INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS
Political Science 1340
Southern Methodist University
Spring 2016

Class time and location: TTh, 2–3:20 p.m., Hyer Hall 200

Professor Karisa Cloward, Department of Political Science
Office: 201 Carr Collins Hall
Office Hours: T 3:30–5 p.m., W 2:30–4 p.m., and by appointment
Email: kcloward@smu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course introduces students to comparative politics: the subfield of political science devoted to the study of politics and political life within the countries of the world. It tackles a range of questions that are of central concern to comparative political scientists, among them: How do states form? How do states become nations? Why do some countries become democracies and not others? What is democracy good for? How do institutions affect the political process? What are the causes of civil wars?

The course satisfies the Individuals, Institutions, and Cultures Pillar (Level 1) of the University Curriculum. As such, students who take the course will ultimately be able to identify some of the many types of interactions and influences that arise among individual, social, cultural, economic, and political experiences, and will be able to summarize basic empirical phenomena in the study of these experiences.

More specifically, students will be able to identify and discuss important concepts and tools in the study of comparative politics, including modernization theory, selectorate theory, tipping models, collective action problems, and veto players. They will be able to explain how social scientists ask questions about politics, how they investigate these questions, and how they develop their theories. They will further be able to critically evaluate academic scholarship and its relevance to the real world, and will be able to convey clear, focused, and well-supported arguments through their written work and in their class participation.

REQUIRED TEXT


Each chapter of the text concludes with a set of exercises. While you are not required to complete them, you may find that doing so helps you to better understand key methods and concepts.
Additional required readings will be posted or linked on Canvas. If you are not using a campus computer, you can access the linked readings by searching for them through the SMU Library website or Google Scholar and then entering your SMU ID and password when prompted for authentication of your SMU status.

Because this course will make reference to current events, and because being an informed citizen of the world is valuable in its own right, you should make a habit of reading a respectable major news publication on a regular basis (e.g., *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, BBC World News).

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

**Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Quizzes</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Response Papers</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Brief</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Attendance and Participation**

Attendance at lecture and participation in discussion are expected. If you need to miss class for a family emergency, illness, or University-sponsored event, you must notify me in advance via email and provide appropriate documentation. Unexcused absences will adversely affect your participation grade. **Upon your fourth unexcused absence, you will be either administratively dropped from the course or receive a final grade of F.**

If you must miss a class, please obtain lecture notes from another student. I will not distribute PowerPoint slides or my own personal notes, nor will I provide a private tutorial. If you have spoken to a classmate and still have questions, I am available to fill in the gaps.

Required readings are, in fact, required—you should complete them prior to the beginning of the class for which they’re assigned and come to class prepared and ready to discuss them.

I expect you to be courteous and respectful to me and to your classmates. This means arriving on time, staying in your seat and awake until the end of the period, and refraining from texting or other distracting activities.

I strongly discourage the use of laptops in class. Students who feel they must use a laptop are required to sit in the first row and to make a commitment to using them only for the purpose of note taking. If I find that laptops are being used for other purposes, the privilege will be revoked.

Late arrivals and early departures, being present but unprepared to participate, participating without being prepared, and engaging in distracting or disrespectful behavior will all adversely affect your participation grade.
Assignment Details

Reading Quizzes: Periodically throughout the semester, I will give unannounced quizzes on the readings. The quizzes will be open note, but not open book or open laptop, and will consist primarily of basic, factual questions that you should have no trouble answering if you have completed the readings and taken good notes. I will drop your lowest quiz grade before calculating your overall quiz average. If you miss a pop quiz because of an excused absence, that quiz will be dropped and your remaining quiz grades re-weighted to compensate. If you miss a pop quiz because of an unexcused absence, you will receive a zero on the quiz. There will be no make-up quizzes.

Short Response Papers: Over the course of the semester, you will write three two-page papers in which you diagram and briefly evaluate a scholarly article, choosing from among the first five assigned articles on the syllabus. Papers will be rewarded for original thinking, concision, and clarity. The short response papers are due on the date for which each article is assigned. You must complete at least two papers by March 15th. If you wish, you may submit a fourth paper, in which case your lowest paper grade (from among on-time papers only) will be dropped.

Policy Brief: You will write a 7–8 page brief, directed at constitutional framers in a new democracy, in which you recommend and justify a specific set of political institutions that should be adopted. Papers will be rewarded for original thinking, synthesis of multiple scholarly works, clarity of argumentation, and appreciation of tradeoffs inherent in institutional choices. You must cite a minimum of seven scholarly sources. The brief is due April 28th.

Exams: Both the midterm and final exams will consist of IDs and essay questions. You will need to draw on information from both lectures and readings in order to successfully answer all of the exam questions. The final exam will be comprehensive.

Paper Submission and Help

The short response papers and final paper should be double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman font, and standard character spacing. Each paper must be submitted in hard-copy format prior to the beginning of class on the day it is due. Failure to meet this deadline will result in a half letter grade deduction for each 24-hour period after the due date and time, beginning at 2:01 p.m. It is your responsibility to complete all assignments such that sufficient time remains to deal with any technical difficulties you might encounter. I will not be sympathetic to claims of malfunctioning printers.

Each paper must also be submitted to Canvas as a Word document (not a PDF or text file). In the absence of electronic submission, your paper will not be graded.

The SMU Writing Center can assist you with your writing. Call 214-768-3648 for an appointment.

Contacting Me

For very quick questions (questions you think I can answer in about three sentences or less) or to schedule an appointment, the best way to contact me is via email at kcloward@smu.edu.
My office hours, listed at the beginning of the syllabus, are your time. I am here to help you, but in order for me to do that you must first let me know that you are having a problem. If you cannot attend my regular office hours, I am happy to schedule another time.

**Religious and Disability Accommodation**

Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS) at 214-768-1470 or [http://smu.edu/Provost/ALEC/DASS](http://smu.edu/Provost/ALEC/DASS) to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. You should then schedule an appointment with me to make appropriate arrangements. It is essential that you address your needs early in the semester, before assignments are due.

Students who need to miss class for religious reasons should provide me with an explanation, in writing, no later than February 2nd.

**Honor Code**

I take plagiarism and other forms of cheating very seriously. Plagiarism is the use of someone else's work, words, or ideas as if they were your own. When in doubt, cite. In addition, you may not recycle work you have submitted in this or another course.

The SMU Honor Code governs all student work in this course, both in class and outside of the classroom. Honor code violations are punishable not only by a failing grade for the course, but also by referral to the University Honor Council. Ignorance of the Honor Code and its provisions is not an excuse. Any questions about specific applications of the Honor Code should be addressed to me.

**Personal Responsibility**

I am committed to being accessible to students, and I want you to succeed in the course, but you should not mistake this attitude for lax standards or low expectations. I am absolutely serious about this course. If you do not intend to be equally serious, this may not be the course for you. If you choose to take the course, the onus is on you to do the things necessary to achieve the goals you’ve set for yourself, or to accept responsibility if you do not. You will get out of the class what you put into it. Students who demonstrate their commitment to the course and to putting in the necessary work will find that I am ready and willing to help and advise them whenever possible. But I will not pick up the slack for students who are just looking to skate by, and I won’t do your work for you. Moreover, I will enforce all of the rules set out for this course—I will not make exceptions simply because you forget what the rules are or think they shouldn’t apply to you for whatever reason.
LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE

I. FOUNDATIONS OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS

January 19: Introduction to Comparative Politics
  - CGG. Chapter 1.

January 21–26: Science and Causation
  - CGG. Chapter 2.

Recommended:

January 28: Reading, Thinking, Writing, and Citing
  - Farrell, Henry. 2010. “Good Writing in Political Science: An Undergraduate Student’s Short Illustrated Primer.” http://www.henryfarrell.net/pol_sci_essay.html
  - University of Wisconsin Writer’s Handbook. “Acknowledging, Paraphrasing, and Quoting Sources” handout.

February 2: Politics, Power, and Strategic Interaction
  - CGG. Chapter 3.

  Guest lecture by Hiroki Takeuchi

II. REGIMES

February 4–9: States vs. Nations, and the Origins of the State
  - CGG. Chapter 4 (pp. 87–91).
  - CGG. Chapter 4 (pp. 100–19).

Recommended:

**February 11: Weak and Failed States**
- CGG. Chapter 4 (pp. 91–100).
  ~ Short Response Paper Option #1

Recommended:

**February 16: Democracy and Dictatorship**
- CGG. Chapter 5.

Recommended:

**February 18: Class Cancelled**

**February 23: Economic Determinants of Democracy and Dictatorship**
- CGG. Chapter 6 (pp. 171–84).

Recommended:
February 25: The Resource Curse
- CGG. Chapter 6 (pp. 184–208).
  ~ Short Response Paper Option #2

Recommended:

March 1: Cultural Determinants of Democracy and Dictatorship
- CGG. Chapter 7.

Recommended:

March 3: Democratic Transitions from Below
- CGG. Chapter 8 (pp. 265–90).

Recommended:
- Film: “The Lives of Others.”

Spring Break

March 15: Democratic Transitions from Above and Mixed Transitions
- CGG. Chapter 8 (pp. 290–307).
  ~ Short Response Paper Option #3
March 17: Midterm Exam

III. INSTITUTIONS

March 22: Government Performance and Varieties of Dictatorship
- CGG. Chapter 9 and Chapter 10 (pp. 349–84).

Recommended:

March 24: Selectorate Theory
- CGG. Chapter 10 (pp. 384–403).

Recommended:

March 29: Group Decision-Making
- CGG. Chapter 11.

Recommended:

March 31–April 5: Parliamentarism
- CGG. Chapter 12 (pp. 457–99).

April 7: Presidentialism, Semi-Presidentialism, and Regime Survival
- CGG. Chapter 12 (pp. 499–524) and Chapter 16 (pp. 805–25).
Short Response Paper Option #4

Recommended:

April 12–14: Electoral Systems
- CGG. Chapter 13.

Recommended:
- CGG. Chapter 16 (pp. 766–88).

April 19: Party Systems and Identity Politics
- CGG. Chapter 14.

Short Response Paper Option #5

Recommended:

April 21: Federalism, Bicameralism, and Constitutionalism
- CGG. Chapter 15 (pp. 673–718).

Recommended:

April 26: Veto Player Theory and Visions of Democracy
- CGG. Chapter 15 (pp. 718–28) and Chapter 16 (pp. 741–65).

Recommended:

IV. **BONUS TOPIC**

**April 28: Civil War**

- CGG. Chapter 16 (pp. 788–805).

**Recommended:**


**Policy Brief due in class**

**May 10, 8–11 a.m.: Final Exam**