Country cases are drawn from different regions of the world to ground students in the set of tools of comparative analysis.

In general, Mondays will be dedicated to the basic concepts of the week's readings (ECP), Wednesdays to the related scholarly readings (ERCP) and Thursdays/Fridays (sections) will focus on the comparative cases (CCP) as a platform for applying what was learned in the other readings.

Prerequisites

None – this is an introductory course

Requirements, Assignments and Grading

Note that class attendance is required for this course. This includes attendance at lectures and weekly discussion sections. Attendance will be monitored as necessary during lectures (roll) and through participation in in-class assignments/quizzes. During lectures the professor may also occasionally provide insider information for exams and otherwise incentivize regular attendance. Attendance and participation grades in sections will be determined by the section instructor and may vary between sections.

Repeated absences will unquestionably affect your performance on exams since they will be based on class lectures, section discussions, as well as readings. Lecture notes and other related course materials discussed or distributed during class will NOT be posted online or otherwise distributed (except in the case of an excused absence).

According to the Office of the University Registrar, “acceptable reasons for absence from class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, and professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious

holidays and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate. Absences from class for court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena) must be excused.”

For further information about the University of Florida’s attendance policy, please see the current Undergraduate Catalogue (<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationattendance.html>).

Plagiarism

Academic dishonesty, including cheating on exams and plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Any student engaging in such activities will be dealt with in accordance with University policy. It is your responsibility to know what constitutes plagiarism, and what the university policies are. If you have doubts, we please discuss with the professor immediately (after the infringement is too late). Please refer to the current Undergraduate Catalogue for more information on the Student Honor code (<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html>). Students who have questions about these policies, should contact the undergraduate advisement center for additional information.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability that may affect your performance in this class, you should contact the Dean of Students Office so that special arrangements can be made to accommodate you. It is your responsibility to do so at the beginning of the semester and to communicate directly with the professor during the first week of classes (or as soon as the disability occurs).

Grading & Assessment

Students are responsible for completing all readings for the topic in question prior to attending the class. Short quizzes on assigned readings will be held most weeks. There will be no make-ups for missed quizzes; however students may drop their two lowest quizzes.

- Midterms (2x 20% each = 40%)
- Final Exam (35%)
- Quizzes (10%)
- Attendance (5%)
- Participation in discussion sections (10%)

Grading Scale

- 91% – 100% = A
- 90% – 93% = A-
- 87% – 89% = B+
- 84% – 86% = B
- 80% – 83% = B-
- 77% – 79% = C+
- 74% – 76% = C
- 70% – 73% = C-
- 67% – 69% = D+
- 64% – 66% = D

60% – 63% = D-
< 60% = F

Required Textbooks

O'Neill, P., Essentials of Comparative Politics (5th Edition) ECP

O'Neill, P. and R. Rogowski, Essential Readings in Comparative Politics (4th Edition) ERCP

O'Neill, P., K. Fields, and D. Share, Cases in Comparative Politics (4th Edition) CCP

Class Calendar

Any session may be subject to change!

Week 1 (January 6): Introduction to the Course

Organizational meeting, introduction of instructor and student assistants; discussion of syllabus; expectations and assignments

Readings:

- ECP Chapter 1
- ERCP Chapter 1 (first two readings)

Week 2 (January 11 and 13): The origin and role of states

The state is the oldest form of political organization. Although many claim that in a globalized era the state is obsolete, in fact, states prove to be remarkably resistant. We discuss the origins and the key characteristics of what makes a state.

Readings:

- ECP Chapter 2
- ERCP Chapter 2 – ALL
- CCP Chapter 2

Week 3 (January 20): Nations, Nationality and Identity I

We discuss the differences between ethnic identity and national identity and why historically the two often clashed. We also discuss the concept of citizenship.

Readings:

- ECP Chapter 3
- CCP Chapter 3 - Hobsbawm

Week 4 (January 25 & 27): Nations, Nationality and Identity II

Ethnic and nationalist conflict
Political identity and ideology

Readings:

- ECP Chapter 3
- ERCP Chapter 3 – (1) Fearon and Laitin; Alesina and Ferrara
- CCP Chapter 3

Week 5 (February 1 & 3): Political Economy

We analyze how politics and markets interact, how states provide public goods and how political-economic systems evolve over time.

Readings:

- ECP Chapter 4
- ERCP Chapter 4 – Smith and North

CCP Chapter 6

Week 6 (February 8 & 10): Review and Midterm I

We review the topics we discussed so far in order to make sure everyone is prepared for the midterm. There are no required readings for this week but I expect students to be open about their progress.

Week 7 (February 15 & 17): Democracy and Democratic Regimes

This week and next week we discuss the emergence and the consolidation of democratic and non-democratic regimes. This topic is traditionally center-stage in comparative politics.

Readings:

ECP Chapter 5

ERCP Chapter 5 – (1) Lijphart; (2) Schmitter and Karl; (3) Stephan, Linz and Yadav

CCP Chapters 4

Week 8 (February 22 & 24): Non-Democratic Regimes

Non-democratic regimes come in many forms and shapes. We discuss the various manifestations of non-democratic rule and their origins.

Readings:

ECP Chapter 6

ERCP Chapter 6 – (1) Linz and Stepan; (2) Levitsky and Way; (3) Diamond

CCP Chapters 10 & 13

Week 9: SPRING BREAK

Week 10 (March 7 & 9): Political Violence

What is political violence and why does political violence occur? We discuss answers to these timely and important questions.

Readings:

ECP Chapter 7

ERCP Chapter 7 – Skocpol; Abrahams; Goldstone

CCP Chapter 14

Week 11 (March 14 & 16): Advanced Democracies

The literature frequently distinguishes between advanced or consolidated democracies on the one hand and young or unconsolidated or young democracies on the other. This week is dedicated to advanced democracies. We also discuss new modes of sovereignty

Defining and understanding ‘advanced democracies’

New modes of sovereignty, identity and political values

Readings:

ECP Chapter 8

ERCPC Chapter 8 – Przeworski; Duverger; Acemoglu, Johnson, Robinson and Yared

CCP Chapter 5

Week 12 (March 21 & 23): Review and Midterm II

We review the material of the last few weeks to make sure everyone is prepared for the second midterm.

Week 13 (March 28 & 30): Communism and Post-Communism

Contrary to what many pundits think, communism is very difficult to define. We review the basic tenants of communist ideology and examine how and why the communist experiment failed.

Readings:

ECP Chapter 9

ERCPC Chapter 9 – Marx and Engels; Bunce and Wolchik; Gat

CCP Chapters 7 & 8

Week 14 (April 4 & 6): Less developed and newly industrializing countries

We contrast less developed countries with developed one and discuss the particular economic and political problems newly industrializing countries are facing.

Readings

ECP Chapter 10

ERCPC Chapter 10 – Collier and Gunning; Krugman; Acemoglu and Johnson

CCP Chapter 9 & 12

Week 15 (April 11 & 13): Globalization

Everyone uses the term ‘globalization’ indiscriminately. We define the term and evaluate the consequences of a globalized world.

Readings:

ECP Chapter 11

ERCPC Chapter 11 – Florida; Jiang; The Economist

CCP Chapter 11

Week 16 (April 18 & 20): Conclusions and Review

We discuss anything you would like to discuss.