

## **POLS 1400-03 Comparative Politics**

Fall 2019

Tuesday and Thursday 9:40-11:10, Seaver Science Hall (SEA) 200

### **Professor Gabriele Magni**

Office Hours: Tuesday 11:20-12:20; 4:30-6:00; Thursday: 11:30-2:00

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Pronouns: he, him, his

### **Course Description**

The course provides an introduction to the study of politics from a comparative perspective. Comparative politics is a subfield of political science that attempts to answer questions such as: Why are some countries democratic and others not? Why do some countries democratize over time while others become more authoritarian? Why do countries have different political institutions and forms of government? Why do political parties exist? What is the role of identity in politics? Why are women underrepresented in politics?

The course is aimed at students with no prior knowledge of the area or the study of comparative politics, but a desire to understand how governments around the world are organized and what the major problems faced by their societies are. This makes it important to go beyond the stereotypes that have traditionally shaped the perceptions of certain regions' histories and cultures, as well as their economic, political, and social structures.

The course is divided into four sections:

- Part 1: Core concepts (August 27 – September 5)
- Part 2: Political regimes (September 10 – October 8)
- Part 3: Political institutions (October 15 – November 7)
- Part 4: Politics and society (November 12 – December 5)

In the first portion of the class, we will discuss the comparative method to study politics and we will explore foundational topics like modern statehood and ideology. The second section analyzes political regimes, with a focus on democracies, authoritarian regimes and hybrid regimes that occupy a gray area in between democracies and dictatorships. We will also study regime transitions, examining how democracies emerge and how they can break down. The third section focuses on political institutions, delving into the causes and consequences of government structures, executives, legislatures, electoral systems and political parties. In the last segment of the course, we will cover specific topics of importance for countries around the world, including nationalism, populism, radical right parties, race, gender and LGBT politics.

The scope of the course is broad, and mastering the minutiae of individual topics is not our objective. We discuss global politics to develop and apply critical thinking skills, questioning assumptions and deconstructing concepts often taken for granted. Our goal is to learn how to think about global affairs.

### Course objectives and student learning outcomes

- Develop tools to better examine a wide range of political outcomes in order to increase your understanding of politics around the world
- Learn the vocabulary and common approaches that political scientists use to describe, classify, and explain political outcomes
- Gain a deeper substantive knowledge of several countries to develop a better understanding of leading theories in comparative politics
- Understand and discuss how political institutions influence policy outcomes and political representation
- Critically examine the course material presented, including academic readings, news articles, and lectures. Critical thought does not necessarily imply criticism, but a careful and creative consideration of the subject matter and a display of awareness of multiple viewpoints
- Learn to employ the comparative method, analyzing several country cases in greater detail and identifying commonalities and contrasts across cases
- Improve writing skills and creative thinking through the research paper assignment, advancing logical arguments supported with evidence
- Develop public speaking skills through class presentations, communicating thoughts clearly and concisely

### Course requirements

The course will meet twice a week. The requirements for the course are first and foremost regular class attendance, reading of the assigned materials, and active participation in class discussions.

**Attendance** is obligatory. You are allowed three (3) unexcused absences throughout the semester without penalty. For every following unexcused absence, your participation grade will be reduced by four (4) points. Further absences will be excused only in reasonable cases. However, you need to contact me ahead of the class session that you plan to miss. If you miss a class, you are responsible for the material covered in class. Make sure you ask a colleague for class notes.

I expect everyone to **arrive on time**. Regular tardiness to class will negatively affect your participation grade. I understand that life is complicated but late arrivals are disruptive and distracting. I appreciate your cooperation.

Please come to **office hours** or contact me by e-mail if you have questions or concerns. If you have any kind of problem with the course or with life, please communicate with me (you do not need to give me any specific details regarding the personal situation you might be going through). Do not let missed classes and assignments get out of hand. I am willing to work with you to help you succeed, but I cannot do so retroactively at the end of the semester.

Students are expected to come to each session **ready for a lively discussion** that will help us all better understand historic and contemporary trends in global politics.

The following are some guidelines to help you get started:

- **Speak up.** Don't be afraid to ask a question or make a comment. I value class participation, and it is possible that other students have similar concerns
- **Respect** one another. Differences of opinion are likely and desirable. Listen to other students' questions, express your disagreements with respect, and always value and engage with your colleagues' opinions
- **Silence your cell-phones.** Should I notice that you are using your phone, I will call you out. Starting with the second violation, **your participation grade will be reduced** by three (3 points) for each violation.
- **Laptops are only allowed for note taking.** Violations of this policy will negatively affect your grade. Should I notice that you are on your laptop doing things unrelated to class, I will call you out. Starting with the second violation, **your participation grade will be reduced** by three (3 points) for each violation.

## Course Readings

We will use the following textbook: *Dickovick, J. Tyler, and Jonathan Eastwood. Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases.* 3rd Edition. New York: Oxford University Press. The book is available in the Campus Bookstore.

I will post the remaining required readings on Brightspace.

## Class Schedule, Topics, and Readings\*

*\*Please note that I reserve the right to change/add/subtract materials throughout the semester.*

*\*D&E = Dickovick and Eastwood textbook*

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<b>Part 1: Core concepts</b>		
August 27 (T)	Course overview	• <i>No readings</i>
August 29 (R)	Comparative political analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• D&amp;E Chapter 1 (14-22)</li> <li>• D&amp;E Chapter 2 (25-40)</li> </ul>
September 3 (T)	The state	• D&E Chapter 3

September 5 (R)	Ideology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• D&amp;E Chapter 15</li> </ul>
<b>Part 2: Political Regimes</b>		
September 10 (T)	Democracy and Democratization I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• D&amp;E Chapter 6 (121-131)</li> <li>• Schmitter and Karl 1991</li> </ul>
September 12 (R)	Democracy and Democratization II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• D&amp;E Chapter 6 (131-146)</li> </ul>
September 17 (T)	Democracy and Democratization III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986 (Ch. 2: 6-8; Ch. 3)</li> <li>• Huntington 1991</li> </ul>
September 19 (R)	Political violence and revolutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• D&amp;E Chapter 12</li> </ul>
September 24 (T)	Authoritarian regimes I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• D&amp;E Chapter 7 (148-154)</li> <li>• Linz 2000 (65-75; 159-171)</li> </ul>
September 26 (R)	Authoritarian regimes II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• D&amp;E Chapter 7 (154-168)</li> </ul>
October 1 (T)	Authoritarian regimes III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zakaria 1997</li> <li>• Levitsky and Ziblatt 2017</li> </ul>
October 3 (R)	Hybrid regimes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Levitsky and Way 2002</li> <li>• Diamond 2002</li> </ul>
October 8 (T)	<i>Class activity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>No readings</i></li> </ul>
October 10 (R)	<b>*Midterm*</b>	
<b>Part 3: Political Institutions</b>		
October 15 (T)	Constitutional design: Federal and unitary systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• D&amp;E Chapter 8</li> </ul>
October 17 (R)	Executives: Presidential and parliamentary systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• D&amp;E Chapter 10</li> </ul>
October 22 (T)	Legislatures <i>Paper abstract due</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• D&amp;E Chapter 9 (201-208; 213-223)</li> </ul>
October 24 (R)	Electoral systems I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• D&amp;E Chapter 9 (208-213)</li> <li>• Gallagher, Laver, Mair 2011 (Chapter 11: 369-376)</li> </ul>
October 29 (T)	Electoral systems II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gallagher, Laver, Mair 2011 (Chapter 11: 376-381; 384-387; 389-395; 398-400)</li> </ul>
October 31 (R)	Political parties I <i>Paper comments due</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• D&amp;E Chapter 11 (skip sections on interest groups)</li> </ul>

November 5 (T)	Political parties II	• Lijphart 1999 (Ch. 5: 62-77)
November 7 (R)	<i>Team Game: Institutional Design</i>	• <i>No readings</i>
<b>Part 4: Politics and Society</b>		
November 12 (T)	Nationalism	• D&E Chapter 13
November 14 (R)	Radical right	• Mudde 2007 (Chapter 1) • Golder 2016
November 19 (T)	Populism <b>*Research paper due*</b>	• Barr 2009 • Urbinati 2019
November 21 (R)	Race and ethnicity	• D&E Chapter 14
November 26 (T)	Women in politics	• Paxton, Kunovich and Hughes 2007 • Lawless and Fox 2008
November 28 (R)	<i>No Class – Thanksgiving Break</i>	
December 3 (T)	LGBT politics	• Magni 2019
December 5 (R)	<i>Final class activity</i>	• <i>No readings</i>
December 12 (R)	<b>*Final exam, 8 am*</b>	

During the semester, there will be three events that you are strongly encouraged to attend. If you attend, you will receive extra credit (if you have a schedule conflict and cannot attend, come see me for alternative extra-credit opportunities). Further information will be provided during the semester, but please mark your calendars with the following dates:

1. **September 3: Ben Rhodes**, former United States Deputy National Security Advisor under President Obama
2. **October 3: Leta Hong**, scholar and author of “Betraying Big Brother: the Feminist Awakening in China” and “The Leftover Women: Resurgence of Gender Inequality in China”
3. **October 17: Steven Levitsky**, Harvard Professor and author of “How Democracies Die”

### Course evaluation

Grades are determined by the quality of the final result (i.e. the work submitted), not by the effort put into the process. The course has the following requirements:

- Midterm exam (October 10): 25%
- Research paper (November 19): 30%
- Final exam (December 12): 30%

- Participation (including attendance, in-class discussion, current events presentation, team game, class and group activities): 15%

The deadlines listed above are strict: **late midterms and finals will not be scheduled; late papers will not be accepted.** Paper abstracts and research papers must be submitted at the beginning of class on the due date. Please talk to me as soon as possible prior to any due date if you anticipate any issue and have a valid excuse.

The following grading scale applies:

A	94-100	A-	90-93		
B+	87-89	B	83-86	B-	80-82
C+	77-79	C	73-76	C-	70-72
D	60-69	F	<60		

### Midterm exam

The midterm exam takes place on October 10 and tests all of the material covered until October 8 (included). The midterm counts for 25% of your final grade. Further information about the format of the exam will be provided during the semester.

### Research paper

There is a 10-page research paper, which counts for 30% of the final grade. The final paper is due on November 19. The paper should not be a literature review or summary of the readings. You will be evaluated based on the clarity of your question, the organization and clarity of your argument, the supporting evidence that you provide, and the quality of your writing. The paper must be 10 pages, Times New Roman, 12-point font size, 1-inch margins, double-spaced. Further information on the paper topic will be provided during the semester. The paper must be submitted at the beginning of class on the due date. Late papers will not be accepted.

**Paper abstract and outline:** An abstract (one or two paragraphs stating the research question you will pursue and how you will do it) and an outline of the paper will be due on October 22. You will also send a copy to a classmate who will provide comments on your progress. I will return your abstract and outline with comments. You should incorporate this feedback into your paper. While the abstract and outline are not graded, being late with the abstract submission will result in a 3-point decrease (out of 100) per day in your paper grade.

**Peer-review:** You will give comments to a classmate on their abstract and outline by October 31 (and you will also provide me with a copy of the comments). You will bring your comments to class and will share them directly with that classmate. While your comments are not graded, if you fail to provide this feedback by the deadline, your own paper grade will drop by 10 points (out of 100).

### Final exam

The final exam takes place on December 12 at 8 am and counts for 30% of your final grade. Further information about the format of the exam will be provided during the semester.

## Participation

Participation is an integral part of the class and counts for 15% of your final grade. While I understand that some students may not be comfortable with speaking up in class, everyone should make an effort and contribute to the discussion. To receive full participation points, you must be present, alert, and active in class. Please note that the quality of participation, and not just the quantity, will affect the overall participation grade. More specifically, your participation grade will be determined by: attendance, participation in in-class discussion, current events presentation, participation in the team game, and participation in class and group activities.

### *Attendance*

You are allowed three (3) unexcused absences throughout the semester without penalty. For every following unexcused absence, your participation grade will be reduced by four (4) points. Regular tardiness to class will also negatively affect your participation grade.

### *Current events presentation*

Each student is expected to deliver a presentation on current events related to the class topics. A presentation sign-up sheet will be circulated the first week of class. Presentations will take place during each class, will be informal (no power point), and should last no longer than 3-5 minutes. You are expected to summarize the content of a news article and come up with a discussion question at the end of your presentation. If possible, choose an article related to the lecture or readings of the day. Potential sources of articles include (but are not limited to): BBC, The Guardian, France 24 (English version), Spiegel Online (International version), Politico (European version), El País (English version), Financial Times, The Economist, The New York Times (International version). Please send the link to the article to me and all of your classmates via Brightspace by 11:59pm on the day before your presentation.

### *Team-game institutional design*

A simulation will take place at the end of the second section of the course. On November 7, the class will be divided into groups for a team game. Each team will be in charge of crafting new political institutions for a specific country in order to improve its political functioning. Further information on how to prepare for the simulation will be provided during the semester.

## Important dates

October 10	Midterm exam
October 22	Paper abstract and outline
October 31	Peer-review
November 19	Final paper
December 12	Final exam

## **Additional information**

### Electronics policy

The use of phones is not allowed. Should I notice that you are using your phone, I will call you out. Starting with the second violation, your participation grade will be reduced by three (3 points) for each violation.

Laptops can be used only for note taking. Violations of this policy will negatively affect your grade. Should I notice that you are on your laptop doing things unrelated to class, I will call you out. Starting with the second violation, your participation grade will be reduced by three (3 points) for each violation.

You may also want to consider taking notes by hand. Scientific evidence shows that writing notes by hand helps remember better. The following article describes the experiment producing this finding: *To Remember a Lecture Better, Take Notes by Hand*

(<https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/05/to-remember-a-lecture-better-take-notes-by-hand/361478/>).

### Email policy

While I am always happy to communicate via email, emails are not the best way to discuss substantive questions concerning course material. I encourage you to come to office hours if you would like me to clarify concepts or discuss issues in depth. Please be professional when you write emails: include proper greetings and salutations and check your spelling and grammar.

### Grade questions

At times you may have questions about your grades on exams or papers. I am happy to discuss any grading-related issue during office hours. In order for me to re-grade any assignment, you will need to provide me with a written note (hard copy or email) explaining in detail why the grade should be changed. I will then re-grade the entire assignment. I reserve the right to raise or lower your grade accordingly.

### Diversity and safe environment

Diverse perspectives and backgrounds enhance our community. As engaged citizens in a global and diverse society, we seek to advance a positive learning and working environment for all through open and substantive dialogue. Accordingly, we will strive to make this class a safe, happy and welcoming environment for all. When we talk about political and social issues, different opinions are likely to emerge. A discussion with diverse perspectives can be enriching, but only as far as we are always respectful of different points of view. Let's always engage in a civil way, even when we disagree with each other. Disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated.

If there is anything you would like to communicate to me privately about your involvement in class, please do not hesitate to do so.

### Pronouns and LGBTI services

Please let me know (in whatever way you wish) what you like to be known as/introduced as. I use the following pronouns: he / him / his.

LGBT Student Services at LMU provides educational and support services to students that identify as LGBT+ and allies. The LGBT Student Services Office at LMU focuses on promoting equality, visibility and inclusion of LGBT students within the LMU community. Please visit



their website for more information:

<https://studentaffairs.lmu.edu/community/ethnicandinterculturalservices/lgbtstudentservices/>.

### Disability accommodations

Disability Support Services (DSS) at LMU assists students with physical, learning, and/or psychological disabilities by offering resources to enable them to achieve maximum independence while pursuing their educational goals. Their objective is to ensure that every student seeking DSS services receives university experiences and opportunities that are identical to those of any other student. They arrange accommodations and services for students with special needs. Please visit the DSS website for more information: <https://academics.lmu.edu/dss/>.

### Academic honesty

The academic honesty policy applies to this course. Plagiarism, cheating and other violations will not be tolerated. If you are unsure on whether something constitutes plagiarism, come see me before you submitting your assignments. For more information on the academic honesty policy, please visit the following page: <https://academics.lmu.edu/honesty/>.

### The Writing Center at LMU

An important part of improving your writing is getting feedback and revision suggestions on your writing projects in progress. The Writing Center offers free tutoring sessions (online or face-to-face) in which you can get feedback from a peer writer on your digital and print texts for any class at any stage in your process. To make an appointment with a tutor, follow the “Writing Center Schedule” link in myLMU.  
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