

SOSC 3520: UNDERSTANDING COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Mondays & Wednesdays, 10:30 – 11:50, Room 2304 (lifts 17-18)*

**Due to the coronavirus epidemic, all classes will be conducted via interactive online teaching mode until further notice.*

Instructor	Teaching Assistant
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Course Description

This course analyzes politics from a comparative perspective. The central theme is to demonstrate how political science understands and explains the variations of political phenomena across different countries. It explores five major topics, i.e., doing comparative politics, comparing political regimes, comparing government systems, comparing political behavior, and comparing political outcomes. Students will benefit with the knowledge, skills and attitude for analyzing the world of politics in a ‘politicized’ world.

Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be better equipped to:

1. (a) Describe the key methods, concepts and theories in comparative politics; and (b) explain the similarities and differences in political regimes, government systems, political behavior and political outcomes.
2. Apply concepts and theories in discussing issues in comparative politics.
3. Exercise independent and critical judgments in the study of politics.

Required Readings

Please refer to the reading list appended on pages 5-6 of this prospectus. Most readings are available on Canvas.

Useful Textbooks (Reserved for 24 hours at HKUST Library)

(UT1) Rod Hague, Martin Harrop & John McCormick (2019) *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction* (11th edition), London: Red Globe Press.

(UT2) Daniele Caramani (ed.) (2017) *Comparative Politics* (4th edition), Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press.

(UT3) William R. Clark, Matt Golder & Sona N. Golder (2013) *Principles of Comparative Politics* (2nd edition), Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

(UT4) John McCormick (2019) *Cases in Comparative Government and Politics*, London: Red Globe Press.

(UT5) Patrick H. O’Neil, Karl Fields & Don Share (2013) *Cases in Comparative Politics* (4th edition), New York: W. W. Norton & Co.

Course Schedule

Week/Date	Theme
1 Feb 19 (W)	Theme 1: Doing Comparative Politics <i>What is comparative politics? How do we study politics comparatively? What are the methodologies?</i>
2 Feb 24 (M) Feb 26 (W)	
3 Mar 2 (M) Mar 4 (W)	
4 Mar 9 (M)	Theme 2: Comparing Political Regimes <i>What is democracy? Why are some countries democratic while others are not? What is dictatorship? Why are some dictatorial regimes more durable than others?</i>

	Mar 11 (W)	Theme 3: Comparing Government Systems
5	Mar 16 (M) Mar 18 (W)	<i>What are the different systems of government? What are the political consequences of different government systems? Why are some systems more desirable for policy making than others?</i>
6	Mar 23 (M) Mar 25 (W)	Revision
7	Mar 30 (M) Apr 1 (W) Apr 2 (H)	Quiz 1* Consultation Meetings for Group Projects (TBA)
8	Apr 6 (M) Apr 8 (W)	Reading Week – NO CLASSES (NB: Students are expected to work on their group projects)
9	Apr 13 (M) Apr 15 (W)	Public Holiday – NO CLASS Theme 4: Comparing Political Behavior
10	Apr 20 (M) Apr 22 (W)	<i>Why do some political parties converge on a left-right scale while others diverge? How do electoral systems shape political behavior? Why are some social groups more able to mobilize than others?</i>
11	Apr 27 (M) Apr 29 (W)	Theme 5: Comparing Political Outcomes
12	May 4 (M) May 6 (W)	<i>Why do some countries spend more public funds than others do? Why is democracy able to manage conflicts in some plural societies but not in others?</i>
13	May 11 (M) May 13 (W)	Revision Quiz 2*
13	May 18 (M) May 19 (T)	Poster Presentations for Group Projects* Review Meetings for Group Projects (TBA)
	May 29	Submission of Group Project Reports

Requirements and Grading

- **Quiz 1 (25%)**
- **Quiz 2 (25%)**
- **Group project (35%)** – poster and presentation (10%) + final report (25%)
- **Pop quizzes (15%)**
- **BONUS for participation (up to 5%)**

Quiz 1 & Quiz 2

- The aim of the quizzes is to evaluate to what extent students have acquired the knowledge and skills in comparative politics.
- Both quizzes are **open-book** with questions that require answers in paragraphs. The time allowed for each quiz is approximately **1 hour**.
- Quiz 1 will be held on **March 30 (Monday)**, covering all topics in Themes 1, 2 & 3 only. Quiz 2 will be held on **May 13 (Wednesday)**, covering all topics in Themes 4 & 5 only.
- **NO ‘make-up’ quizzes will be arranged except for medical/family emergencies or unavoidable duties.** Students must present appropriate evidence in order to request for a make-up quiz.

Group project

- The aim of the group project is to help students consolidate the knowledge of, and develop the skills and attitude for, comparative politics.
- Students will work in **groups of four**. Each group will identify a phenomenon in real-world politics (e.g., revival of authoritarianism, reform of electoral systems, rise of far-right or populist parties, emergence of women's political representation, etc.), formulate a study question, and answer the question from a comparative perspective. The answer should incorporate the **analysis of at least TWO country/jurisdiction cases** and apply relevant concepts and/or theories from lectures and readings.
- There are TWO deliverables:

(1) Poster Presentation	(2) Project Report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The poster contains an argument outline for the project report. Each group will design their poster, which may include figures, tables and/or other illustrations, on the A1-size paper provided. Each group will have 3 minutes to deliver a pitch to the class and receive feedback for preparing their project report. ○ The poster presentation will take place on May 18 (Monday). ○ The poster presentations will be assessed in terms of (i) content; (ii) structure; (iii) style; and (iv) responses to questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The project report is an academic paper that elaborates on the argument outline on the poster. Each paper should NOT exceed 5,000 words, excluding references and appendices. ○ The project report is due at 23:59, May 29 (Friday). Marks will be deducted for late submission at 3% per day. Reports submitted 4 days after the deadline will NOT be graded. ○ To avoid free-riding, each group should attach detailed division of labor on the last page of the project report. The grade of each individual student may be adjusted based on the division and quality of labor. ○ All reports will be checked by anti-plagiarism software. For confirmed cases of plagiarism, severe sanctions – including but not limited to a failure grade – may be imposed. ○ The project reports will be assessed in terms of (i) issue interpretation; (ii) quality of argument; (iii) quality of evidence; (iv) application of relevant concepts and theories; and (v) structure, clarity and language.

- The instructor (and TA) will meet with all groups to discuss their group projects on **April 1 & 2 (Wednesday & Thursday)** for consultation and **May 19 (Tuesday)** for review. Details will be announced in due course.

Pop quizzes:

- There will be FIVE open-book pop quizzes which **can take place anytime in any session**.
- In each pop quiz, students will complete a simple task, such as giving responses to MC/short questions or writing a short reflection.
- Students will score at least 1% for each completed quiz, **2% if their answers are with good quality, and 3% for excellent answers**.

Bonus

- A maximum of 5% bonus will be awarded to students who make an effort to contribute to discussions (including discussions on Zoom and Canvas).

Course Communications

All announcements are made through the course website on Canvas (<https://canvas.ust.hk/>). In addition to Canvas, students may communicate with the instructor and course assistants via e-mails. They should allow at least 3 working days for a reply. **All e-mail enquiries regarding any of the assessment items should be made at least 48 hours before their respective due dates.**

Class Rules

Students should avoid using mobile phones in class except for class activities. **Video/sound recording is NOT allowed for students.** If there is a genuine need for video/sound recording, students must seek permission from the instructor before the session begins.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and cheating are very serious offences. Students are reminded of the consequences for violating University's regulations governing academic integrity and honesty. For details of the regulations, please visit: <http://ugadmin.ust.hk/integrity/student-1.html>. For advice on avoiding plagiarism and copying, please visit: <http://libguides.ust.hk/writing/style-man>.

Quality Assurance

Students are welcome to offer comments and suggestions on the course. The principal concern of this course is students' learning, and therefore, the instructor may modify the schedule if this will facilitate their learning.

Last revised: February 7, 2020

Appendix: Reading List

Theme 1: Doing Comparative Politics (Feb 19, 24, 26)	
Essential	(UT1), chapters 1, 2 & 3
Optional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UT2), chapters 1, 2 & 3 • (UT3), chapters 1 & 2 • Christopher Howard (2017) <i>Thinking Like a Political Scientist: A Practical Guide to Research Methods</i>, Chicago: Chicago University Press, chapters 1-3. • John Gerring (2004) <i>What is a Case Study and What is it Good for? The American Political Science Review</i> 98(2): 341-354.
Theme 2: Comparing Political Regimes (Mar 2, 4, 9)	
Essential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UT1), chapters 5 & 6 • (UT3), chapters 6 & 7 • Pippa Norris & Ronald Inglehart (2002) <i>Islamic Culture and Democracy: Testing the 'Clash of Civilizations' Thesis</i>, <i>Comparative Sociology</i> 1(3-4): 235-263. • Jennifer Gandhi & Adam Przeworski (2007) <i>Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats</i>, <i>Comparative Political Studies</i> 40(11): 1279-1301.
Optional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UT2), chapters 5 & 6 • Daron Acemoglu & James Robinson (2006) <i>Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy</i>, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. • Ben Ansell & David Samuels (2010) <i>Inequality and Democratization: A Contractarian Approach</i>, <i>Comparative Political Studies</i> 43(12): 1543-1574. • Stephen Haber & Victor Menaldo (2011) <i>Do Natural Resources Fuel Authoritarianism? A Reappraisal of the Resource Curse</i>, <i>American Political Science Review</i> 105(1): 1-26. • Beatriz Magaloni (2008) <i>Credible Power-Sharing and the Longevity of Authoritarian Rule</i>, <i>Comparative Political Studies</i> 41(4/5): 715-741. • Jennifer Gandhi & Ellen Lust-Okar (2009) <i>Elections Under Authoritarianism</i>, <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> 12: 403-422.
Theme 3: Comparing Government Systems (Mar 11, 16, 18, 23)	
Essential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UT1), chapters 8, 9 & 11 • (UT3), chapters 12 & 15 • Juan J. Linz (1990) <i>The Perils of Presidentialism</i>, <i>Journal of Democracy</i> 1(1): 51-69. • Pranab Bardhan (2002) <i>Decentralization of Governance and Development</i>, <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> 16(4): 185-205. • George Tsebelis (2000) <i>Veto Players and Institutional Analysis</i>, <i>Governance: An International Journal of Policy and Administration</i> 13(4): 441-474.
Optional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UT2), chapters 7, 8, 11 & 16 (pp.743-765, 805-824) • Arend Lijphart (2012) <i>Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-six Countries</i>, New Haven: Yale University Press. • Anthony J. McGann & Michael Latner (2013) <i>The Calculus of Consensus Democracy: Rethinking Patterns of Democracy Without Veto Players</i>, <i>Comparative Political Studies</i> 46(7): 823-850. • Steffen Ganghof (2003) <i>Promises and Pitfalls of Veto Player Analysis</i>, <i>Swiss Political Science Review</i> 9(2): 1-25. • José Antonio Cheibub (2007) <i>Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, and Democracy</i>, New York: Cambridge University Press. • José Antonio Cheibub & Fernando Limongi (2002) <i>Democratic Institutions and Regime Survival: Parliamentary and Presidential Democracies Reconsidered</i>, <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> 5: 151-179. • José Antonio Cheibub & Svitlana Chernykh (2008) <i>Constitutions and Democratic Performance in Semi-Presidential Democracies</i>, <i>Japanese Journal of Political Science</i> 9(3): 269-303. • Jan Erk (2006) <i>Does Federalism Really Matter?</i> <i>Comparative Politics</i> 39(1): 103-120. • Wallace E. Oates (1999) <i>An Essay on Fiscal Federalism</i>, <i>Journal of Economic Literature</i> 37(3): 1120-1149.

Theme 4: Comparing Political Behavior (Apr 15, 20, 22, 27)	
Essential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UT1), chapters 15, 16, 17 & 18 • (UT3), chapters 13 & 14 • Matt Golder (2003) Explaining Variation in the Success of Extreme Right Parties in Western Europe, <i>Comparative Political Studies</i> 36(4): 432-466. • John M. Carey & Simon Hix (2011) The Electoral Sweet Spot: Low-Magnitude Proportional Electoral Systems 55(2): 383-397. • Cameron G. Thies & Schuyler Porche (2007) The Political Economy of Agricultural Protection, <i>The Journal of Politics</i> 69(1): 116-127.
Optional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UT2), chapters 12, 13, 14 & 16 • Cas Mudde (2004) The Populist Zeitgeist, <i>Government and Opposition</i> 39(4): 541-563. • Anthony Downs (1957) An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy, 65(2): 135-150. • Lawrence Ezrow et al. (2010) Mean Voter Representation and Partisan Constituency Representation: Do Parties Respond to the Mean Voter Position or to Their Supporters? <i>Party Politics</i> 17(3): 275-301. • John M. Carey & Andrew Reynolds (2011) Comparing the Arab Revolts: The Impact of Election Systems, <i>Journal of Democracy</i> 22(4): 36-47. • André Blais (1991) The Debate over Electoral Systems, <i>International Political Science Review</i> 12(3): 239-260. • Mancur Olson (1971) <i>The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups</i>, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, chapter I. • Arend Lijphart & Markus M. L. Crepaz (1991) Corporatism and Consensus Democracy in Eighteen Countries: Conceptual and Empirical Linkages, <i>British Journal of Political Science</i> 21(2): 235-246.
Theme 5: Comparing Political Outcomes (Apr 29, May 4, 6)	
Essential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UT3), chapter 16 (pp.766-804) • Alberto Alesina & Edward L. Glaeser (2004) Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe: A World of Difference, Oxford: Oxford University Press, chapters 2 & 4. • John D. Huber (2012) Measuring Ethnic Voting: Do Proportional Electoral Laws Politicize Ethnicity? <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 56(4): 986-1001.
Optional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UT2), chapter 21 • André Blais, Donald Blake & Stéphane Dion (1993) Do Parties Make a Difference? Parties and the Size of Government in Liberal Democracies, <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 37(1): 40-62. • Torben Iversen & David Soskice (2006) Electoral Institutions and the Politics of Coalitions: Why Some Democracies Redistribute More than Others, <i>The American Political Science Review</i> 100(2): 165-181. • Ignacio Jurado & Sandra León (2017) Geography Matters: The Constitutional Effect of Electoral Systems on Social Spending, <i>British Journal of Political Science</i> 49: 81-103. • Kanchan Chandra (2006) What is Ethnic Identity and Does it Matter? <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> 9: 397-424. • Arend Lijphart (2004) Constitutional Design for Divided Societies, <i>Journal of Democracy</i> 15(2): 96-109. • Arend Lijphart (2002) The Wave of Power-Sharing Democracy, in Andrew Reynolds (ed.) <i>The Architecture of Democracy: Constitutional Design, Conflict Management, and Democracy</i>, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.37-54. • Donald L. Horowitz (2002) Constitutional Design: Proposals Versus Processes, in Andrew Reynolds (ed.) <i>The Architecture of Democracy: Constitutional Design, Conflict Management, and Democracy</i>, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.15-36.