

# Understanding Comparative Politics

**SOSC 3520**

Spring 2021

Mon, Wed 10:30PM - 11:50PM

Zoom: <https://hkust.zoom.us/j/4890933026?pwd=THlrZFBCOUJlSnNmby83d05wR21WUT09>

## **Instructor: Jean (Ji Yeon) HONG**

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## **TA: Hanying Wei**

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This is a comparative politics course targeting toward advanced undergraduate students. With its long history, comparative politics has covered many different topics. The course will focus on important substantive questions to understand political phenomena around the world.

This course is designed to build perspectives and skills to understand and analyze domestic politics around the globe by exposing students to the basic literature in political science and economics related to comparative politics subfield. Except for the first few classes, the course will be run as a combination of lecture and student presentation(s) and discussion, in which everyone is expected to participate. Therefore, everyone is responsible for reading, preparing presentations and critically assessing the readings and presentations.

The course consists of four topics related to politics. Each topic is broad and complex. Due to time constraints, we will focus on several key subtopics in each section. First, we will discuss the basic logic and methodologies in comparative politics. We will then survey the literature on a controversial topic in state formation and regime types. In the subsequent section, the class will focus on election and government system. Then we move to policy-related issues and several challenges in comparative political economy including economic growth, inequality,

poverty, foreign aid, natural resources, and civil war.

## GRADING

1. **Mid-term and final examination:** Mid-term exam will take 25% of the grade. Final exam, taking 25% of grades, will be scheduled by the school. Both exams will be a mixture of multiple choices, true or false, short answers, and short essays. Final exam will be cumulative. Mid-term will be one hour and the final will be two hours. Essential readings and lectures are the subjects of exams. You **MUST** sit these exams at the scheduled time. Two exceptions are family emergency (such as sudden fatal illness or death) and your emergent surgery. In any case, you must provide a doctor's note with his or her contact information. Upon a proper doctor's note and contact information, a make-up exam may be scheduled.

2. **Final Paper:** 30% of the grade will be decided by individual final paper. You can choose any topic related to comparative politics. You need to submit a one-page proposal on 5pm, **29/4/2021** for comments. Comment session will be held on **6/5/2021**. (Proposal will not be graded.) The final paper submission to the CANVAS is due on 5pm, **29/05/2019**. Detailed guideline will be announced. Paper cannot exceed 2000 words.

3. **Class attendance and group discussion:** 20% of the grade will depend on attendance, participation, and group discussion. Group discussion will be randomly conducted about 4-5 times during the semester. Group will be randomly assigned. Active participants will be noticed and considered.

Failure to complete any of the tasks above (presentation, mid-term exam, final exam, final paper or attendance) may result in a failure grade for this course.

## TEXTBOOKS

William R. Clark, Matt Golder, and Sona N. Golder. 2018. *Principles of Comparative Politics* (3rd edition), Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, Sage. (hereafter, CGG)

### Other useful textbooks

David J. Samuels. 2012. *Comparative Politics*. Pearson.

Daniele Caramani. 2008. *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kenneth Newton and Jan W. van Deth. 2010. *Foundations of Comparative Politics* (2nd edition). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Jeffrey Kopstein and Mark Lichbach. 2005. *Comparative Politics: Interests, Identities, and Institutions in a Changing Global Order*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

## TOPICS & READINGS

### I. Introductory Materials

#### Feb. 2: Overview

*What is political science? What is comparative politics? Is politics comparable?*

##### ***Essential Readings***

CGG, Chapter 1. Introduction

#### Feb. 4 and 9: Research Methods

*Is political science a science? What are quantitative/qualitative research? What are the advantages and disadvantages?*

##### ***Essential Readings***

CGG, Chapter 2. What is Science?

##### ***Recommended Readings***

James Mahoney and Gary Goertz. 2006. A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research, *Political Analysis*, 14:227-249.

Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Henry Brady and David Collier. 2004. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Rogers M. Smith. 2002. "Should We Make Political Science More of a Science or More about Politics?" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35(2): 199-201.

## II. State and Regime

### Feb. 11: The nation state

*What is state? What is nation? What is sovereignty? How does state differ from dynasty?*

#### ***Essential Readings***

CGG, Chapter 4. The Origins of the Modern State.

#### ***Recommended Readings***

Samuels, Chapter 2. The State.

Charles Tilly. 1985. "War Making as Organized Crime." In *Bringing the State Back In* edited by Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Fukuyama, Francis. 2004. *State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century*. Cornell University Press.

### Feb. 16, and 18: Democracy

*What is Democracy? How can one measure democracy? What values does democracy bring to a society?*

#### ***Essential Readings***

CGG, Chapter 5. Democracy and Dictatorship: Conceptualization and Measurement.

Philippe Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl. 1991. "What Democracy Is...and Is Not," *Journal of Democracy* 2: 75-88.

#### ***Recommended Readings***

Zachary Elkins. 2000. "Gradations of Democracy? Empirical Tests of Alternative Conceptualizations." *American Journal of Political Science* 44 (2): 293-300.

Geraldo L. Munck and Jay Verkuilen. 2002. "Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices." *Comparative Political Studies* 35: 5-34.

Robert A. Dahl. 1971. *Polyarchy*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Robert A. Dahl. 2000. *On Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Charles Tilly. 2007. *Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

## **Feb. 23: team organization and discussion**

### **Feb. 25 and Mar. 2: Autocracy**

*What is autocracy? Is autocracy bad? Why or why not? Why do people support or choose authoritarian regime voluntarily? Why do autocracies have elections?*

#### ***Essential Readings***

CGG, Chapter 10. Varieties of Dictatorships.

#### ***Recommended Readings***

Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way. 2002. "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy* 13: 51-65.

Jennifer Gandhi and Adam Przeworski. 2007. "Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats," *Comparative Political Studies* 40: 1279-1301.

Fareed Zakaria. 1997. "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy." *Foreign Affairs* 76: 22-41.

### **Mar. 4 and 9: Democratization (and Autocratization)**

*What lead a country to democratization? What causes autocratization? What makes a country to swing between two regime types?*

#### ***Essential Readings***

CGG, Chapter 8. Democratic Transitions.

#### ***Recommended Readings***

Barbara Geddes. 1999. "What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?" *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2:115-44.

Adam Przeworski, Michael Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub and Fernando Limongi. 1996. "What Makes Democracies Endure?" *Journal of Democracy* 7(1): 39-55.

Carles Boix. 2006. "The Roots of Democracy." *Policy Review* 135.

### III. Institutions

#### Mar. 11 and 16: Electoral System

*Why countries have different electoral system? Are elections democratic/fair? Does election reflect the voice of the majority? What are the features of good electoral system?*

##### ***Essential Readings***

CGG Chapter 11. Problems with Group Decision Making.

CGG Chapter 13. Elections and Electoral Systems.

##### ***Recommended Readings***

Arend Lijphart. 1997. "Unequal Participation: Democracies Unresolved Dilemma." *American Political Science Review* 91(1): 1-14.

Arend Lijphart. 2004. "Constitutional Design for Divided Societies." *Journal of Democracy* 15(2): 96-109.

Kenneth Benoit. 2007. "Electoral Laws as Political Consequences: Explaining the Origins and Change of Electoral Institutions." *Annual Review of Political Science* 10: 363-90.

#### Mar. 18: Political Parties

*Why do parties matter? Why are there only a handful number of parties? Do they represent people? What types of people join the party?*

##### ***Essential Readings***

CGG Chapter 14. Social Cleavages and Party Systems.

##### ***Recommended Readings***

Harold Clarke and Marianne Stewart. 1998. "The Decline of Parties in the Minds of Citizens." *Annual Review of Political Science* 1: 357-78.

Larry Diamond and Richard Gunther. 2001. *Political Parties and Democracy*. Johns Hopkins Press.

Richard Gunther, Jose Ramon Montero and Juan J. Linz. 2002. *Political Parties: Old Concepts and New Challenges*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## Mar. 23: Midterm Examination

- In-class exam
- 60 minutes (early leave is allowed)
- Multiple choice, short answers (1-3 words), True or false, short essays

## Mar. 25 and 30: Social Movement

*Why do people protest? Why does the mass participate in protest? Why do governments tolerate/repress protests?*

### *Essential Readings*

Samuels, Chapter 9. Collective Action.

Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E Roberts. 2013. "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression." *American Political Science Review* 107(2): 1-18.

### *Recommended Readings*

Cameron G. Thies and Schuyler Porche. 2007. "The Political Economy of Agricultural Protection." *Journal of Politics* 69(1): 116-127.

Robert D. Putnam. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. NY: Simon and Schuster.

## Apr. 1 and 6: Mid Term Break

## IV. Policies and Challenges

## Apr. 8 and 13: Economic Growth

*What drives economic growth? Does regime type matter? Why the richest countries are democracies? Why some authoritarian countries are wealthy?*

### *Essential Readings*

Samuels, Chapter 11. Political Economy of Development.

CGG, Chapter 9. Democracy or Dictatorship: Does It Make a Difference?

### *Recommended Readings*

Mancur Olson. 1993. "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development," *American Political Science Review* 87(3): 567-576.

Stanley L. Engerman and Kenneth L. Sokoloff. 2008. "Debating the Role of Institutions in Political and Economic Development: Theory, History, and Findings." *Annual Review Of Political Science* 11: 119-135.

Douglas North. 1990. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson. 2012. *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty*. New York: Crown Publishers.

Navia, P. and T.D. Zweifel. 2003. "Democracy, Dictatorship, and Infant Mortality revisited." *Journal of Democracy* 14(3): 90-103.

Brown, D.S. 1999. "Reading, writing, and regime type: Democracy's impact on primary school enrolment." *Political Research Quarterly* 52(4): 681-707.

## Apr. 15 and 20 : Poverty and Inequality

*Why are there poor population in wealthy democratic countries? Why do the poor often vote for the conservative/right-wing parties? Does anti-poverty program or foreign aid reduce the poverty level?*

### ***Essential Readings***

Thomas Piketty. 2015. "About Capital in the Twenty-First Century", *American Economic Review: Papers & Proceedings* 105(5): 48-53.

Ana De La O. 2013. "Do Conditional Cash Transfers Affect Electoral Behavior? Evidence from a Randomized Experiment in Mexico." *American Journal of Political Science* 57(1): 1-14.

### ***Recommended Readings***

Philip Keefer. 2007. "Clientelism, Credibility, and the Policy Choices of Young Democracies." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(4): 804-821.

Faisal Z. Ahmed. 2012. "The Perils of Unearned Foreign Income: Aid, Remittances, and Government Survival." *American Political Science Review* 106(1): 146-165.

Alberto Diaz-Cayeros and Beatriz Magaloni. 2009. "Aiding Latin America's Poor." *Journal of Democracy* 20(4):36-49.



## Apr 22: Natural resources

*Are natural resources beneficial for the citizens? Why are resource-rich countries autocratic? Why do they have smaller number of populations and universities?*

### ***Essential Readings***

World Bank, "Natural Resources: When Blessings Become Curses."

### ***Recommended Readings***

Ji Yeon Hong. 2018. "How Natural Resources Affect Authoritarian Leaders? Provision of Public Services: Evidence from China" *Journal of Politics* 80(1): 178-194.

Michael L. Ross. 1999. "The Political Economy of the Resource Curse." *World Politics* 51(2): 297-322.

Michael L. Ross. 2012. *The Oil Curse: How Petroleum Wealth Shapes the Development of Nations*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Macartan Humphreys, Jeffrey Sachs, Joseph Stiglitz (Eds). 2007. *Escaping the Resource Curse*. New York: Columbia University Press.

## Apr. 29: Final Paper Proposal Due

## Apr. 27 and 29: Political Violence and Civil War

*Why are there a war within a country? What explains civil conflict? Does religion or ethnicity contribute to conflict?*

### ***Essential Readings***

James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 97 (1):75-90.

### ***Recommended Readings***

Ji Yeon Hong and Wenhui Yang, "Oilfield, Mosques and Violence: Is There a Resource Curse in Xinjiang?" *British Journal of Political Science*.

Chris Blattman and Edward Miguel. 2010. "Civil War." *Journal of Economic Literature* 48(1): 3-57.

Edward Miguel, Shanker Satyanath and Ernest Sergenti. 2004. "Economic Shocks and Civil Conflict: An Instrumental Variables Approach." *Journal of Political Economy* 112(4): 725-753.

**May 4 and 6: Final Paper Consultation**

**TBD: Final Exam**