1 Course Summary

Welcome to Democracy and Dictatorship! In this course we will use the method of comparison to better understand the domestic politics of different societies. We will compare different trajectories of institutions, states, and economies; the characteristics and consequences of different regimes; and the causes of revolution and political violence.
We will examine different theoretical approaches (Modernization, Marxist, cultural, institutionalist, and agency-centered) and apply them to cases across the world. Examples of questions in Comparative Politics are diverse. Does capitalism support or subvert democracy? What explains intercommunal conflict in Bosnia or India? Why do some authoritarian regimes survive and others fall? Which of today’s political actors are revolutionary? Why do individuals mobilize to participate in protest, ethnic violence, revolution, and civil war? Though questions in comparative politics vary across broad substantive and geographical scopes, in this course we will learn to consider them all through the framework of the comparative method.

2 Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Use the method of comparison to analyze divergent outcomes and their causes across cases.
- Define and identify different types of regimes, from totalitarian to democratic and everything in between.
- Gain an understanding of theories of regime change, democratic and authoritarian governance, civil society, revolution, civil war, ethnic conflict, and political economy.
- Independently investigate and write a research paper, comment intelligently on others’ work, and revise your own work based on feedback.

3 Student Evaluation

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<th>Course Assessment</th>
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<tr>
<td>1) Participation</td>
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<td>2) Reading Notes</td>
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<td>3) Two Single-Point Papers</td>
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<td>4) Simulation Analysis</td>
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<td>5) Comparative Research Paper</td>
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<td>6) Final Exam</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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4 Readings

You do not have to buy any books for this class. All of the readings are available in one of two places: either posted on the class Moodle page as a PDF, or (for academic articles) on Google Scholar. Carleton provides internet access to most academic journals, and if you don’t already know how, I’d like you to learn how to search for them. So try this:
Step 1: Connect to Wi-Fi while you are on the Carleton campus (or through Carleton’s VPN service if you are off-campus)


Step 3: Search for the reading: e.g. “Schmitter and Karl What Democracy Is . . . and Is Not”.

Step 4: Find our article and click on “Full View” or “Carleton Full Text.”

Step 5: Read the article, while taking careful notes filled with brilliant insights.

5 Expectations

The most important expectation is simple: be respectful of everyone in the class, and of each other’s views. In an environment as diverse as Carleton’s, everyone has a different perspective to offer, to teach, and to learn. Engage with the course fully and listen as carefully to your fellow students as you would to your professor.

Although this is an introduction, this is not an easy class. There’s plenty of reading and a lot of it is tough—but rewarding. I expect you to leap into the readings with enthusiasm from the very first class. If we all do that, we’ll have a lively classroom discussion.

It’s also essential to take notes as you read. Different methods work for different students: some try to create an outline of the main points, others may write a summary paragraph of the reading as soon as they finish it, while others might pull out five to seven quotes that capture key ideas. It would be a good idea to experiment with different styles throughout the course to learn what works best for you.

Arrive on time and ready to participate. If you will be late or absent, please email me at least 30 minutes before class. I will notice repeated absences and penalize your class participation grade.

I will ask a lot from you in this course, but you can expect to receive a lot from me in return. I hope that by the end of the semester, you will conclude that this was one of your most challenging courses at Carleton, and one of your best.

6 Evaluation

Format and Required Citation Style: Submit written work online through our Moodle (you will get my feedback through the Moodle as well) and use the APSA style guide to format citations and bibliography.
Language Options for Written Assignments: English or Spanish

On-Time Work Policy: My expectation is that you will complete your work by deadlines listed on this syllabus. When sufficiently compelling circumstances arise, I will grant students an extension without imposing a grade penalty. I will only grant extensions that students request prior to the original deadline. Students should tell me when they expect to complete their work and communicate with me about its progress.

Summary of Assignments

1. **Class Participation:** On some occasions I will lecture, but more often, we will engage in class and group discussions in which students are expected to share their thoughts, ideas, and questions with the class. We also will engage in a handful of classroom simulations, each of which is based on the theories covered in the readings. Don’t worry! There will be lots of opportunities—and different ways—to be engaged with the class, and I am happy to give feedback and discuss your participation during office hours. 10% of course grade.

2. **Reading Notes:** Consistent note-taking is among the most important skills you can develop in college. Come prepared to show me your reading notes at the beginning of every class. Your notes may be digital or hand-written, and you may take them in any style that works best for you. You will be graded simply on whether you took notes or not. 10% of course grade.

3. **Two Single Point Papers:** These short papers should respond to an individual reading or set of readings. You will be able to choose between several prompts that I will provide, or you may create your own prompt. Think about the key ideas that you see emerging from your reading or your reading notes. Advance a single argument or assertion, which may be substantive, analytic, methodological, theoretic, or any combination of these. Please note that these are intended as low-stakes writing assignments: their goal is to give me a chance to read and workshop your writing before we move towards weightier assignments. First paper due on January 17, second paper due on January 27. 750 words maximum. 5% of course grade each.

4. **Simulation Analysis:** We will spend two class periods conducting a simulation of the Russian Revolution. Prior to the start of the simulation, you will write a 2 page strategy brief, in which you outline your character’s positions and goals, and how you will bargain and negotiate. Following the simulation, you will submit a longer 3-4 page paper in which you evaluate the dynamics of the simulation, assess the success (or failure) of your initial strategy, and contrast the events of the simulation with class readings on how revolutions unfold. Simulation Strategy Brief due on February 14 (5% of course grad), Simulation Analysis due on February 21 (10% of course grade).

5. **Comparative Research Paper:** For this research paper, you will try to answer your ‘Why’ question about some aspect of world politics. Ask: How have political scien-
tists tried to answer this question? What do you think is the answer to this question? What evidence would you need to collect to answer it? In order to develop your own argument, you will compare two (or more) cases in a most-similar-systems (MSS) or most-different-systems (MDS) research design. A template for these research designs is available on the Moodle. We will talk much more about how to conduct a comparative politics research project throughout the course. Rough draft due on March 6, final draft due on March 11 at 7pm. 9–10 pages (including literature review). 25% of course grade.

- **Your ‘Why’ Question:** On a single sheet of paper, write a single sentence asking a single question about some phenomenon covered in comparative politics. This question should start with ‘Why’ (I will also consider well-structured ‘How’ questions). Why do some democracies experience fierce class conflict while others don’t? Why have mass pro-democracy protests broken out in some longstanding African dictatorships (for example, Zimbabwe and Uganda), but not others (Angola and Mozambique)? Why do members of ethnic majorities sometimes support ethnic minority protest movements (as during the US civil rights movement)? Why do some civil wars end with peace treaties and others with military victories? We will use the *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics* to identify topics for potential ‘Why’ questions. Your question will form the core of your final research project. Due on February 5. 5% of Research Paper grade.

- **Literature Review:** How have previous scholars tried to answer your ‘Why’ question? *Identify, describe, and critique three distinct arguments* from a set of articles and book chapters on your research question of choice. A literature review does not only summarize arguments from the literature; it critiques them, identifying areas where they may fall short or cases they may not adequately explain. This paper will be graded on its argumentation and written communication. Due February 12. 3–4 pages. 15% of Research Paper grade.

- **Most Similar Systems (MSS) or Most Different Systems Research (MDS) Design:** For this assignment, you will create a case comparative research design to test your ‘Why’ question. I will pass out a chart to help you design an MSS or MDS comparison. Based on three independent variables (IVs) *drawn from your literature review* and your dependent variable (DV), you will select two cases that meet the requirements of an MSS or MDS comparison. Due on February 28. 5% of Research Paper grade.

- **Peer Review:** For your Research Paper you will be paired with two “peer reviewers”—other students in the class who will give you a two-page written feedback on your paper (a Peer Review Memo). Using this feedback, you will revise the Research Paper, and along with the final draft, you will submit a Reviewer Response Memo, which explains how you addressed the Peer Review Memo’s comments in your revisions. Each memo you write—two Peer Reviews and one Reviewer Response—is worth 5% of the Research Paper grade.

6. **Final Exam:** This will be a comprehensive, closed-book and closed-note final exam.
You will be tested on your understanding of both factual and theoretical material taken from both readings and lectures. The exam will include IDs, multiple-choice questions, short answer questions, and essay questions. At least one of the essay questions will consist of the interpretation and critique of the results of a regression analysis. Self-scheduled during exam week. 30% of course grade.

7 Academic Integrity

The academy is an ancient tradition founded on the pursuit of truth at all costs. Honesty, personal responsibility, and integrity are therefore core values indispensable to any academic pursuit. You will be judged, justly, on the extent to which you uphold these values for the rest of your life, and your integrity is far more important than your final grade in this course.

One common form of academic dishonesty will result in an automatic failure of any assignment, or more likely, an F in the course along with a referral to the university honor board: plagiarism, presenting another person’s words, ideas, or work as if it were your own. Plagiarism is more than simply copying and pasting language found on the internet into your paper (although this is certainly plagiarism). Plagiarism also consists of taking someone’s ideas, or paraphrasing their language, without proper attribution. That is, you must always cite the original author, even when not using their original words. Citing your sources does not detract from the originality of your argument; rather, it situates your contribution within a long conversation with other scholars. This long conversation, including your contribution, is the academic pursuit.

As a final note, Carleton punishes academic dishonesty severely. Professors count on extremely sophisticated data analysis tools to detect most forms of plagiarism, and after thousands of exams and essays, most of us are able to spot plagiarism and other forms of cheating at a glance. The consequences may include expulsion from the college—a serious penalty in exchange for the possibility of a minor advantage on an assignment.

8 Laptop Policy

Students are permitted laptops in this course. However, I strongly discourage them. Electronic devices, with all their flashy lights and noises, distract your attention from where it belongs: your professor, your fellow students, and the incisive arguments flying around the classroom. It would be best to write notes in your notebook with pen and ink. If you would like your notes digitized, you can always photograph them after class. Your most important role in the classroom is not passive notetaker, but active interlocutor. The best way to incorporate laptops into the classroom—if you must—is to tilt the screen down when you are not using it. If you require the use of any electronic device for accessibility reasons, I’m more than happy to accommodate your needs in this regard.
9 Other Resources for Students

Writing Help

The Carleton Writing Center, located on the 4th floor of the library (also known as “4th Libe”), has peer tutors available for assisting students in all stages of their writing. You may drop in for help or schedule an appointment.

Students with Special Needs

I am committed to providing assistance to help you be successful in this course. Students seeking accommodations based on disabilities should meet with Chris Dallager, Director of Disability Services for Students. Call 507-222-5250 for an appointment. I encourage you to address any special needs or accommodations with me as soon as you become aware of your needs. More info here.
10 Schedule of Classes and Assignments

MODULE 1
Comparative Politics and the State

Monday, January 6
Introduction to the Course

No reading.

Wednesday, January 8
What is Comparative Politics?

Timothy C. Lim, Doing Comparative Politics: An Introduction to Approaches and Issues (Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006), Chapter 1: Getting into Comparative Politics.

Friday, January 10
Power and the State


Monday, January 13
War and the State


Wednesday, January 15
The State Without War


In-class simulation: Mapping Colonial Africa.

Friday, January 17
The Comparative Method

Lim, Doing Comparative Politics, Chapter 2: Comparing to Learn, Learning to Compare.

Assignment: First Single-Point Paper due before class.

Monday, January 20
The State and Revolution


MODULE 2
Foundations of Democracy

Wednesday, January 22
What is Democracy?


Friday, January 24
Origins of Democracy: Modernization Theory


Friday, January 31
Social Capital in Democratic Civil Society


Monday, February 3
Social Capital and Ethnic Riots

Barbara Geddes, “How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics,” *Political Analysis* 2, no. 1 (1990): pp. 131–3 and 141–146 (and Figure 10 on p. 147) only.


Wednesday, February 5
Democratic Stability: Institutions


Assignment: 'Why’ Question due before class.

Wednesday, January 29
Origins of Democracy: Elite-Led Transitions


Assignment: Second Single-Point Paper due before class.

In-class simulation: Democracy, Dictatorship, and Redistribution.
Friday, February 7
Democratic Stability: Parties


Monday, February 10

Midterm Break.

**MODULE 3**
**REGIME TRANSITIONS**

Wednesday, February 12
Explaining Sudden Revolutions


**In-class simulation:** Threshold Models of Revolution.

**Assignment:** Literature Review due before class.

Friday, February 14
Simulation: The Russian Revolution I


**In-class simulation:** Dual Power in Revolutionary Russia.

**Assignment:** Simulation Strategy Brief due before class.

Monday, February 17
Simulation: The Russian Revolution II

No reading.

**In-class simulation:** Dual Power in Revolutionary Russia.

Wednesday, February 19
Competitive Authoritarianism


Friday, February 21
Criminal Violence in Democracies and Dictatorships


**Assignment:** Simulation Analysis due before class.

**MODULE 4**
**FOUNDATIONS OF AUTHORITARIANISM**

**Required this week:** Student Hours meeting to discuss MSS or MDS Research Design.
Monday, February 24
Authoritarian Stability: Institutions


Wednesday, February 26
Can Authoritarianism Be Good?


Friday, February 28
Authoritarian Civil Society


Assignment: MSS or MDS Research Design due before class.

Monday, March 2
Putinism: A New Model of Authoritarian Rule?


Module 5
Mobilization and Violence

Wednesday, March 4
The Causes of Civil War


Assignment: Rough Draft of Comparative Analysis Research Paper due before class.

Friday, March 6
Causes of Mobilization: Grievances


In-class exercise: Interview Field Notes.

Assignment: Peer Review Memos due Saturday, March 7 before 7pm.
Monday, March 9
Causes of Mobilization: Protection and Profit


Assignment: Final Draft of Comparative Analysis Research Paper due Wednesday, March 11 before 7pm.

Saturday to Monday, March 14–16


Wednesday, March 11
Conclusion and Wrap-up

No reading.