

Political Science 02: Introduction to Comparative Politics
Class Time: Mondays and Wednesdays 2:10 to 4:00 PM
Room: Olson 147

Instructor: Roi Zur
Office: 568, Kerr Hall
Office Hours: Monday 4:10 to 6:00 PM or by appointment
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Course Description

The study of politics is typically divided into four sub-fields; American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, and Political Theory. Although CP stands on its own merit, it is sometimes misunderstood as an “international” version of AP, or a political version of IR. Indeed, CP has a lot in common with both AP and IR, but the study of CP is a well-defined field where both theories and evidence are unique.

This class takes a speed-dating approach for the study of Comparative Politics. That is, in each week we will review an influential topic in CP and then discuss its causes and effects. For example, our first substantive week will review variations in Executive branch designs (Presidential vs Parliamentary systems), then discuss what causes countries to choose among different types and does this choice affect levels of democracy. This is a speed-dating approach because one week is not enough to even scratch the surface of the differences between different executive types and their effects. I will provide both external readings and recommendation for other POL classes on each topic for students who are interested in it.

On its substantive part, this class focuses on and motivated by two very broad schools of thoughts – the institutional and the behavioral. The institutional school of thought in Comparative Politics deals with the variations in political institutions and their political consequences. In many regards, political institutions shape the roles of the political game. Thus, they define the winners and losers in politics and put limits on the size of the political prize. We will discuss three such institutions in the first half of the course – Executives (week 2), Legislatures (week 3), and Electoral Systems (week 4).

The second part of class will focus on voters and parties, mainly through the lens of the political behavior school of thought. Here again, political institutions shape the behavior we observe, but do not determined it. We will see that political behavior is very similar in similar institutional context, but it is not the same. This part of the class will focus on Party systems (week 6), parties’ Left-Right ideology (week 7), other policy issues (week 8), valence politics (week 9), and one topic for the students to choose (week 10).

Course Requirements

1. Readings - Students are expected to read ALL the material that assigned to a specific class before its meeting (most of the reading are very short, do not worry!). After class students should review the syllabus to make sure they understand and can explain the class “topics”. The readings are especially important in light of course requirement number 2:
2. Quizzes - During this course the students will be required to take 6 pop-quizzes. All quizzes will take the same form: You will be asked to define and identify three distinctive pieces of information about one of the terms in the reading or lecture. The grading of these quizzes is simple – a correct definition worth 2 points of your final grade, each of the three distinctive pieces of information worth 1 point of your final grade. Your best 5 quizzes will be counted toward 25% of the final grade. An example of the expected answers for these quizzes will be given in the first week of class.
3. Midterm examination – The midterm examination will take place in our regular class on the last meeting of the 5th week (May 3rd). The midterm will be 35% of your final grade, and will include both short answered questions and a longer writing essay.
The writing essay will be heavily influenced by the readings. As you will see, most of the readings are designed in a way that reviews the literature regarding a specific topic. That is, the readings are written as if they are answering a “prompt”. For example, the first reading Shugart (2006) seems to answer the prompt – what are the different executive types, because it “looks at comparative executive-legislative relations, beginning with early theoretical considerations and their modern application. It discusses the forms of constitutional structure and defines parliamentary, presidential, and hybrid systems.”
The best way to answer these essay questions is to cover everything answering the prompt, include only relevant information for answering the prompt. Be sure to bring blue books.
4. Final Examination – The final is not cumulative, but the pre-midterm information is very useful for the final. The final worth 40% of the final grade. The final will have a similar structure to the midterm, but will include more questions. The final will take place in our regular class on Wednesday June 14th (6:00 PM). Be sure to bring blue books.

Reading Assignments

As I recognize the high costs of higher education, all the assign readings for this class are free and available as URLs below (for most of them you need to use the UCD internet connection or remote access associated with a university). If you have any problems getting the readings please go to one of the library computers and download the readings there. Also, some of the URLs do not properly linked to a print-friendly version of the paper, so just copy-paste it to your favorite internet browser and read online (or find a PDF version on the website).

Course Grading

Course grades will be calculated in the following manner:

Midterm	35%
Quizzes (best 5 counts)	25%
Final Exam	40%

Numerical grades are translated into letter grades as follow:

A	93.5-100%
A-	89.5-93.49%
B+	86.5-89.49%
B	83.5-86.49%
B-	79.5-80.49%
ETC.	

A few final points

Please bring a bold and large name tag to each class; I want to know your names.

Please bring a pen to write your quizzes with.

Make-up midterm/final times will be given only in cases of illness or family emergency, and you must inform the instructor a whole week before the midterm/final. Furthermore, you must provide proof of illness. Absolutely no make-up midterms will be given if the student fails to contact the instructor before the midterm. Alternative times for the midterm/final will be only before the regular class time.

NOTE: Under no circumstances may you email the instructor the morning of the midterm/final and expect a makeup. You will get a zero for the midterm/final – absolutely no exceptions.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (April 3): Introduction / Syllabus / Q&A

Topics:

- (1) Introduction – Why are we here and what to expect?
- (2) The study of comparative politics
- (3) Political Institutions and Political Behavior

Reading: No readings!

No class on Wednesday, April 5

Week 2 (April 10 and 12): Political Institutions: Executives

Topics:

- (1) What makes a country “Parliamentary” vs “Presidential”?
- (2) Other forms of government
- (3) Executives in Parliamentary systems
- (4) Executives in Presidential systems

Reading:

- a. Matthew Shugart "Comparative Executive-Legislative Relations", in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*, edited by R.A.W. Rhodes, Sarah Binder, and Bert Rockman. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2006:
<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199548460.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199548460-e-18>
- b. Donald L. Horowitz, ‘Comparing Democratic Systems’, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.1, No.4 (1990), pp.73 – 9 (See Canvas and do not read the summarize online, they are really bad!)

Week 3 (April 17 and 19): Political Institutions: Legislatures

Topics:

- (1) What makes a country “Unicameral” vs “Bicameral”?
- (2) Does it matter?
- (3) Assemblies in Parliamentary systems
- (4) Assemblies in Presidential systems
- (5) S – The size of the assembly
- (6) The effective number of parties

Reading:

- a. Michael Laver “Legislatures and Parliaments in Comparative Context”. In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Economy*. 2008:
<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199548477.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199548477-e-007>

AND AT LEAST ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- b. John Uhr "Bicameralism", in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*. 2006:
<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199548460.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199548460-e-24>
- c. Eric M. Uslaner and Thomas Zittel “Comparative Legislative Behavior” in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*. 2006:
<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199548460.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199548460-e-23>

Week 4 (April 24 and 26): Electoral Systems

Topics:

- (1) Single Member Districts (Plurality and Majority)
- (2) Multi Member Districts (Open-List and Close-List)
- (3) M – The average district magnitude
- (4) Duverger's "Law" and "Hypothesis"

Reading:

- a. Pippa Norris (1997) "Choosing Electoral Systems: Proportional, Majoritarian and Mixed Systems." *International Political Science Review*, 18(3), 297-312

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/019251297018003005>

- b. Shaun Bowler "Electoral Systems" in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*. 2006:

<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199548460.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199548460-e-29>

Also go over:

http://www.fairvote.org/electoral_systems#research_electoralsystems101

http://www.fairvote.org/electoral_systems#research_electoralsystems_world

If you want to know more:

<https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/es/onePage>

Week 5 (May 1): Midterm Review (I will finish up the electoral systems lectures, if needed)

Week 5 (May 3): Midterm

Week 6 (May 8 and 10): Party Systems

Topics:

- (1) Winners and Losers in Politics
- (2) The Number of parties
- (3) The Effective Number of Parties
- (4) Which Parties?

Reading:

- a. Kitschelt, Herbert. "Party Systems." *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*. Oxford University Press. 2009:

<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199566020.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199566020-e-22?rskey=a3UF52&result=3#oxfordhb-9780199566020-div2-84>

- b. Taagepera, Rein. "Electoral Systems." *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*. : Oxford University Press, 2009:

<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199566020.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199566020-e-28>

Week 7 (May 15 and 17): Parties and the Left-Right Continuum

Topics:

- (1) Mass-Elite linkages
- (2) What do parties stand for?
- (3) Party families
- (4) How to measure party's ideology

Reading:

- a. Wren, Anne, and Kenneth M. McElwain. "Voters and Parties." *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*. Oxford University Press, 2009:
<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199566020.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199566020-e-23?result=14&rskey=vdoH7q&mediaType=Article#oxfordhb-9780199566020-div1-132>
- b. Laver, Michael. "Measuring policy positions in political space." *Annual Review of Political Science* 17 (2014): 207-223.
<http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/full/10.1146/annurev-polisci-061413-041905>
- c. Mair, Peter, and Cas Mudde. "The party family and its study." *Annual Review of Political Science* 1.1 (1998): 211-229.
<http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/full/10.1146/annurev.polisci.1.1.211>

Week 8 (May 22 and 24): Beyond the Left-Right – New Issues and New Parties

Topics:

- (1) Post materialist politics? The raise of the Greens
- (2) Extra materialist politics? The raise of the Far-Right

Reading:

- a. Golder, Matt. "Far right parties in Europe." *Annual Review of Political Science* 19 (2016): 477-497.
<http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/full/10.1146/annurev-polisci-042814-012441>
- b. Meyer, Thomas M, and Bernhard Miller. "The Niche Party Concept and Its Measurement." *Party Politics* 21.2 (2015): 259–271:
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5180693/>

No class on May 29 (Memorial Day)

Week 9 (May 31): Candidate Quality and Valence Politics

Topics:

- (1) Personal votes
- (2) Personalization of political parties

Reading:

- a. Adams, James. "Causes and electoral consequences of party policy shifts in multiparty elections: Theoretical results and empirical evidence." *Annual Review of Political Science* 15 (2012): 401-419:

<http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev-polisci-031710-101450>

Also, you can read this one (but not have to):

- Zur, Roi. 2017. "[When Valence Crushes: Explaining the Electoral Failure of the German FDP in the 2013 Election](#)", German Politics, DOI: 10.1080/09644008.2016.1257612

Week 10 (June 5): Miscellaneous

Topics:

- (1) Students will be asked to choose a topic for this class among the following:
 - A. British Politics
 - B. Canadian Politics
 - C. Gender Politics
 - D. German Politics
 - E. Israeli Politics

Week 10 (June 7): Final Review

Final Exam Wednesday June 14th 6:00 PM.

Other interesting issues

Gender and representation:

<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199751457.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199751457-e-21?rskey=a3UF52&result=2>

Downs in AP:

<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199548477.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199548477-e-002>

Parties in Canada:

<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195335354.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780195335354-e-12?result=20&rskey=vdoH7q&mediaType=Article#oxfordhb-9780195335354-div1-66>

Parties and the Welfare state:

<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199579396.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199579396-e-14?rskey=vdoH7q&result=13#notes>