

Comparative Politics*
POLC 2300-01 (3 credits)
Fall 2021 (Revised)
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30 - 10:45 AM
118 Norman Mayer Building

Instructor: Gustavo Diaz

Office location: Center for Inter-American Policy and Research, 7025 Freret St, First floor

Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11AM - 12PM or by appointment (virtual preferred)

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Course Description

This course offers an introduction to comparative politics. Comparative politics is the subfield of Political Science that tries to understand variation within countries in political institutions, political behavior, public policies, and their outcomes.

The course focuses on building the analytical tools to understand comparative politics, as well as the central questions in the subfield. These central questions include:

1. How do democracies rise and fall?
2. How do regime types affect the economic and political performance of a country?
3. How do institutional arrangements vary within and across regime types?
4. How do these institutional arrangements affect economic and political outcomes?

We start with a discussion of the origins of comparative politics and its current role within Political Science. Then, we explore the origins of nation-states, governments, and regime types. From there, we address the causes and consequences of different regime types, including variation within democracies and autocracies.

Note: This syllabus was revised due to the impact of Hurricane Ida. Some parts have been crossed ~~like this~~ to highlight key changes.

The most important change is that the course will now use a flipped classroom approach. To accommodate for those impacted by Hurricane Ida, we will now convene only once a week, on Thursdays. I will upload lecture videos and slides early in the week, and I expect you to use the scheduled meeting time on Tuesdays to watch them. We will then meet on Thursdays to discuss the material. I have incorporated many avenues in case you need to engage with the course asynchronously.

*This syllabus is heavily inspired by similar courses by [Graeme Blair](#), [Virginia Oliveros](#), and [Yujeong Yang](#).

The main reason for this change is that I imagine some of you are experiencing unique hardships as a result of the global pandemic and Hurricane Ida. Rather than trying to anticipate unforeseen circumstances, I opted for the most flexible format I can work with.

We will meet online only until the school allows us to resume in person.

Course Goals

This course has three goals:

1. Familiarize students with the study of comparative politics
2. Build core analytical skills central to the study of politics around the world
3. Strengthen communication skills by learning and practicing concepts from comparative politics

Course Learning Objectives

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

1. Understand the fundamentals of comparative politics
2. Engage in productive conversations on politics and policy around the world
3. Apply the analytical skills from the course to our current and future careers

Required Student Resources

Prerequisites

There are no formal prerequisites to take this course.

Technology

You will need reliable access to a computer with internet connection to access the course material and to work on and submit assignments. We will use Canvas as a hub for all course related purposes. Please let me know if you need help accessing technology resources.

Reading

We will use the following textbook:

- Clark, William Roberts, Matt Golder, and Sona N. Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Washington DC: CQ Press. Third Edition. [\[TU Bookstore\]](#) [\[Amazon\]](#)

The rest of the syllabus refers to the textbook as CGG. We will use the third edition. The second edition may also work, with the exception of the chapters listed [here](#). Don't bother with the international edition.

I will also list recommended readings in the course schedule. I may mention some during class, but I do not expect you to read them. They are mostly for your future reference.

Also for your reference, you can see the list of comparative politics courses that you may take after this introductory course [here](#).

Evaluation Procedures and Grading Criteria

Your grade will depend on the following assignments:

Assignment	Percentage
Quizzes (5)	40%
News Reports (5)	40%
Participation	20%
Final Exam	30% of final grade

Quizzes (40%)

We will have six five online quizzes every other week. These are a combination of selection and short answer questions including material from the textbook and lectures. Every quiz will cover the material discussed after the last quiz.

Quizzes become available on Canvas on Thursdays at noon CT and are due on Fridays of the same week by 5pm CT. Each quiz is worth 10 points and ~~only your best five quizzes count towards your final grade.~~

News reports (40%)

On the weeks without Quizzes (except for weeks 1 and 11), you will submit a news report covering recent political events in a region of the world of your choosing. I encourage you to be creative about the meaning of “political” and “region.” The purpose of news reports is to apply the course material to current world events and to practice short-form communication. You will submit six five reports in total.

Except for the first report, you can use any creative medium to deliver your news report. If you write a short essay, your report should be no longer than two pages (12pt font, double spaced). Some examples of alternative creative mediums include: audio, video, drawing, painting, infographics, concept maps, and flowcharts.

My ultimate goal is for you to use the course as an opportunity for advancing your personal interests and career goals, so the only restriction is that you choose a medium that can be uploaded or linked in canvas and that I can reasonably grade within a week. Don’t overdo it! Find something that will be fun and sustainable throughout the semester.

If your report does not include an equivalent amount of written or spoken words, you should attach a document no longer than one page explaining your intention. If your creative medium cannot accommodate a reference to the sources you use, you should also attach those in a separate document.

Your first news report will propose a region of the world to follow, explain why you think it would be interesting to follow the news from that region, include a list of five potential news sources, and explain the creative medium that you plan to use. I will discuss news reports in more detail on

week 3. Your choice of region or creative medium is not binding, but you should consult with me if you plan to change your original focus.

Every subsequent news report should contain a brief summary of events or opinions surrounding them, a justification of why these are important events, and your own thoughts or opinions regarding the events in question. If any of those aspects is not immediately obvious, you should clarify it in an attachment. An excellent news report uses the course material to shed new light on recent events.

News reports are due on the Friday of the week they appear as due in the course schedule by 5pm CT. You will upload or share a link to your report using the corresponding space on Canvas. Each report is worth 10 points and ~~only your best five reports count towards your final grade.~~

Participation (20%)

I expect you to engage actively in this class. At a minimum, I expect you to come to lecture ready to discuss the material. To obtain a good participation grade, you must also make interventions conducive to a productive and respectful learning environment for yourself and others during class, office hours, in Canvas, or through other means that best suit your learning style.

We all have different learning styles, so I will keep an open mind about what constitutes good participation, and I encourage you to be proactive about pursuing the participation avenues that are most productive for you.

You will receive a temporary participation grade during Fall Thanksgiving break along with feedback on how to improve. As a rule of thumb, if I remember your name, you are likely in the right track. Participation scores range from 0 to 100.

Final Exam (30% of final grade)

We will have a **take home** final exam ~~on the scheduled final examination date for the course~~ due on December 21 (the last day of instruction in the revised school calendar). The final exam is required only for those without a passing grade. For everyone else, the final exam is optional. If you wish to opt-in for the final exam, you must let me know by Friday, December 17, at 5:00 PM, at which time the exam prompt goes live.

The final covers the entirety of the course material and uses a format similar to the quizzes. Your exam will be graded from 0 to 100. ~~If public health conditions allow, we will hold the final exam in person.~~ Since the final exam is due too close to Winter break, I will upload it to Canvas and you will upload your answers in PDF or word format.

Late work policy

~~For each day an assignment is late without excuse, I will deduct 10% of your grade for that assignment.~~ If your assignment is late for more than ~~3~~ 2 days, your assignment will be graded with zero. I will no longer penalize your grade for late submissions, but in return I expect you to submit assignments within 48 hours of the due date.

That said, this course is taking place during extraordinary times. If exceptional circumstances require you to ask for an extension or other accommodations, reach out to me as soon as possible. If you anticipate prolonged issues, ask your academic advisor (or equivalent) to send me an e-mail

detailing the extent of required accommodations. For accessibility or religious accommodations, please read the appropriate sections below.

Please note that you never owe me personal information about your mental or physical health, nor about any other aspect of your personal life. For example, I will not ask for documentation if you need to quarantine because of a close contact tested positive. However, I do expect you to be accountable for coursework and reach out if you expect complications that prevent you from keeping up.

I aim to establish a learning community based on empathy about our varied circumstances during this time. You are always welcome to talk to me about what you are going through. I will not judge nor think less of you, and I hope you will extend me the same courtesy. If I can't help you, I will help you find the resources on campus that you need.

Grading

Final grades range from 0 to 100 and will use the following conversion to letter grades:

F	D-	D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A
60	63	67	70	73	77	80	83	87	90	93	
Grade											

Final grades with decimal numbers will be truncated to the highest integer (e.g. 92.1 becomes 93). After this, if your grade is exactly in the limit between two letter grades, you will get the highest letter grade (e.g. 93 is an A).

Attendance Statement

I do not take attendance, but attendance is a basic component of your participation grade and some topics may be covered during lecture but not on the textbook. I trust that you will balance attendance and participation according to your priorities.

I encourage those unable to attend in person to participate via Canvas using the Discussion or Chat sections, as well as the Google form linked in the Syllabus section of the course website.

Remote Course Policies

As long as we are meeting in person, I will not allow remote attendance unless a formal accessibility request requires so. This is mostly because I find it hard to give equal attention to two audiences. If you cannot attend in person to one or more lectures, I encourage you to engage with the course asynchronously instead. If we are required to move the class online, we will convene via Zoom.

The public health situation is still evolving, and the recovery from Hurricane Ida complicates things even further. I ask for your patience and flexibility as conditions are likely to change under short notice.

Recording of class sessions

I will record in-person lecture audio and slides and upload them to Canvas by the end of the day. I will also upload slides separately no later than the night before lecture.

I will record one or more lecture videos in advance for each week and upload them to Canvas no later than Monday by 5:00 PM. I expect you to use the scheduled meeting time on Tuesdays to watch those and come ready to discuss on Thursday. I will also upload slides separately.

ADA/Accessibility Statement

Tulane University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability, please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. I will never ask for medical documentation from you to support potential accommodation needs. Instead, to establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with the Goldman Center for Student Accessibility. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. **Goldman Center contact information:** goldman@tulane.edu; (504) 862-8433; accessibility.tulane.edu.

Code of Academic Conduct

The Code of Academic Conduct applies to all undergraduate students, full-time and part-time, in Tulane University. Tulane University expects and requires behavior compatible with its high standards of scholarship. By accepting admission to the university, a student accepts its regulations (i.e., [Code of Academic Conduct](#) and [Code of Student Conduct](#)) and acknowledges the right of the university to take disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion, for conduct judged unsatisfactory or disruptive.

Unless I indicate differently on instructions, all quizzes and exams are to be completed individually and without any study aid, including textbooks, class notes, or online sites. If you have any question about whether a resource is acceptable, you must ask the instructor rather than assume.

Religious Accommodation Policy

As per Tulane policy, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester if you will be missing class due to religious observance so that we can agree on a makeup schedule. Tulane's Religious Observance Policy can be found at the bottom of the page linked here: https://registrar.tulane.edu/Academic_Calendar

Course Schedule

Important dates

Week 1 (August 24/26): Introduction + What is Science?

Reading: CGG Chapters 1-2

Assignment	Date
Fall Break (NO CLASS)	September 20-24
News Report 1	October 1
Quiz 1	October 8
News Report 2	October 15
Quiz 2	October 22
News Report 3	October 29
Quiz 3	November 5
News Report 4	November 12
Thanksgiving Break (NO CLASS)	November 22-26
Quiz 4	December 3
News Report 5	December 10
Quiz 5	December 17
Final Exam Due	December 21

Recommended:

- Lijphart, Arend. 1971. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method." *American Political Science Review* 65(3): 682-693
- Fearon, James. 1991. "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science." *World Politics* 43: 169-195

Week 2 (September 13-17): What is Politics?

Reading: CGG Chapter 3

Recommended:

- Foucault, Michel. 1977. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Pantheon Books

Week 3 (September 20-24): FALL BREAK (NO CLASS)

Week 4 (September 27- October 1): What are States?

Reading: CGG Chapter 4

Due: News report 1

Recommended:

- Tilly, Charles. 1985. "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime." in Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol. *Bringing the State Back In*. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 117-139
- Herbst, Jeffrey. 1990. "War and the State in Africa." *International Security* 14(4): 117-139
- Grzymala-Busse, Anna. 2020. "Beyond War and Contracts: The Medieval and Religious Roots of the European State." *Annual Review of Political Science* 23: 19-36

Week 5 (September 4 - October 8): Democracy and Dictatorship

Reading: CGG Chapter 5

Due: Quiz 1

Recommended:

- Dahl, Robert. 1971. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press
- Diamond, Larry. 2002. "Elections Without Democracy: Thinking About Hybrid Regimes." *Journal of Democracy* 13(2): 21-35
- Cheibub, José Antonio, Jennifer Gandhi, and James R. Vreeland. 2010. "Democracy and Dictatorship Revisited." *Public Choice* 143: 67-191

Week 6 (October 11-15): Economic Determinants of Democracy and Dictatorship

Reading: CGG Chapter 6

Due: News report 2

Recommended:

- Valenzuela, J. Samuel and Arturo Valenzuela. 1978. "Modernization and Dependency: Alternative Perspectives in the Study of Latin American Underdevelopment." *Comparative Politics* 10(4): 535-557
- Knack, Stephen. 2004. "Does Foreign Aid Promote Democracy?" *International Studies Quarterly* 48(1): 251-266
- Inglehart, Ronald, and Christian Welzel. 2009. "How Development Leads to Democracy: What We Know About Modernization." *Foreign Affairs* 88(2): 33-48
- Ross, Michael L. 2015. "What Have We Learned About the Resource Curse?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 18: 239-259

Week 7 (October 18-22): Cultural Determinants of Democracy and Dictatorship

Reading: CGG Chapter 7

Due: Quiz 2

Recommended:

- Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson. 2001. "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation." *American Economic Review* 91(5): 1369-1401
- Fish, Steven M. 2002. "Islam and Authoritarianism." *World Politics* 55(1): 4-37
- Habyarimana, James, Macartan Humphreys, Daniel N. Posner, and Jeremy M. Weinstein. 2007. "Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision." *American Political Science Review* 101(4): 709-725

Week 8 (October 25-29): Democratic Transitions

Reading: CGG Chapter 8

Due: News report 3

Recommended:

- Boix, Carles and Susan C. Stokes. 2003. "Endogenous Democratization." *World Politics* 55(4): 517-539
- Bellin, Eva. 2012. "Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring." *Comparative Politics* 44(2): 127-149

Week 9 (November 1-5): Democracy vs. Dictatorship

Reading: CGG Chapter 9

Due: Quiz 3

Recommended:

- Olson, Mancur. 1993. "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development." *American Political Science Review* 87(3): 567-576
- Gallagher, Mary E. and Jonathan K. Hanson. 2015. "Power Tool or Dull Blade? Selectorate Theory for Autocracies." *Annual Review of Political Science* 18: 367-385
- Geddes, Barbara. 1999. "What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 2: 115-144
- Levitsky, Steven and Lucan Way. 2002. "Elections Without Democracy: The Rise and Fall of Competitive Authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy* 13(2): 51-65

Week 10 (November 8-12): Problems with Group-Decision Making

Reading: CGG Chapter 11

Due: News report 4

Recommended:

- McElwain, Kenneth M. 2008. "Manipulating Electoral Rules to Manufacture Single Party Dominance." *American Journal of Political Science* 52(1): 32-47
- Ostrom, Elinor. 2009. "Collective Action Theory." In Carles Boix and Susan Stokes (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, pp. 186-208
- Andrews, Talbot M. and John Barry Ryan. 2021. "Preferences for Prevention: People Assume Expensive Problems Have Expensive Solutions." *Risk Analysis*

Week 11 (November 15-19): Parliamentary, Presidential, and Semi-Presidential Democracies

Reading: CGG Chapter 12

Recommended:

- Mainwaring, Scott. 1993. "Presidentialism, Multipartyism, and Democracy: The Difficult Combination." *Comparative Political Studies* 26(2): 198-228
- Cheibub, José Antonio, Adam Przeworski, and Sebastián M. Saiegh. 2004. "Government Coalitions and Legislative Success Under Presidentialism and Parliamentarism." *British Journal of Political Science* 34(4): 565-587
- Cheibub, José Antonio, Zachary Elkins, and Tom Ginsburg. 2014. "Beyond Presidentialism and Parliamentarism." *British Journal of Political Science* 44(3): 515-544

Week 12 (November 22-26): Thanksgiving Break - NO CLASS

Week 13 (November 29-December 3): Elections and Electoral Systems

Reading: CGG Chapter 13

Due: Quiz 4

Recommended:

- Boix, Carles. 1999. "Setting the Rules of the Game: The Choice of Electoral Systems in Advanced Democracies." *American Political Science Review* 93(3): 609-624
- Carey, John M., and Simon Hix. 2011. "The Electoral Sweet Spot: Low-Magnitude Proportional Electoral Systems." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(2): 383-397

Week 14 (December 6-10): Social Cleavages and Party Systems

Reading: CGG Chapter 14

Due: News Report 5

Recommended:

- Kitschelt, Herbert. 2000. "Linkages between Citizens and Politicians in Democratic Polities." *Comparative Political Studies* 33(6-7): 845-879
- Luna, Juan Pablo and David Altman. 2011. "Uprooted but Stable: Chilean Parties and the Concept of Party System Institutionalization." *Latin American Politics and Society* 53(2): 1-28

Week 15 (December 13-17): Institutional Veto Players

Reading: CGG Chapter 15

Due: Quiz 5

Recommended:

- Gibson, Edward L. and Julieta Suarez-Cao. "Federalized Party Systems and Subnational Party Competition: Theory and an Empirical Application to Argentina." *Comparative Politics* 43(1): 21-39
- Palanza, Valeria and Gisela Sin. 2013. "Item Vetoes and Attempts to Override Them in Multiparty Legislatures." *Journal of Politics in Latin America* 5(1): 37-66
- Magar, Eric, Valeria Palanza, and Gisela Sin. 2021. "Presidents on the Fast Track: Fighting Floor Amendments with Restrictive Rules." *The Journal of Politics* 83(2): 633-646

Week 16 (December 21): FINAL EXAM DUE 11:59 PM

Title IX

Tulane University recognizes the inherent dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. As such, Tulane is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination including sexual and gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence like sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or is experiencing these types of behaviors, know that you are not alone. Resources and support are available: you can learn more at allin.tulane.edu. Any and all of your communications on these matters will be treated as either “Confidential” or “Private” as explained in the chart below. Please know that if you choose to confide in me I am required by the university to share your disclosure in a Care Connection to the Office of Case Management and Victim Support Services to be sure you are connected with all the support the university can offer. The Office of University Sexual Misconduct Response and Title IX Administration is also notified of these disclosures. You choose whether or not you want to meet with these offices. You can also make a disclosure yourself, including an anonymous report, through the form at tulane.edu/concerns.

Confidential	Private
<p><i>Except in extreme circumstances, involving imminent danger to one’s self or others, nothing will be shared without your explicit permission.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) (504) 314-2277 ▪ The Line (24/7) (504) 264-6074 ▪ Student Health Center (504) 865-5255 ▪ Sexual Aggression Peer Hotline and Education (SAPHE) (504) 654-9543 	<p><i>Conversations are kept as confidential as possible, but information is shared with key staff members so the University can offer resources and accommodations and take action if necessary for safety reasons.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Case Management & Victim Support Services (504) 314-2160 or srss@tulane.edu ▪ Tulane University Police (TUPD) Uptown - (504) 865-5911 Downtown – (504) 988-5531 ▪ Office of University Sexual Misconduct Response and Title IX Administration (504) 865-5611 or msmith76@tulane.edu ▪ Student Affairs Professional On-Call (24/7) (504) 920-9900

Emergency Preparedness & Response

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS: TU ALERT	SEVERE WEATHER
<p>In the event of a campus emergency, Tulane University will notify students, faculty, and staff by email, text, and/or phone call. You were automatically enrolled in this system when you enrolled at the university.</p> <p>Check your contact information annually in Gibson Online to confirm its accuracy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Follow all TU Alerts and outdoor warning sirens ▪ Seek shelter indoors until the severe weather threat has passed and an all-clear message is given ▪ Do not use elevators ▪ Do not attempt to travel outside if weather is severe <p>Monitor the Tulane Emergency website (tulane.edu/emergency/) for university-wide closures during a severe weather event</p>
ACTIVE SHOOTER / VIOLENT ATTACKER	EVERBRIDGE APP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RUN – run away from or avoid the affected area, if possible ▪ HIDE – go into the nearest room that can be locked, turn out the lights, and remain hidden until all-clear message is given through TU ALERT ▪ FIGHT – do not attempt this option, except as a last resort ▪ For more information or to schedule a training, visit emergencyprep.tulane.edu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Download the Everbridge app from the App Store or Google Play store ▪ The Report feature allows you to silently and discreetly communicate with TUPD dispatchers ▪ The SOS button allows you to notify TUPD if you need help ▪ The Safe Corridor button serves as a virtual escort and allows you to send check-in notifications to TUPD

From: Tulane Office of emergency preparedness and response