

POLS 3104

Introduction to Comparative Politics

Sean Lee
Fall 2020

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Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Sean Lee (sean.lee@aucegypt.edu)

Location: Waleed C145

Time: Sunday & Wednesday 5:00 – 6:15 pm

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Course Description

Why are some countries democratic and others autocratic? How do institutions and laws differ among democratic countries and how do these differences affect political behavior? How does political behavior such as ethnic strife, nationalist fervor and international intervention affect the development of political institutions in democracies? Where do new institutions come from when political order has broken down? How and why do people succeed or fail in acting collectively? The study of comparative politics addresses these and many other questions. Comparative politics is about analyzing differences and similarities among the political, social and economic features of countries and determining how and why these differences matter.

Learning Objectives

This class is an introduction to the methods and topics of comparative politics. The first section of the course provides a brief survey of the comparative method and of regime types derived from sociologist Max Weber's three categories: patrimonial, legal-rational and charismatic. The second section compares institutions and political behavior in 36 democratic countries with considerable help from Arend Lijphart's book, *Patterns of Democracy*. This section provides conceptual building blocks for studying institutions, including voting systems, legislatures, executive institutions, political parties and constitutional design. The third section focuses on a series of comparative politics questions that address a wider range of political regimes beyond those that Lijphart considers, including some that are non-democratic. This section provides insights into the logic of politics in these political systems and the roles that institutions play in their politics. These political systems provide a point of comparison to those encountered in Lijphart's survey of institutions in democratic countries. Finally,

we take a closer look at problems of political violence and its place in processes of political change.

One core assumption of this course is that formal institutional rules of politics matter a great deal in shaping political outcomes. The Lijphart book reinforces this message in its focus on democratic political systems. But other political systems institutionalize authority in different ways, some of which lead to hybrid or authoritarian outcomes, while others struggle to impose a set of rules against a variety of challenges. Still others struggle to maintain basic levels of order and frantically search for solutions to this serious problem. What kinds of institutional designs are effective for state building?

At the end of the course you will be able to:

- Explain major theories and concepts of the subfield of comparative politics
- Use these theories and concepts to think and talk about politics critically
- Demonstrate how institutions affect political outcomes
- Explain different sources of political authority
- Apply the above tools to critically evaluating examples of political science research.
- Think about how empirical evidence matters to your own questions about politics

Required Texts and Materials

We will be reading most of **Arend Lijphart's *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*** during the course of the semester. It is not available in the bookstore, but you have electronic access to it through the AUC library [here](#).

All other course readings will be provided as PDFs on Blackboard.

Each week students will be required to complete and take notes on the **required texts** assigned. Completion of the required texts is necessary for active participation in the class as well as for the **weekly response papers**. These texts will make essay research and writing easier and are essential for this course.

In addition to the required texts are **recommended texts** that address other aspects of the debates, histories, or traditions covered in that week. These texts are not compulsory and do not necessarily have to be addressed. Addressing them will be beneficial, but these recommended texts are primarily useful for essay research and writing.

Students must do all of the assigned readings and make sure to bring them to class.

Online Learning Format

The format for this course is hybrid, with part of the course taking place in real time on Zoom and part of it taking place asynchronously. The week's lectures will be delivered by Panopto on Sundays. A link to them will be available through Blackboard each week by the scheduled meeting time. It is imperative that you watch these lectures (I can see whether you have or not), because the class discussions on the following Wednesdays will be based on them as well as on the readings. The other asynchronous part of class will be to participate in the online discussion board, which will be done through Slack. Each week some students will be in charge of starting the discussion in the online forum as well as in the Zoom session, but each student is responsible for participating in the discussions each week. Failure to do so will result in a lower grade for participation.

The second component of the course will be the live discussion sections on Wednesdays. These will be live (or synchronous) and done through Zoom. You are expected to attend, and to also be on time and prepared. A schedule will be prepared to let you know which weeks you will be in charge of leading discussion. For these sessions, unless you have special permission, you must have the camera on.

Sundays: pre-recorded lectures and message board

Wednesdays: live Zoom discussion sessions

Online etiquette

Since there will be 25-30 of us present for class discussions, we need to respect some ground rules. First, I ask that everyone mute their microphone until you have been called on. This will limit the amount of distracting noises. Second, if you need someone to repeat something, please use the chat function for that. Finally, when you would like to speak, please use the raise hand function to signal that so I can call on you in turn.

Privacy concerns are extremely important. To maintain our privacy as a class and as individuals, please do not record sessions (this goes for audio, video, and screenshots). The default is for cameras to be on, but if there is a good reason why you cannot have your camera on, get in touch with me.

Assessment

Personal statement:	(5%)	September 13
Midterm exam	(15%)	October 20
First draft final paper	(5%)	November 25
Peer review	(5%)	November 29
Final paper	(20%)	December 3
Final exam	(20%)	December 12
Weekly reading responses	(20%)	Every Sunday (2% each)
Participation	(10%)	In discussion sections & online forum

Important Notes Regarding Written Assignments:

- **Weekly reading responses** should be between 500-800 words long (single spaced). Each week's response should have three components: 1. a very brief summary of the arguments in the week's readings and how they fit together; 2. an evaluation of the competing claims; and 3. a short conclusion about how the topic fits in with the bigger picture of comparative politics and why we should care. You must complete 10 weekly reading responses; however, there are 12 opportunities to do so (there are no responses for weeks 1 and 8), which means you can miss two weeks and still get a perfect score.
- **Final paper:** Students are required to include **their name, course code, and bibliography** for their final paper, which should be 6-8 pages (not including the bibliography). The paper should be formatted in **Times New Roman, 12pt font, and double-spaced**. Make sure to include correct referencing (**in-text and in your bibliography**) for any materials used from the readings. It is not important whether you use APA, U Chicago, etc., but you must format consistently.
- Do not exceed the assigned word/page count as indicated in the assignment.
- All written assignments are due **via Turnitin on Blackboard** by the beginning of class and are graded on both form and content. This means that you are graded both on what you argue as well as how you present your ideas and claims.
- Penalties and deductions for any limitations or discrepancies regarding the above for written assignments may be applied at the discretion of the instructor.

Grade Scale

A	93+	C+	77-79	F	59 and below
A-	90-92	C	73-76		
B+	87-89	C-	70-72		
B	83-86	D	60-66		
B-	80-82	D+	67-69		

Grading Policies

The instructor reserves the right to refuse any late assignments. If the instructor accepts a late assignment without a justified excuse, a full **3.5% will be deducted for each day the assignment is late**. The grade that you receive at the end of the semester is the sum of grades received for your completed coursework and participation. This is **not negotiable** and **no additional coursework will be provided for extra credit**. Grades are not altered based on a curve.

If you believe that there is a problem with your grade on an assignment or exam, there are two avenues to pursue this:

1. If the problem is mathematical (e.g. the points were added up incorrectly), then please signal the problem to me after class so we can look at it together and then follow up with an email reminding me of the issue.
2. If there is a dispute over substance, then you must write up a report making your case based on the assignment prompt or exam question, the syllabus, and your assignment or exam itself. Reference to other students' papers or grades will not be considered. Once you have written up your case and sent it to me by email with the original, marked-up assignment or exam, I will then regrade the assignment or exam in question. Please keep in mind that the new grade may be lower than the original.

Absence Policies

No attendance mark is assigned in this course. However, the following policies will be strictly adhered to:

- Students are expected to attend the online discussion sessions, watch pre-recorded lectures AND take part regularly in class discussions (on Zoom and on Slack), showing knowledge of – and engagement with – the essential readings. Students who are present in class but are unable or unwilling to contribute to the class discussions or are otherwise distracted (for instance by using their mobile devices during the session), will have marks deducted or be considered as absent at the discretion of the instructor.
- Students who, without a valid justification, arrive to class more than 5 minutes late or leave more than 5 minutes early without permission will be considered as absent.
- Students unable to attend class for justifiable reasons should contact the instructor ideally before class, and in any case no later than seven days after the missed class. Only serious and documented family or health emergencies and documented participation in formal AUC activities will be accepted as valid justifications. The procedure for correct documentation of such absences is outlined in the university-wide attendance policy.
- Unexcused absence in at least **THREE** weeks, and absence with or without valid justification in at least **FIVE** weeks, will result in an automatic “F” grade.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to commit to the principles of academic integrity.

Teaching is based on a relation of mutual trust between the teacher and the students. When we research, we use other people's work to help develop our own: this is an essential part of the academic world. However, when you use someone else's work, you must cite it. This lets the reader know which parts of the work are your own, and which parts come from other sources. What that means is that anytime you draw from someone's ideas or use their actual words, you must give the name of the author and the book in proper citation form.

All students are expected to be familiar with the AUC code of practice on academic integrity which is available online [here](#).

Please pay particular attention to the regulations on plagiarism, collaborative work and falsification of signatures. All breaches of the code of practice will be acted upon promptly and firmly, resulting at least in zero marks for the relevant piece of assessment and possibly in further action being taken by the instructor, depending on the severity of the offense.

If in doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism, do not hesitate to contact the instructor.

Disability Resource Center

If you believe that you are differently-abled/have a disability that impacts your studies, or you have documentation of such, please contact the instructor as soon as possible. The instructor is happy to hear from you even if you do not have a formal proof; however, you may be asked to provide a note from the AUC Disability Services (<http://in.aucegypt.edu/student-life/student-well-being/disability-services>) when your condition requires substantial adjustments (e.g. to the structure of the exams, etc.).

Academic Freedom and Intellectual Interaction

In this course you will deal with a number of topics that are often controversial. You are free to offer the class any disagreement you may have with the readings or lecture. You will not be penalized for disagreeing with other students, the readings or the instructor, but your perspective must be based on documentable evidence from the course or other readings. Freedom of speech and ideas is a basic principle of academic life (and of universal human rights), and every student will have a chance to express her/his opinion as long as it is voiced in a respectful manner. However, varied points of view must be expressed in a manner that is sensitive to differences in abilities, ethnicity, religion, gender, and lifestyle, and should not be expressed so as to be perceived as a personal attack. In short, respect for others' differences is one of the most important prerequisites for us working together in this course.

Syllabus Change Policy

This syllabus is only a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction to the course and comparative politics

September 6 & 9 – Course introduction & What is comparative politics? What and How to compare?

Empirics, politics and political science: What are we studying here?
Syllabus review, questions about the course and course policies.

Required reading:

1. O'Neil, Patrick. (2012) "Introduction." *Essentials of Comparative Politics*. New York: Norton. pp. 1-20.
2. Foit, Roberta. (2005) "I'm very Interested in Hearing Some Half-Baked Theories." *The Onion*.

Suggested Reading:

Munck, Geraldo L. (2007.) "The Past and Present of Comparative Politics." in Geraldo L. Munck and Richard Snyder, *Passion, Craft, and Method in Comparative Politics*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 32-59.

Weber, Max. (2009) "Politics as a Vocation." *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. London: Routledge. pp. 77-128.

Week 2:

September 13 & 16 – The state, its origins (in Europe) and its (regional) variations

Required reading:

1. Samuels, David J. (2012) "The State." *Comparative Politics*. New York: Pearson. pp. 29-55.
2. Tilly, Charles. (1985) "War-making and State-Making as Organized Crime." Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol (eds.) *Bringing the State Back In*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 169-191.
3. Jackson, Robert H. and Carl G. Rosberg. (1982) "Why Africa's Weak States Persist." *World Politics*. Vol. 35, No. 1. pp. 1-24.

4. Grovogui, Siba N. (2001). "Sovereignty in Africa: Quasi-Statehood and Other Myths in International Theory." Dunn, Kevin C. and Timothy M. Shaw. *Africa's Challenge to International Relations Theory*. London: Palgrave, pp. 29-45.

Suggested Reading:

Spruyt, Hendrik. (2007) "War, Trade, and State Formation." Boix, Carles and Susan Stokes (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Anderson, Lisa. (1987) "The State in the Middle East and North Africa." *Comparative Politics*. Vol. 20, No. 1: pp. 1-18.

Centeno, Miguel Angel (1997). "Blood and Debt: War and Taxation in Nineteenth-Century Latin America." *American Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 102, No. 6. pp. 1565-1605.

Week 3: Authority and Regimes

September 20 & 23 – Types of authority, regime type and comparing democracies

Required reading:

1. Ritzer, George. (2008). "Max Weber: Structures of Authority." *Sociological Theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 8th edition, pp. 128-136.
2. Dahl, Robert A. (1971) "Democratization and Public Opposition." *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 1-16.
3. Lijphart, Arend. (2012) *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. New Haven: Yale University Press. pp. 1-45 (Chapters 1-3).

Suggested Reading:

Collier, David and Steven Levitsky. (1997) "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research." *World Politics*. Vol. 49, No. 3. pp. 430-451.

Riker, William. (1986) "Gouverneur Morris in the Philadelphia Convention," *The Art of Political Manipulation*. New Haven: Yale University Press. pp. 34-51.

Week 4: Democratic Institutions

September 27 & 30 – Party Systems & Political Behavior, Executive-legislative relations

Required reading:

1. Lijphart, Arend. (2012) *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. New Haven: Yale University Press. pp. 46-157 (Chapters 4-8).

Suggested Reading:

Mainwaring, Scott. (1993) "Presidentialism, Multipartyism and Democracy: The Difficult Combination," *Comparative Political Studies*. Vol. 26, No. 2. pp. 198-228.

Week 5:

October 4 & 7 – Division of power, Parliaments, and Constitutions

Required reading:

1. Lijphart, Arend. (2012) *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. New Haven: Yale University Press. pp. 158-203 (Chapters 10-12).
2. Ordeshook, Peter. (2002) "Are 'Western' Constitutions Relevant to Anything Other than the Countries They Serve?" *Constitutional Political Economy*, Vol. 13, No. 3, pp. 3-24.
3. Skim Carnegie document comparing Egypt's Constitutions (2013).

Week 6:

October 11 & 14 – Institutions

Required reading:

1. Lijphart, Arend. (2012) *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. New Haven: Yale University Press. pp. 255-303.
2. van de Walle, Nicholas (2003) "Presidentialism and Clientelism in Africa's Emerging Party Systems," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 2, pp. 297-321.

Week 7:

October 18 & 21 – Hybrid regimes & Political corruption

Required reading:

1. Levitsky, Steven and Lucan Way. (2002) "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 51-65.
2. Brownlee, Jason. (2007). "Introduction." *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 1-15.
3. Riordan, William. (1905) "Honest Graft and Dishonest Graft," and "The Curse of Civil Service Reform," *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall*. pp 3-29.
4. Scott, James C. (1972). *Comparative Political Corruption*. Edgewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall. pp. 2-35 (Chapters 1-2).
5. Salloukh, Bassel F. (2019). "Taif and the Lebanese State: The Political Economy of a Very Sectarian Public Sector," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 25:1, 43-60.

Suggested Reading:

Diamond, Larry. (2002) "Thinking about Hybrid Regimes," *Journal of Democracy*. Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 21-35.

Krastev, Ivan and Stephen Holmes. (2012) "An Autopsy of Managed Democracy," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 23, No. 3, pp. 33-45.

Bellin, Eva. (2004) "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East," *Comparative Politics*. Vol. 36, No. 2, pp. 139-57.

Gilens, Martin and Benjamin Page. (2014) "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens," *Perspectives on Politics*. Vol. 12, No. 3, pp. 564-81

Week 8:

October 25 – Midterm exam

October 28 – Varieties of dictatorship: Predatory states and Development states

Required reading:

1. de Waal, Alex. (2013) "The Theory and Practice of Meles Zenawi," *African Affairs*, Vol. 112, No. 446, pp. 148-55.
2. Allison, Graham. (2015) "Singapore Challenges the Idea That Democracy Is the Best Form of Governance," *The World Post*, August 5.

3. O'Neil, Patrick. (2012) "Nondemocratic Regimes." *Essentials of Comparative Politics*. New York: Norton. pp. 141-166.
4. Evans, Peter B. (1989) "Predatory, developmental, and other apparatuses: A comparative political economy perspective on the third world state." *Sociological forum* (Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 561-587).

Week 9:

November 1 & 4: Nationalism and Ethnicity

Required reading:

1. Patel, David. (2010) "Identity and Politics." *Politics and Society in the Contemporary Middle East*. Michelle Penner Angrist (ed). Boulder, CO: Lynne Reiner: pp. 145-165.
2. Gellner, Ernest. (1983). *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. pp. 1-7, 53-62.
3. Anderson, Benedict. (2006) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso. pp. 1-7; 37-46.
4. Bajalan, Djene Rhys. (2020) "The Elusive Quest for a Kurdish State," *Middle East Report*. 295, Summer.

Suggested Reading

Horowitz, Donald. (1971). "Three Dimensions of Ethnic Politics." *World Politics*. Vol 23, No. 2. pp. 232-244.

Young, Crawford. (1986) "Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Class in Africa: A Retrospective." *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*. Vol. 26, No. 103. pp. 421-473.

Hobsbawm, Eric. (2013 [1992]). *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Connor, Walker. (1978). "A nation is a nation, is a state, is an ethnic group is a ...," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 4, pp. 377-400.

Week 10:

November 8 & 11 – Ethnic Diversity and conflict

Required reading

1. Fearon, James and David Laitin. (2003). "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review*. Vol. 97, No. 1, pp. 75-90.
2. Snyder, Jack and Robert Jervis. (1999) "Civil War and the Security Dilemma." Walter, Barbara and Jack Snyder (eds.) *Civil Wars, Insecurity and Intervention*. New York: Columbia University Press. pp. 15-37,
3. Posner, Daniel. (2004) "The Political Salience of Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi." *American Political Science Review*. Vol. 98, No. 4, pp. 529-545.
4. Wimmer, Andreas. (2018) "How Nations Come Together." *Aeon*. 24 May. <https://aeon.co/essays/why-some-countries-come-together-while-others-fall-apart>
5. Lijphart, Arend. (2003 [1969]) "Consociational Democracy." Dahl, Robert et al. *The Democracy Sourcebook*. Boston: MIT University Press, pp. 142-6.

Week 11:

November 15 & 18 – Responses to Conflict: International interventions

Required reading

1. Krasner, Stephen (2004) "Sharing Sovereignty: New Institutions for Collapsed and Failed States," *International Security*. Vol. 29, No. 2, pp. 85-120.
2. Kaufmann, Chaim. (1998) "When all else fails: Ethnic Population Transfers and Partitions in the Twentieth Century." *International Security*. Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 120-156.
3. Reno, William (2015) "Lost in Transitions: Civil War Termination in Sub-Saharan Africa," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 120, No. 5, pp. 1798-1810.
4. Luttwak, Edward. (1999) "Give War a Chance." *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 78, No. 4, pp. 36-44.

Suggested Reading

Eglebert, Pierre. (2008) "Post Conflict Reconstruction in Africa: Flawed Ideas about Failed States," *International Security*. Vol. 32, No. 4, pp. 106-39.

Week 12:

November 22 & 25 – Collective Action & Social Movements

Required reading

1. Olson, Mancur. (2008). "The Logic of Collective Action." Ruggiero, Vincenzo and Nicola Montagna (eds.) *Social Movements: A Reader*. London: Routledge. pp. 93-94.
2. Tarrow, Sydney. (1994). *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 1-34.
3. Varshney, Ashutosh. (2003) "Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Rationality" *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 85-99.
4. Pearlman, Wendy. (2013) "Emotions and the Micro-foundations of the Arab Uprisings." *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 387-409.

Suggested reading

Ostrom, Elinor. (1990). *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 1-28.

McAdam, Doug. (1999) *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 1-59.

Week 13:

November 29 & December 2 – Alternative views of structure & Social Revolution

Required reading

1. Kurzman, Charles. (1996) "Structural Opportunity and Perceived Opportunity in Social Movement Theory: The Iranian Revolution of 1979" *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 61, No. 1, pp. 153-170.
2. Goodwin, Jeff and James M. Jasper. (1999) "Caught in a Winding, Snarling Vine: The Structural Bias of Political Process Theory" *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 27-53.
3. Skocpol, Theda. (1976) "France, Russia, China: A Structural Analysis of Social Revolutions," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. Vol 18, No. 2, pp 175-210.

Week 14:

December 6 & 9 – Transitions and Democratization

Required reading

1. Geddes, Barbara. (1999). "What do we know about democratization after twenty years?" *Annual Review of Political Science* Vol 2, No. 1, pp. 115-144.

2. Rustow, Dankwart. (1970). "Transitions to Democracy: Towards a Dynamic Model." *Comparative Politics*. Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 337-63.
3. Brownlee, Jason, Tarek Masoud and Andrew Reynolds. (2013). "Why the Modest Harvest?" *Journal of Democracy*. Vol. 24, No. 4, pp. 29-44.
4. Bellin, Eva. (2015) "Explaining Democratic Divergence." POMEPS Briefs.
5. Stacher, Joshua. (2020). *Watermelon Democracy: Egypt's Turbulent Transition*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.