

## **CPO 2001 – Introduction to Comparative Politics (Honors)**

Class Meeting Time: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9.35 AM – 10.25 AM  
Class Venue: Anderson Hall 34  
Professor: Dr. Sebastian Elischer  
Office: Anderson Hall 212  
Office Hours: Monday 4 PM to 6 PM and Wednesday 3 PM to 4 PM.  
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### **Course Outline**

Comparative politics is a major subfield of political science. It covers a variety of topics, which are relevant to students of related disciplines. This introductory class surveys major concepts, theories and approaches guiding the study of comparative politics. It examines important global issues such as democratization, political institutions, economic development, nationalism, globalization and conflict. We examine how these issues unfold in different countries from around the world and how different countries have dealt with these issues. The class focuses both on general themes that drive comparative politics research and on how these issues shape politics in a variety of individual countries. The country cases are drawn from different regions of the world in order to provide student with global knowledge.

On Mondays we discuss the basic concepts, which shape research in comparative politics. On Wednesdays we critically examine how scholars have applied these concepts in empirical research. On Fridays we hear student presentations that are related to the concepts and the empirical research we debate during the week; we will also explore individual country cases in greater depth and discuss contemporary international affairs as they unfold. The course instructor leads the sessions on Mondays and Wednesdays. Students are expected to take the intellectual lead on Fridays. During the first two weeks of class we will discuss the content of the Friday sessions in greater detail.

### **Prerequisites**

None – this is an introductory course

### **Requirements, Assignments and Grading**

Regular attendance is required. Attendance will be monitored (roll). Repeated absences will unquestionably affect your performance. Your grades for the exams and your active participation will suffer from absences as they are based class lectures, discussions and readings. Lecture notes and other related course materials discussed or distributed during class will NOT be posted online. This class teaches the basic tools of research in comparative politics. Not taking this class seriously will harm your future academic progress.

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**

- Attendance and active participation in class (20%)  
This part is self-explanatory. It is a class for honor students. I expect everyone to engage with the material in class.
- Country Assignment (10%)  
Become a country expert! During the first two weeks of class, all students pick a country of their choice. Feel free to pick a country you do not know at all. During the Friday sessions students provide a short oral update about contemporary political events as they unfold in your country of choice. During the first few sessions I will provide an overview of *reliable* media sources students may consult.
- Student presentation (20%)  
All student presentations take place on Fridays. Students present alone or as part of a group (maximal two students per group) on a topic of their choice. The content of the presentation must be related to the topic we discuss in class during the week. **Important: Although we discuss country cases in class on Friday (see readings), student presentations should have a thematic focus.** In order to prepare the presentation, students must consult additional sources. Please make ample use of the library and academic sources that can be found online. Student presentations should not be longer

than 15 minutes (max!) and incite discussions in class. All students have to discuss their presentation with me during my office hours at least one week prior to the presentation.

- Midterm (25%). The midterm takes place on Friday, March 17 in class. It covers everything we discussed between Week 1 and 11.
- Final Research Paper (25%)  
The final research paper is due on April 22 at 5 PM. The paper should be not contain more than five pages (excluding bibliography, Times New Roman 12, double-spaced). Students are required to compare TWO countries located in the same world region with regard to ONE of the following themes:
  - a) Different (or similar) institutions of government and how these institutions evolved over time
  - b) Different (or similar) political economies and how these economies evolved over time
  - c) The role of ideologies and/ or religion in politicsPlease send me a brief outline of your final paper by Week 12.

### **Grading Scale**

94% – 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**

All students must purchase the following two books. We will use them every week and without them, you will not be able to pass this class.

Dickovick, J. and Eastwood, Jonathan (2016): *Comparative Politics. Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases*. New York: Oxford University Press, Second Edition.

Dickovick, J. and Eastwood, Jonathan (2016): *Current Debates in Comparative Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press, Second Edition.

## **Class Calendar**

**Any session may be subject to change!**

### **Week 1 (January 4 and 6): Introduction to the Course**

Organizational meeting, introductions; discussion of syllabus and assignments; presentation of open-source databases and reliable media sources.

Readings:

January 4: no reading

January 6: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases, Chapter 1 and 2

### **Week 2 (January 9): The Origin and Role of the State I**

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. *No class on January 11 and 13 (Southern Political Science Association annual meeting)*

Readings:

January 9: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases, Chapter 3

### **Week 3 (January 18 and 20): The Origin and Role of the State II**

We continue our discussion from last week. *No class on Monday, January 16 (MLK)!*

Readings:

January 18: Current Debates in Comparative Politics, p.19-21 and 28-29

January 20: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases, Case Study Nigeria

### **Week 4 (January 23, 25 and 27): The Political Economy**

We examine how politics and the economy interrelate and how different countries tackle economic inequality, unemployment and economic growth.

Readings:

January 23: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases, Chapter 4

January 25: Current Debates in Comparative Politics, p.22-27 and 30-33

January 27: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases, Case Study France

### **Week 5 (January 30, February 1 and 3): Development**

Development is a complex concept and there is heated disagreement about what counts as development and which states can be regarded as developed. We examine this concept and discuss various ways of measuring development.

Readings:

January 30: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases, Chapter 5

February 1: Current Debates in Comparative Politics, p.40-44

February 3: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases, Case Study China

### **Week 6 (February 6, 8 and 10): Democracy and Democratization**

Democracy is one of the most fundamental concepts in politics, and given its importance, scholars have contested and reworked the concept and caused of democracy. We review important definitions and cases of democratization.

Readings:

February 6: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases, Chapter 6

February 8: Current Debates in Comparative Politics, p.48-55

February 10: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases, Case Study India

### **Week 7 (February 13, 15 and 17): Authoritarian Regimes and Democratic Breakdown**

Authoritarian rule is defined as the absence of democratic institutions and norms. Autocratic regimes come in many forms and shapes. We discuss the various manifestations of non-democratic rule and their origins. We also discuss the factors, which account for the breakdown of democratic rule and the persistence of autocratic rule.

Readings:

February 13: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases, Chapter 7

February 15: Current Debates in Comparative Politics, p.48-55

February 17: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases, Case Study Saudi Arabia

### **Week 8 (February 20, 22 and 24): Nationalism and National Identity**

Some of the greatest atrocities in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were ethno-nationalist conflicts. There are different explanations that account for the rise of nationalism and national identity. We also examine some of the mechanisms by which national identities are created and re-created.

Readings:

February 20: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases, Chapter 13

February 22: Current Debates in Comparative Politics, p.145-155

February 24: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases, Case Study United Kingdom

### **Week 9 (February 27, March 1 and 3): Constitution and Constitutional Design**

Constitutions are the foundational charters and laws of most modern states. They have come to symbolize social contracts between states and their citizens. They are the set of rules and norms in which all other laws are based.

Readings:

February 27: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases, Chapter 8

March 1: Current Debates in Comparative Politics, p.80-93

February: no reading for today

### **Week 10 (March 6, 8 and 10): Spring Break**

### **Week 11 (March 13, 15 & 17): Review Session and Midterm**

*We review the content of all previous sessions in order to make sure everyone is well prepared for the midterm on March 17. Please note that all outlines (one page) for the final paper are also due by March 17!*

### **Week 12 (March 20, 22 & 24): Executives**

Executives administer policies and laws. Executives also have a substantial role in determining which laws and policies pass. The relationship between the executive and the legislative branches is one of the leading issues that determine how political decisions are made.

Readings:

March 20: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases, Chapter 10

March 22: Current Debates in Comparative Politics, p.110-121

March 24: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases, Case Study United States

### **Week 13 (March 27, 29 and 31): Legislatures**

Legislatures are deliberative bodies composed of the decision makers who represent the population at large. Legislatures are where debates take place about the fundamental values and preferences of voters.

Readings:

March 27: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases, Chapter 9

March 29: Current Debates in Comparative Politics, p.99-108.

March 31: no reading for today

**Week 14 (April 3, 5 & 7): Political Parties, Party Systems and Interest Groups**

Many citizens organize in political parties and interest groups in order to shape the political debate but also to influence the making of laws.

Readings:

April 3: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases, Chapter 11

April 5: Current Debates in Comparative Politics, p.123-129

April 5: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases, Case Study Germany

**Week 15 (April 10, 12 and 14): Ideology and Religion in Modern Politics**

Ideological and religious beliefs tend to be deeply held and therefore are highly impactful.

Readings:

April 10: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases, Chapter 15

April 12: Current Debates in Comparative Politics, p.169-178

April 14: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases, Case Study Iran

**Week 16 (April 18 & 20): Research Time/ Makeup time**