



Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Department of Political Science

POLS 2523 – FOUNDATIONS OF GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

FALL 2023

Section 102, TR 12:30 - 1:50 pm

Instructor: Dr. Juheon Lee

Office: O'Donohoe Hall 203

Office Hours: Mon 3:30pm- 5pm; Tue 2pm-5pm; Wed 9am-12pm; and by appointment

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Course Description

This course will introduce students to key concepts and major theoretical and methodological components of comparative politics, a subfield of political science that compares politics across countries. The assumption of this course is that we may better understand domestic political issues by comparing different political systems; therefore, its objective is to help students build up the ability to understand and analyze different political systems and key political issues around the world. By the conclusion of this course, students should be able to analyze various political issues by constructing and testing hypotheses using methods and theories of comparative politics. To achieve this goal, the course provides students with opportunities to practice various analytical skills in a range of real-world cases. Class will include discussions, debates, and student presentations. These elements will help students stay up-to-date on current issues and gain better understanding of the variety and the evolution of political arrangements around the world. Some key questions of comparative politics are: Why are some states more democratic than others? Why are some states more developed than others? What conditions make democracy a viable enterprise? What forces tend to encourage or obstruct the process of democratization? And, if democracy is such a great governing system, why isn't it more common?

Course Objectives

Through the completion of this course, students are expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes:

- identify and distinguish between the different types of explanations of comparative politics;
- evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of theoretical arguments through the logical examination of evidence;
- think critically about world events and develop clearly articulated arguments; and
- apply theoretical knowledge to various policy issues in comparative politics.

Course Requirements

Completing ALL the readings and regular attendance will be required of all students. Active participation in class discussions is critical for students to succeed in this course.

Assignment	Weight	Notes
Final exam	20%	Short essay questions (via D2L)
Midterm exam	20%	Short essay questions (via D2L)
Policy paper presentation	15%	Case studies + discussion leading
Policy paper	20%	A written report (>2500 words)
Movie reflection paper (2)	10%	5 points for each paper (>500 words)
Engagement	15%	Attendance and participation

1. **Exams (Midterm 20 points / Final 20 points):** Each exam will consist of 2-3 essays. They will test your understanding of the key concepts of comparative politics and the main arguments of the assigned articles. The exams will also ask you to apply a theoretical framework to the real-world examples. A study guide will be provided before the exams, and make-up exams will be granted only in case of dire and documented personal emergencies.
2. **Policy Paper (20 points):** All students are required to complete an analytical paper on a specific political/policy issue by comparing two (or more) countries. A good paper successfully explains how different countries have taken different approaches to the same problem, compares pros and cons of different policies, and/or evaluates policy results. The goal of the paper is to provide policy implications to other country or countries by comparing and contrasting. You may use academic articles, local/national news sources, or your own knowledge to identify the issue you wish to focus on. You must use a critical thinking approach and not simply summarize the information.
3. **Policy Paper Presentation (15 points):** All students are required to sign up for an individual slide presentation in the first week. The presentation (20-25 minutes) should include in-depth case studies on the policy paper topic. Students are encouraged to discuss with the instructor regarding their presentation topic by the end of the first week. An effective and interactive presentation will earn extra credits.
4. **Movie reflections papers (10 points):** During the semester, we will watch 2 movies on comparative politics. You will be expected to respond to each movie in a short reflection paper (>500 words). Your response must be critical and go beyond a summary or a description of those movies. Originality will be critical for your grade (similarity rate above 5% will be penalized). All papers should be submitted electronically via D2L.
5. **Attendance and Participation (15 points):** Attendance is vital to learning the material presented in this course. You will be expected to come to class prepared to engage thoughtfully, listen attentively, and interact with your peers respectfully. Over the course of the semester, 4 excused absences will be allowed for all students. More than 4 absences and unexcused absences will lower your final grade.

Your final grade will be based on the quality of assignments listed above. It will be determined using the following percentage scale:

A = 100 – 90 B = 89 – 80 C = 79 – 70 D = 69 – 60 F < 60

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

I will use D2L for posting syllabus, course communication, course schedule, attendance, and gradebook, as well as for course materials and testing. Therefore, each student is expected to be familiar with this platform. You should regularly check D2L, and the email hosted via D2L for important course information. If you experience any difficulties, please contact the IT technicians immediately and let me know your problems.

For your midterm and final examinations, I may utilize the Respondus Lockdown Browser and Respondus Monitor. In order to install these programs, you will need the following:

- **A desktop computer or laptop** other than a Chromebook. Chromebooks are NOT compatible with the Respondus Lockdown Browser and Monitor. Apple iPads may be used for quizzes and exams, but these are not advised for any assignment with a written component. Mobile phones and similar devices are not compatible with the required programs.
- **A working webcam on the computing device** used for the exam.
- **Microsoft Office or a compatible program** for written assignments. Access to Microsoft Office 365 is available through the Office 365 for Students on the Microsoft website.

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individuals to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the [Office of Student Conduct](#).

Student Disability Services

Any student having an education disability plan on file with the university needs to inform me within the first week of the class, so I make the appropriate arrangements to accommodate your situation. In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to Disability Support Services.

Textbooks

1. Patrick H. O'Neal, *Essentials of Comparative Politics* (7th edition), ISBN 978-0393624588, W. W. Norton & Company [Required]
2. Patrick H. O'Neal & Ronald Rogowski, *Essential Readings in Comparative Politics* (5th edition), ISBN 978-0393938982, W. W. Norton & Company [Recommended]

Course Schedule

Week 1 – Comparative Politics

Discussion Topics: Why do we study comparative politics? What are the major components of studying comparative politics? How can the study of comparative politics be made more scientific? What can political science tell us that we don't already know?

August 29 & August 31

- Introduction to the course
- Reading
 - Chapter 1
 - Lichbach and Zuckerman, *Research Traditions and Theory*
 - King, Keohane, and Verba, *The Science in Social Science*
 - Mill, *Of the Four Methods of Experimental Inquiry*

Week 2 – States

Discussion Topics: How do countries create and maintain political power? What are the sources of legitimacy that give states power? How would we measure their strength or weakness?

September 5 & September 7

- Chapter 2
- Herbst, *War and the State in Africa*
- Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*
- Rotberg, *The New Nature of Nation-State Failure*
- Krasner, *Sovereignty*

Week 3 – Nations and Society

Discussion Topics: What is a society? What is a nation? What do you mean by political identity? How do people organize themselves into political communities?

September 12

- Chapter 3
- Hobsbawm, *Nationalism*
- Fearon and Laitin, *Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War*
- **Student Presentation 1**

September 14

- Chapter 3
- Alesina and La Ferrara, *Ethnic diversity and Economic Performance*
- **Student Presentation 2**

Week 4 – Nations and Society 2

Discussion Topics: What are the components of ethnic identity? How does national identity bind people together? What is the difference between citizenship and patriotism? What are the causes of ethnic and national conflict?

September 19

- Chapter 3
- Baldwin and Huber, *Economic Versus Cultural Differences*
- Cederman, Weidman, and Gleditsch, *Horizontal Inequalities and Ethnonationalist Civil War*
- **Student Presentation 3**

September 21

- Movie: *Beasts of No Nation*
- **A reflection paper should be submitted by September 24 (11:00 pm)**

Week 5 – Political Economy

Discussion Topics: How do people use politics to create and distribute wealth? How are states involved in the management of markets and property? How do states provide public goods? What are the future trends of political-economic systems?

September 26

- Chapter 4
- Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*
- North, *Institutions*
- **Student Presentation 4**

September 28

- Chapter 4
- Acemoglu, *Root Causes*
- Rogowski, *Political Cleavages and Changing Exposure to Trade*
- **Student Presentation 5**

Week 6 – Democratic Regimes

Discussion Topics: What are the key components of democracy? Why has democracy emerged in some cases and not in others? What are the differences between plurality, majority, and proportional electoral systems?

October 3

- Chapter 5
- Schmitter and Karl, *What Democracy is...and is not*
- Lijphart, *Constitutional Choices for New Democracies*
- Stepan, Linz, and Yadav, *The Rise of "State-Nations"*
- **Student Presentation 6**

October 5

- Foa and Mounk, *The Danger of Deconsolidation*
- Waylen, *Engendering the "Crisis of Democracy"*
- **Student Presentation 7**

Week 7 – Non-Democratic Regimes

Discussion Topics: Why have some countries failed to establish democracy? What are the differences between authoritarian and totalitarian regimes? How do nondemocratic regimes maintain power? How can you distinguish between personal, monarchical, military, one-party, theocratic and illiberal regimes? How can you explain the persistence of illiberal regimes despite the trend away from authoritarianism?

October 10

- Chapter 6
- Linz and Stepan, *Modern Nondemocratic Regimes*
- Levitsky and Way, *The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism*
- **Student Presentation 8**

October 12

- Chapter 6
- Diamond, *The Rule of Law versus the Big Man*
- King, Pan, and Roberts, *How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression*
- **Student Presentation 9**

Week 8 – Midterm

October 17

- Review for midterm
- **Student Presentation 10**

October 19

- Midterm exam

Week 9 – Political Violence

Discussion Topics: What is political violence? What are the factors that contribute to it? When does political conflict turn deadly? How can you compare revolution and terrorism? Can you explain how religion and political violence sometimes become linked? What are the connections between state power and political violence?

October 24

- Chapter 7
- Skocpol, *France, Russia, China*
- Crenshaw, *The Causes of Terrorism*
- **Student Presentation 11**

October 26

- Chapter 7
- Atran and Axelrod, *Reframing Sacred Values*
- Walsh and Piazza, *Why Respecting Physical Integrity Rights Reduces Terrorism*
- **Student Presentation 12**

Week 10 – Developed Democracies

Discussion Topics: Is democracy the key to peace and prosperity? What are the characteristics of developed democracies? How do political, economic, and social institutions differ in the developed democracies?

October 31

- Chapter 8
- Tocqueville, *Author's Introduction*
- Boix and Stokes, *Endogenous Democratization*
- **Student Presentation 13**

November 2

- Chapter 8
- Acemoglu, Johnson, Robinson, and Yared, *Income and Democracy*
- Ansell and Samuels, *From Inequality and Democratization*
- **Student Presentation 14**

Week 11 – Developed Democracies 2

Discussion Topics: Is democracy the key to peace and prosperity? What are the characteristics of developed democracies? How do political, economic, and social institutions differ in the developed democracies? How have developed democracies faced challenges to sovereignty? How have developed democracies seen a rise in postmodern values?

November 7

- Chapter 8
- Duverger, *The Number of Parties*
- Iversen and Soskice, *Electoral Institutions and the Politics of Coalitions*
- Estevez-Abe, Iversen, and Soskice, *Social Protection and the Formation of Skills*
- **Student Presentation 15**

November 9

- Movie: *Hotel Rwanda*
- **A reflection paper should be submitted by November 12 (11:00 pm)**

Week 12 – Communism and Post-communism

Discussion Topics: Why did communism fail, and what are its legacies? What are the foundations of communist ideology? How did communist systems seek to eliminate inequality? Can you analyze the effects of state control over markets and property?

November 14

- Chapter 9
- Marx and Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*
- Ekiert, *The Illiberal Challenge in Post-Communist Europe*
- **Student Presentation 16**

November 16

- Chapter 9
- Hale, *25 Years after the USSR*
- Balzer, *Russia and China in the Global Economy*
- **Student Presentation 17**

Week 13 – Developing Countries

Discussion Topics: What are the causes of poverty and wealth? What are the key characteristics of developing countries? How have imperialism and colonialism affected developing countries' state, societal, and economic institutions? How have post-imperial countries suffered from ethnic and national division, limited economic growth, and weak states?

November 21

- Chapter 10
- Easterly, *To Help the Poor*
- Clark, *The Sixteen-Page Economic History of the World*
- Collier and Gunning, *Why Has Africa Grown Slowly?*
- Acemoglu and Johnson, *Disease and Development*
- **Student Presentation 18**

November 23

- **Thanksgiving Holiday (No class)**

Week 14 – Globalization

Discussion Topics: How do global forces shape local communities? How do you define globalization? How can economic globalization transform markets and property within and between countries?

November 28

- Chapter 11
- Rodrik, *Is Global Governance Feasible? Is It Desirable?*
- Bourguignon, *Inequality and Globalization*
- **Student Presentation 19**

November 30

- Chapter 11
- Ferguson, *Populism as a Backlash against Globalization*
- Dryzek, *Global Civil Society*
- **Student Presentation 20**
- **Policy Paper Due at 11 pm**

Week 15 – Globalization 2

Discussion Topics: How does societal globalization undermine old identities and create new ones? Can you evaluate whether globalization is new, exaggerated, or inevitable?

December 5

- Chapter 11
- Ferguson, *Populism as a Backlash against Globalization*
- Dryzek, *Global Civil Society*
- Final Exam Review

December 7

- **Final Exam**