

INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Political Science 250, Fall 2015
Annenberg G-21
Mondays & Wednesdays, 2:00pm to 3:20pm
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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? 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.

Objectives: This class introduces 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. The fourth section takes a closer look at problems of political violence and its place in processes of political change. This section is organized around Paul Collier's book, *Wars, Guns, and Votes*. Collier shows how electoral competition can lead to more conflict and instability in contexts where institutions are already weak. Some of the readings and class lectures will link Collier's observations to the politics of conflicts encountered in parts of the contemporary Middle East.

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 other 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? This issue may be of interest to people in the United States, given that considerable American resources have been devoted with varying degrees of success to building new political systems in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Bosnia, Libya, Somalia, South Sudan... you name it.

Course Requirements: Students are responsible for completing readings listed in the syllabus prior to classes for which they are assigned. Students will be graded on the basis of an in-class midterm, a paper of eight to ten pages, a final, and attendance. Grading will be apportioned as follows:

Midterm 25%	In-class, Wednesday, 21 October
Paper 30%	Due at the last class meeting, Wednesday, 25 November
Final 35%	December, (in Annenberg G-21)
Attendance 10%	All the time

I will provide details regarding the exams and the paper assignment during the term. You must complete all assignments in order to receive a passing grade in this course. Make-ups and incompletes will be given only in exceptional circumstances with prior approval.

Office Hours: You can expect to find me in my office at Scott Hall 240 (847-467-1574) or at 620 Library Place (847-491-5794) during Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:30-2:00. Please make an appointment if scheduled hours are inconvenient.

By the end of this course, you should know:

1. Key features of political systems around the world and how they affect important outcomes.
2. Differences across countries such as political parties, party systems, regimes, states and policy-making processes, and social movements & political cultures
3. Core concepts in comparative political analysis such as the state, institutions, society, regimes, markets, and conflict.
4. How institutions of democratic regimes work and how they vary, including legislatures, executives, bureaucracy, legal & judicial systems, elections, and interest groups.
5. How to articulate a comparative empirical political theory and modify it in light of empirical evidence.
6. How to distinguish between normative arguments about global issues and questions that require empirical investigation.
7. How to construct a causal argument to explain variation in politically-relevant outcomes.
8. How to apply a political science theory to analyze real world events.
9. How to write an analytic paper in political science.
10. How to effectively communicate comparative political analysis in written and oral forms.

Required Readings: Readings are to be completed in advance of the class meeting for which they are required. Class lectures and discussion will assume familiarity with these readings. Articles and book chapters are available at Canvas and via links provided on the electronic version of this syllabus.

There are two required texts for this class (in order of assignment):

Arend Lijphart (2012) *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. Yale. [We are using the 2nd edition of this book.]

Paul Collier (2010) *Wars, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places*. Harper Perennial.

Books can be bought at [Beck's](#), 716 Clark St. Non-textbook material is available at [Canvas](#).

CLASS CALENDAR

I. Big Processes and General Comparisons

21 September: Fallacies of reasoning when making comparisons (false correlations, reading history selectively to affirm pre-conceived theories and the problems of the unexpected killer asteroids—or attacks on Twin Towers or falling walls in Berlin—pose for analysis and prediction)

Stephen Jay Gould (1994) “The Belt of an Asteroid,” in his *Hen’s Teeth and Horse’s Toes*, Norton, 320-29.

23 September: The classical categorization of political types by Max Weber (German sociologist & political economist, 1864-1920, pronounced *vā-ber*), focusing on legal-rational, patrimonial, and charismatic patterns of authority

Max Weber (1978) “Types of Authority” in his *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 324-73.

II. Comparing Institutions and Performance of Thirty-Six Democracies

28 September: Lijphart provides a framework of majoritarian and consensual systems against which to evaluate democracies. In general terms, what are the advantages of each model and to what extent are their aims mutually exclusive? Riker shows how rules matter for outcomes.

Arend Lijphart (2012) Introduction through Chapter Three, 1-45.

William Riker (1986) “Gouverneur Morris in the Philadelphia Convention,” in his *Art of Political Manipulation*, Yale, 34-51.

30 September: Lijphart explores the extent of democratic governance and then discusses the variables that he uses for his comparison. We start with an examination of the role of party systems and how this choice shapes political behavior. Pay attention to the issue of effective parties and how to calculate this figure. He then moves to cabinets. How do party systems influence cabinet types?

Arend Lijphart (2012) Chapter Four through Chapter Six, 46-104.

5 October: Executive—legislature relations: Note Lijphart’s index of executive dominance. Then move on to electoral systems, paying attention to the roles of electoral thresholds and mal-apportionment in shaping representation through electoral rules. What is Duverger’s Law?

Arend Lijphart (2012) Chapter Seven through Chapter Eight, 105-157.

Scott Mainwaring (1993) “Presidentialism, Multipartyism and Democracy: The Difficult Combination,” *Comparative Political Studies*,” 26:2 (July) 198-228. [Available [here](#) and on Canvas]

A map of the Canada’s [2011 federal election](#) results will come in handy for class. What if one chose [ice cream](#) the same way that one chooses politicians in most US elections?

7 October: Interest groups [pluralist and corporatist], federal-unitary divisions of power, Parliaments and Congresses, and the challenges of writing constitutions. Central banks too! The focus, however, will be on constitutions.

Arend Lijphart (2012) Chapters Nine through Thirteen, 158-238.

Peter Ordeshook (2002) “Are ‘Western’ Constitutions Relevant to Anything Other than the Countries They Serve?” *Constitutional Political Economy*, 13:3, 3-24.

12 October: Lijphart sums up his comparison along two consensus – majoritarian axes. Which variety of democracy is best able to manage economies, control violence, and be of the highest quality, however Lijphart defines that. A consensus man to the last, he offers his recommendations. Why do African democrats (and plenty of others) defy his advice?

Arend Lijphart (2012) Chapter Fourteen to the End, 239-303.

Nicolas van de Walle (2003) “[Presidentialism and Clientelism](#) in Africa’s Emerging Party Systems,” *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41:2, 297-321. [Also available at Canvas]

III: Institutions and Their Roles in Other Political Regimes

14 October: Are Hybrid Regimes democratic? Is a shift toward greater institutional accountability and more competitive politics an inevitable feature of hybrid regimes? Why rig elections if the incumbent would be expected to win them if they were not rigged?

Larry Diamond (2002) “[Thinking about Hybrid Regimes](#),” *Journal of Democracy* 13:2, 21-35.

Steven Levitsky & Lucan Way (2002) “[The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism](#),” *Journal of Democracy*, 13:2, 51-65.

Ivan Krastev & Stephen Holmes (2012) “[An Autopsy of Managed Democracy](#),” *Journal of Democracy*, 23:3, 33-45.

[Those interested in Russian politics may read the not-required interview of Gleb Pavlovsky (2014), “Putin’s World Outlook,” at Canvas. Pavlovsky was an architect of “managed democracy” under Putin.]

19 October: What Causes Political Corruption? How is corruption different from clientelism? Why are some corrupt governments able to promote economic growth while other corrupt governments impede economic growth? What is the relationship between corruption and democracy?

William Riordan (1905) "Honest Graft and Dishonest Graft," and "The Curse of Civil Service Reform," in his *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall*; an electronic version is available [here](#).

Michael Bratton (2008) "[Vote Buying](#) and Violence in Nigerian Election Campaigns," Afrobrometer Working Paper 99.

Martin Gilens & Benjamin Page (2014) "[Testing Theories of American Politics](#): Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens," *Perspectives on Politics* 12:3, 564-81.

Thomas Frank's 2014 [review](#) of Zephyr Teachout's *Corruption in America* (Harvard, 2014) in the *New York Times*, 19 Oct. (Jon Stewart [interviewed](#) Zephyr Teachout). Find the US on Transparency International's [Corruption Perceptions](#) Index for 2014.

21 October: Midterm exam in class.

26 October: Why are some states predatory while others focus on economic development?

Alex de Waal (2013) "The Theory and Practice of Meles Zenawi," *African Affairs*, 112: 446 (January), 148-55. [Canvas]

Graham Allison (2015) "[Singapore Challenges](#) the Idea That Democracy Is the Best Form of Governance," *The World Post*, August 5.

28 October: What is the relevance of informal institutions and culture in regime politics? What roles do culture and informal institutions play in strategies for economic development and regime stability? What is the relationship of cultural and institutional change?

Kellee Tsai (2015). "China: Economic Liberalization, Adaptive Informal Institutions, and Party-State Resilience," in Stephen Leibfried, et al, eds., *Oxford Handbook of Transformations of the State*, Oxford University Press, 654-70 (at Canvas).

Frederic Schaffer (1998) "The Definition and Study of Democracy," in his *Democracy in Translation: Understanding Politics in an Unfamiliar Culture*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1-20.

Alberto Alesina & Paolo Giuliano (2013), "[Culture and Institutions](#)," National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper.

2 November: Can foreigners serve as effective builders of other people's institutions?

Stephen Krasner (2004) "[Sharing Sovereignty](#): New Institutions for Collapsed and Failed States," *International Security*, 29:2, 85-120.

Pierre Englebert (2008) "[Post Conflict Reconstruction in Africa](#): Flawed Ideas about Failed States," *International Security*, 32:4, 106-39.

IV. Contemporary Challenges: Democratic Politics and the Problems of Weak State Institutions, and Ethnic and Nationalist Conflict

4 November: A preliminary look at Wars, Guns and Votes: How do institutions matter? What is the relationship between opportunities for violence, instruments of violence, and the incidence of violent acts?

Center for Systemic Peace (2012) "[Global Conflict Trends](#)," [web site]

Small Arms Survey (2011) "[Estimating Civilian Owned Firearms](#)," (4 page research note). (Here is a Small Arms Survey supported [compellation](#) of firearms legislation and policies.)

Explore the [Elections in Africa](#) database.

9 November: Why is democratic competition sometimes associated with weakening state institutions and an increase in violence and insecurity? Are there "good" authoritarian leaders, and what distinguishes them from "bad" authoritarian leaders? What are the best "electoral technologies" for rigging an election? How does ethnic politics factor into this problem of democratic transitions in the bottom billion?

Paul Collier (2010) *Wars, Guns, and Votes*, 1-73.

Arthur Goldsmith (2012) "Ballots, Bullets, and the Bottom Billion," *Journal of Democracy*, 23:2 (April), 119-32. [Available [here](#) and on Canvas]

11 November: Post-conflict settlements and state-building: Why do so many leaders shy away from policies that would benefit them & their countries in the long-run? We will take a closer look at guns, the nature of political competition, and violence. Why do leaders spend so much on their militaries if this makes them more insecure – i.e., increases the risk of coups d'états?

Paul Collier (2010) *Wars, Guns, and Votes*, 75-140.

[Not required but interesting: Small Arms Survey (2012) "[Political Conflict](#) and Vulnerabilities: Firearms and Electoral Violence in Kenya," 12pp.)

16 November: Closer examination of coups, d'états: Meltdown in Côte d'Ivoire and the rise of political entrepreneurs who exploit the weakening and collapse of state institutions. What are the instrumental advantages of ethnic mobilization, and what kinds of institutional features facilitate (or mitigate) this kind of politics?

Paul Collier (2010) *Wars, Guns, and Votes*, 141-166.

Patrick Chabal & Jean-Pascal Daloz (1999) “The Political Instrumentalization of Disorder,” in their *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument*, (James Currey), 141-63. [at Canvas]

18 November: Why is it so difficult to build states in the contemporary global context? If a society does not have strong institutions, who or what can supply these if politicians face immediate incentives (and pressures) to undermine what institutions they have? Do we have too many states, and are we too quick to recognize new ones? How does the proliferation of states affect Paul Collier’s solution to the dilemma of state-building?

Paul Collier (2010) *Wars, Guns, and Votes*, 170-227.

[Interview](#) of Bridget Coggins (2015), author of *Power Politics and State Formation in the Twentieth Century* at Cicero.

23 November: Paul Collier’s final words and a few words about contemporary challenges for fostering order and building institutions in places like Syria and Iraq. What if Islamic State is the real state-builder in that part of the world?

Paul Collier (2010) *Wars, Guns, and Votes*, 229-34.

Stathis Kalyvas (2015) “[Is ISIS a Revolutionary Group](#) and I Yes, What Are the Implications?” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9:4, 42-47.

Major Justin Gorkowski (2015) “[Where There is No Will](#), There is No Way,” at Cicero.

Explore BBC’s [Syria Conflict](#) site, along with the New York Times, [Syria page](#). Updates may follow as developments merit.

25 November: We will read and discuss items to be selected as developments unfold in the Middle East.

Papers are due in class on Wednesday, 25 November

WCAS reading period begins on Monday, 30 November

The final exam for this course will be held from **9am to 11am, Monday, 7 December**. It will be administered in **Annenberg G-21** [the class meeting room]. Please plan accordingly as you make travel arrangements. (Registrar’s exam schedule is [here](#).)

The Paper Assignment

Poli Sci 250, Fall 2015

Your assignment is to write a ten page double-spaced paper that offers advice to interested authorities who are responsible for trying to devise institutional remedies for the kinds of political violence that you have read about in this course. You are welcome to concentrate on whichever case is of most interest to you. The focus of the paper, however, should be on the specific institutional remedies that you think will be most appropriate in a particular situation. You should also pay particular attention to the tradeoffs or drawbacks associated with our remedies. Explain how the recipient of your advice might weigh these contending considerations, and show why your advice should receive serious consideration.

Here are some basic suggestions about how you might begin to tackle this assignment.

1. Vote buying in Nigeria (19 Oct) is associated with that country's political violence in ways that Paul Collier explains in general terms in his *Wars, Guns, and Votes*. Nevertheless, this country has a competitive electoral system. Does Lijphart's *Patterns of Democracy* offer clues about how one might remedy this situation in Nigeria? Should the electoral system be the target of reforms to eliminate vote buying? What tradeoffs would be involved in potential remedies?
2. Do institutions and institution-building have a positive role in solutions to widespread violence in Syria and Iraq? Kinds of institutions would be needed? How would institution-building occur in these places, and who would be best situated to undertake this task?
3. Are "informal institutions" a sustainable solution to problems of political violence and instability, or are they easily exploited for insider advantage? Can informal institutions become more formal over time?

You may choose your citation style, so long as it provides full bibliographic information and it is used consistently through your paper. Please, no gigantic fonts. The paper is due in class on **Wednesday, 25 November**.

Additional Note

Students enrolled in this course are required to complete a research assignment that can include up to 4 hours of research study participation. These studies require that students set up an appointment to complete participation at a laboratory on campus (or via an on-line survey). Students will learn how studies are conducted and will receive a synopsis at the conclusion of the quarter describing the study's goal, result, and relevance to the class. Students who prefer not to participate in research as a subject may opt for an alternative that entails reading any one chapter about political science research and writing a five page reaction paper. The typical chapter is about 20 pages and thus reading it and writing a five page paper should take approximately four hours.

During the first week of the quarter, students will receive an e-mail asking them whether they prefer study participation or the alternative assignment. The e-mail will also include details on how to complete either requirement. Failure to complete the requirement during the quarter will result in an incomplete. Failure to complete the requirement during the following quarter will result in a failing grade for the class. Note that if you are enrolled in multiple classes that require participation, you only need to satisfy the requirement one time. Also, if you already completed the requirement in another course in a previous quarter, you are excused from the requirement.