

CPO 2002: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Department of Political Science

DETAILS

Classroom: BEL 004

Summer B, M-F 12:30 – 1:45

Course website on Blackboard at campus.fsu.edu

INSTRUCTOR

Mr. William Schultz

Office: Bellamy 557-B (near the graduate computer lab)

Office hours: TUES from 3:00-4:30; THURS from 10:30-11:30.

Email: wbs15@my.fsu.edu

ON COURSE TIMING AND OFFICE HOURS

We will be meeting every day (M-F) for six weeks from 12:30-1:45. I've set aside office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays for meeting with students in this class. Please come see me with any questions, concerns, things you'd like to learn more about, etc. The hours are split over two days in the hopes that students with a responsibility preventing them from dropping by one day will be free to visit on the other. If you cannot make office hours, please send an email and we'll work something out.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Comparative Politics is the study of politics *within* nations. In general, the goal is to develop reliable theories that explain differences between countries across space and across time.

What kinds of governments do we see around the world today, and how do they work? Does living in a democracy or a dictatorship make a difference in people's lives? What causes governments to change, and where does social stability come from? How do changes in demographics, public opinion and economics influence who has power in society?

Researchers in our field address questions like those by: (1) coming up with testable theories of human social behavior that *might* explain these outcomes and; (2) seeing how those theories hold up when we explore the details of real world cases. We will pay heavy attention in this class to what scientific research of politics should look like, and why it's worthwhile. My **most important goal** is to prepare students to think sharply and critically about "explanations of politics." This should help you excel in later political science courses, and hopefully will also help you think more critically about the arguments you come across in your everyday life.

LIBERAL STUDIES

The Liberal Studies for the 21st Century Program at Florida State University builds an educational foundation that will enable FSU graduates to thrive both intellectually and materially and to support themselves, their families, and their communities through a broad and critical engagement with the world in which they live and work. Liberal Studies thus offers a transformative experience.

Moreover, as a Liberal Studies Social Sciences Course, students will also meet the goals of three Social Sciences competencies:

- **Competency 1:** critically examine, interpret, and explain how personal, political, cultural, economic, and social experiences and/or structures shape the past and/or the present.
- **Competency 2:** gather and analyze data using social science and/or historical methodologies to evaluate causal arguments and analyze assertions, assumptions, and explanatory evidence.
- **Competency 3:** evaluate and employ appropriate methods and technology in the collection and analysis of data.

COURSE MATERIALS

There is a required textbook you need:

William Clark, Matt Golder & Sona Golder. 2008. Principles of Comparative Politics. Washington D.C.: CQ Press. Second Edition.

You can buy CGG at the FSU bookstore or online. A few copies may be available at the library. There will be additional readings for some class periods on blackboard, or that I will direct you to.

Complete the required readings **before each class**. Readings for each day will be about 20 pages. This is standard for intro-level political science classes. The last few chapters are longer, so we'll be skipping around. I'll make it clear what material from each chapter you need to focus on.

THE SKILLS YOU'LL NEED, AND SOME SKILLS YOU'LL LEARN

We will sometimes use a little math in class. The most I assume of students is a passing familiarity with basic algebra. All you need beyond that is an open mind to how math can be a useful *means to an end* for studying politics. If you ever find yourself confused, please let me know in class, over email, or drop by my office hours and we can talk.

By the end of this class, students will learn a little about statistics, and will become familiar with the bare basics of "game theory." We'll talk about the importance of case studies and qualitative research, too.

GRADING PHILOSOPHY AND EXPECTATIONS

Grades in college have several purposes: assessment; signaling knowledge; and signaling *effort* to learn the course material and apply it. In my view, the last is most important. That is my biggest priority when designing and grading assignments.

This is an introductory class on a vast subject. Students are not expected to develop a mastery of Comparative Politics from just this semester. I aim to introduce students to important theories, skills, and facts that will help you excel in other politics classes— and hopefully your future careers.

GRADING SCALE

The grade scale used in this course is standard to many at FSU. Final grades ending in .5 or higher will be rounded up (92.5 earns an A), and final grades below .5 will be rounded down (92.4 earns an A-). Note that the numbers listed below are percentages.

A	93 to 100	B-	80 to 82	D+	67 to 69
A-	90 to 92	C+	77 to 79	D	63 to 66
B+	87 to 89	C	73 to 76	D-	60 to 62
B	83 to 86	C-	70 to 72	F	<60

EARNING YOUR GRADE

Your overall grade will be out of 500 points. It will be impacted by the following:

Participation: 100 points = 20%

TWO multiple choice tests: 225 points (total) = 45%

- (112.5 points each)

TWO quizzes on Blackboard: 125 points = 25%

News briefs: 50 points = 10%

- (10 points each)

NEWS BRIEFS

Every Wednesday before class time, submit a link on Blackboard to a news story about politics somewhere else in the world (i.e., *not directly about the US*). Stories about US influence on other parts of the world are OK). The **last brief is due June 14th**.

Along with the link, write a one paragraph summary of what the news story is about. I want to know: (1) what happened; (2) background on why the story is important; and (3) how does this relate to material we've covered in class? I will be lenient on that last point in the beginning of the semester, but after the first week you should be referencing class material.

There will be a "News Brief Guidelines" document on blackboard, containing: an example of what I want these briefs to look like; some resources on how to write and think about a news story; and examples of the types of news agencies you should be drawing on. These do not need to take you long to write.

These are graded on a pass-fail basis. (1) Have you made a good faith effort to fulfill the requirements of the assignment? (2) Is it clear you read the guidelines? The answer to each of these should be YES.

QUIZZES

There will be two quizzes you must complete on Blackboard.

The first is due by **June 4th at 11:59PM**. You have unlimited attempts to complete this quiz; the last one you finish before 11:59 will be taken as your final grade. Quiz content is based on Chapter 7, and an article on Blackboard by Stephen Fish. We will discuss the quiz in class after it is completed.

The second is due by **June 18th at 11:59PM**. You have three attempts; the third attempt, or the last you finish before 11:59, will be your final grade. Quiz is based on an article by Juan Linz about the difference between presidential and parliamentary democracies; is one system at greater risk of instability?

TESTS

There will be two tests this semester, and they will both be multiple choice. Each test has an equal weight on your grade, and second test (the "final exam") will not be cumulative. Study guides will be posted on Blackboard a week before each test, listing the theoretical and factual questions the test is going to see if you can answer. All material on a test will be hinted at in the study guide. We will have a review day before each test.

PARTICIPATION

I will not be taking regular daily attendance. However, there will be times when missing class can make you lose participation points.

- (1) Class is lecture based, but I will regularly ask questions to make sure people are absorbing the material. If no one volunteers, I'll call on someone enrolled in the class at random using a name generator. If you are not there to try and answer, you lose participation for the day (3.7 points).
- (2) On Wednesdays to start class I'll ask a few people to share what they wrote about in their news briefs, and see if it sparks discussion. If no one volunteers, I will use the name generator, and that person must be in class ready to talk about their brief or they will lose credit for the day.
- (3) Additionally, on a few days we will do in-class exercises that help drive home the material. I will not announce these days ahead of time, but students not present will lose participation credit.

If you know you have to miss class for a sanctioned reason (University attendance policy below), email me and I will not take off points if you come up on the name generator or miss a class exercise.

EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITY

Students will have the opportunity to participate in a pilot study of an economics experiment in the XS/FS lab (first floor of Bellamy) related to common-pool resource problems from Ch. 16 and collective action problems from Ch. 8. Participating is not mandatory, and choosing not to participate will not impact your grade. However, students who do participate will receive 15 extra credit points.

Dates are TBD, and will be discussed in class.

ACADEMIC HONOR POLICY

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "...be honest and truthful and... [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://dof.fsu.edu/honorpolicy.htm>.)

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center
874 Traditions Way
108 Student Services Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
sdrc@admin.fsu.edu
<http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

UNIVERSITY ATTENDANCE POLICY

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

MISSED/LATE ASSIGNMENTS OR EXAMS

It is University policy to accept missed exams and tests for documented medical reasons, family crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. I follow these guidelines gladly. I also give deference to parents with dependent children who are sick. Consideration will be given when I am contacted prior to or within two days following an exam with appropriate documentation from the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students office where these claims may be presented is located at Suite 4100 University Center (Stadium A).

Make up exams will be administered during the university scheduled time frame, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. on the Friday of finals. Missed exams for which no documentation is provided receive a score of zero.

Late assignments drop 10% of their full worth for each day they are late. I will still accept them by email.

PETITIONS FOR A GRADE CHANGE

I will consider written petitions for a change of grade on assignments. However, I require students to wait two business days after receiving a grade before submitting their petition.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY, and CLASSROOM COURTESY

I require cell phones to be turned off or at least silenced and put away during lecture. I have no issue with students taking notes on laptops. But if it seems like use of your laptop is distracting other

students, I reserve the right to ask you to put it away. On a similar note, please do not engage in private conversations during class, as it is disrespectful to other students who are trying to pay attention.

Please arrive on time, and let me know if you have a compelling reason to leave early. When entering late or leaving early, please do so quietly and with minimal interruption. I reserve the right to dismiss disruptive individuals from the classroom and report them to the Dean of Students.

EMAIL POLICY

Please include your first and last name and course information in the subject line of your email. When I receive your email, I will make effort to respond in a timely manner, usually within 48 hours. You may receive a reply sooner than that, but you should not expect an immediate response. Please treat all email correspondences with your instructor as you would treat any other professional exchange. I expect emails to be respectful and polite, to use correct grammar and complete sentences.

SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY

Except for changes that substantially affect parameters of evaluation, including grading and the scheduling of the final exam, this syllabus is subject to change at discretion of the instructor. I will provide you with advance notice in class and via your university registered email contact.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

The tentative course schedule is below. Topics covered and dates are subject to change with advance notice. Due dates of assignments will not change. The dates of the Midterm and Final are set and are not subject to change.

SCHEDULE

Class 1, May 15th — First day attendance. Reviewing syllabus. We'll end early.

Class 2, May 16th — Discussion of comparative politics. Overview of topics. Why study this at all?

Read for today:

- **[On Blackboard]** Prologue of "The Elusive Quest for Growth." William Easterly, 2002.
- Preface of "Why Nations Fail." Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, 2012.
 - <http://whynationsfail.com/preface/>
- Clark, Golder and Golder.
 - In Ch. 1, from beginning until "State Failure" (page 9). Box 1.1 and Figure 1.1 are most important. What were the important questions in different decades?
 - End of Ch. 1, "Approach Taken in This Book" (page 16).

Class 3, May 17th — Science as a field? Or science as a process? Overview of scientific method.

Read for today:

- Clark, Golder and Golder.
 - From beginning of Ch. 2, up to "An Introduction to Logic."

- **[On Blackboard]** James March and Charles Lave, 1975. “Introduction to Models in the Social Sciences.” Pages 10-20.
 - You don’t need to focus on the details of their topics. Pay attention to the process of theory development Lave and March walk through.

Class 4, May 18th — The rules of logic. Testing scientific theories. How to think about causation.

Read for today:

- Clark, Golder and Golder.
 - Finish Ch. 2 (“An Introduction to Logic” until end).
 - What is a valid argument? What argument structures are valid, and which aren’t? What’s “falsification-ism”?
 - Pay attention to Box 2.2

Class 5, May 19th — What is politics? 1

Read for today:

- Michela Wong, “In defense of western journalists in Africa.”
 - <http://africanarguments.org/2014/02/21/in-defence-of-western-journalists-in-africa-by-michela-wrong/>
- Clark, Golder and Golder.
 - From beginning of Ch. 3, up to page 57 (“Solving the... Game”). Pages 50-53 and the figures are most important.

Class 6, May 22nd — What is politics? 2

Read for today:

- Clark, Golder and Golder.
 - Finish Ch. 3. Focus on pages 57-58, and “Evaluating the... Game,” starting on page 66. Just skim the rest.

Class 7, May 23rd — States, nations, and state failure.

Read for today:

- Clark, Golder and Golder.
 - From beginning of Ch. 4 until page 100. What definitions of “the state” do the authors discuss? You should be able to overview of what happened in Somalia.

Class 8, May 24th — The state: social contract, or domination?

Read for today:

- Clark, Golder and Golder.
 - Ch. 4, 100-114. “The Contractarian View of the State”. Why is the state of nature important? What are the punchlines of the State of Nature and Contract games?
 - Ch. 4, 114-120. “The Predatory View of the State.” What are “economies of scale,” and what do they have to do with the modern state?

Class 9, May 25th — Democracy and Autocracy: what’s the difference?

Read for today:

- Clark, Golder and Golder.
 - All of Ch. 5. You can skim 160 to the end (“Evaluating...”); just note the bolded definitions.
 - Pay attention to Box 5.3

Class 10, May 26th — Revolution! Bottom-up regime change

Read for today:

- Clark, Golder and Golder.
 - Ch. 8, beginning until “Top Down Transitions” (Page 290). Pages 277+ are more important.
 - What’s the basic logic of the collective action problem? What can’t those models explain? Where do tipping-point models come in?

No class, May 29th — Memorial Day

Class 11, May 30th — Elite-led regime change

Read for today:

- Clark, Golder and Golder.
 - Ch. 8, finish chapter. Start at Top Down Transitions, page 290. Skim the application to Poland.
 - What’s the “prehistory” here? Who are soft liners and hard liners, and what do they want? What different conditions can we look at the Transition Game under?

Class 12, May 31st — Economics and regime type: 1

Read for today:

- Clark, Golder and Golder.
 - Ch. 6. Beginning until “A Variant of Modernization Theory,” page 184. Be able to answer: What’s the modernization narrative? What’s the survival narrative? What are their competing implications?

Class 13, June 1st — Economics and regime type: 2

Read for today:

- Clark, Golder and Golder
 - Skim the rest of chapter 6 (page 184+). Be able to answer: how do natural resources and foreign aid influence propensity towards democracy or dictatorship? Make sure to glance at p. 203, ‘Some More Empirical Evidence’ as well.

Class 14, June 2nd — Review for midterm; culture and regime type

Read for today:

- Clark, Golder and Golder.
 - Skim Ch. 7. You should know: what is cultural modernization theory? What is civic culture? (p. 214-220) Why can it be problematic to test arguments about culture using survey data? (p. 223-226)

FIRST BLACKBOARD QUIZ DUE, June 4th, 11:59PM

Class 15, June 5th —Review for midterm

MIDTERM, June 6th

Class 16, June 7th — Culture and democracy, part 2 (religion, and experiments)

Read for today:

- Clark, Golder and Golder
 - Ch. 7. Skim p. 235-240. What do CGG make of arguments that some religions are better suited to sustain democracy?
- Clark, Golder and Golder.
 - Ch. 7. P. 248-258. What are the ultimatum and dictator games? Why do we care about playing these games with people in different countries around the world? (*on p. 257*)

Class 17, June 8th — Varieties of autocracy

Read for today:

- Blog post by Tom Pepinsky at Cornell <https://tompepinsky.com/2017/01/06/everyday-authoritarianism-is-boring-and-tolerable/>
- Clark, Golder and Golder
 - Ch. 10. Skim beginning until page 384. You need to know: what are the different kinds of dictatorship in the world? What are the different threats they each face? What's the "Dictator's Dilemma?"

Class 18, June 9th — Democracy, dictatorship... does it really matter?

Read for today:

- Clark, Golder and Golder
 - Ch. 9. Read enough to know: What's the point of the Meltzer-Richard model? What are the problems with it? Why could democracy cause economic growth? What do CGG conclude from empirical evidence?

Class 19, June 12th — Selectorate Theory

Read for today:

- Clark, Golder and Golder.
 - Finish Ch. 10. Page 384+

Class 20, June 13th — Group decision-making: problems and tradeoffs

Read for today:

- Clark, Golder and Golder.
 - Ch. 11. Read enough to know: What are the implications of: (1) Condorcet's Paradox; (2) the Median Voter theorem; and (3) Arrow's Theorem? (p. 415-420; 424-433; 440-442).

Class 21, June 14th — Parliamentary and Presidential systems

Read for today:

- Clark, Golder and Golder
 - Ch. 12. P. 458-462; 465-468; skim 475-480 (*What would we expect in a purely office seeking, or purely policy seeking world?*); 483 (*why do we see minority parliamentary governments?*); 500-503; 512-514; 517; 520

Class 22, June 15th — Majoritarian and proportional electoral systems

Read for today:

- Clark, Golder and Golder
 - Ch. 13. P. 542-546. 554-557. 560-563. 566. 571-572. 574-582.

Class 23, June 16th — Party systems and social cleavages

Read for today:

- Clark, Golder and Golder.
 - Ch. 14. What do political parties do in a democracy? What is Duverger's theory? What do CGG conclude about it?
 - P. 604-611. 616-617. 619. 643-650. 653-655. 659.
 - *Glance over 622-633: what are the different kinds of cleavages that can influence party systems?*

SECOND BLACKBOARD QUIZ DUE, June 18th, 11:59PM

Class 24, June 19th — Checks and balances: the power of 'veto' players

Read for today:

- Clark, Golder and Golder.
 - Ch. 15. What are federalism, bicameralism, and constitutionalism? What is "veto player theory," and what does it have to do with those institutions?

Class 25, June 20th — Visions of democracy; Review for final.

Read for today:

- [On Blackboard] Selections from:
 - Powell, G. Bingham. 2000. *Elections as Instruments of Democracy. Majoritarian and Proportional Visions*. New Haven: Yale University Press
 - Fearon JD. 1999. Electoral accountability and the control of politicians: selecting good types versus sanctioning poor performance. In *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*, ed. A Przeworski, S Stokes, B Manin. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press

Class 26, June 21st — Extra credit pilot study (*come to the classroom today, the lab is in Bellamy*)

REVIEW FOR FINAL, June 22nd

FINAL EXAM, June 23rd