

Poli 2053-3, Spring 2018
9:00-10:20am, Tuesday and Thursdays
Location: Tureaud Hall 119

Introduction to Comparative Politics

Professor: Dan Qi , dqj2@lsu.edu
Office Hours: 10:30-12:00 am Tuesday& Thursday or by appointment.
Office: Stubbs 329, Department of Political Science

In this General Education course, we study the fundamentals of politics. Understanding politics is a sine qua non of leading a good life, for politics affects our *quotidien* – everyday life. As such, political science is a “master science,” in the words of Aristotle, on which all arenas of human activity depend, and from which all other practical sciences take their cue. Broadly speaking, studying politics necessarily involves comparison. For example, comparing countries (China and the United States), systems (democracy and dictatorship; universal and selective social welfare), ideologies (conservatism, liberalism, and socialism), and time periods (the 19th century and 20th century; the Cold War era and post-Cold War era). Hence, comparative politics is the most important subfield in political science, which requires critical thinking and rigorous analytical skills. We will learn why we compare, what to compare, and how to compare.

The main purpose of this course is to equip students with solid understanding of ‘big issues’ in politics around the world. As an introductory course, this class has three major goals: 1) to understand various theories, approaches, and empirics widely studied in the comparative study of politics, 2) to provide an analytical and comparative framework to understand ‘big issues’ in the world, and 3) to provide a broad perspective about the world we live in and the ability to relate some of our own interests to existing concerns of other scholars. The course is organized around questions that reflect both interesting phenomena and puzzles that call for explanations. We will examine some of the answers to these questions that have been proposed on the basis of comparative research. In this way, we will cover the areas in which research in political science is the most active and has contributed most significantly to the production of knowledge. To do so, this course is divided into four parts.

The first part entitled “Power, Ideology, and the Capital-Nation-State” constitutes the foundations of comparative politics. We will conceptualize politics, discuss competing ideologies, and understand the modern nation-state: its meaning and the historical formation. Some ontological and methodological issues will be discussed between the first and second parts. The second part “Democracies, Dictatorships, and People” will deal with the emergence and demise of political regimes (democracies and dictatorships), by focusing on various features of democratization, and by comparing top-down (elite-driven) and bottom-up (mass-driven) processes of democratic transitions. In the third part “Democratic Institutional Design” we will discuss the institutional design under democracy, by comparing different electoral rules (majoritarian and proportional), executive-legislative relationships (parliamentary and presidential), and different party systems (two-party and multiparty). The final part “Socioeconomic Policies under Globalization” will investigate why and how socioeconomic policies differ across countries and their divergent consequences. Attention should be paid to varieties of welfare capitalism. Economic “miracles” and “disasters” will be examined as well. We will also study the impacts of globalization on domestic politics.

READINGS

Each student is expected to read (before class) all the assigned readings for each session. The required readings are based on two sources. The first source is the course textbook. The textbook provides a background to understand topics and lectures:

Shively, W. Phillips. 2014. *Power & Choice: An Introduction to Political Science*. 14th Edition. New York: McGraw-Hills.

The second source is readings from journal articles to book chapters. These readings are also essential to understanding lectures. These readings are posted as pdf files on Moodle. Please make sure that all of you have a LSU email account so that you have an access to Moodle through your PAWS desktop.

REQUIREMENTS

Basically, classes will involve lectures of the reading material assigned for each session. But, I will introduce and explain some concepts, issues and theories that are not in the readings, so attendance is crucial. This means that a significant amount of material on the examinations will come from class lectures presenting information not discussed directly in the textbook and other readings. Participation from students is important and will count toward the final grade. At the end of each week, I will distribute memos (posted on Moodle) that contain important points of my lectures. N.B. Some materials and lectures might be difficult, so ask questions whenever necessary. In addition, feel free to stop my lecture and ask, to e-mail me, and to stop by my office. The general philosophy is that students who are eager to learn should be rewarded.

Final grades are based on three in-class examinations (two midterm and one final tests) and attendance/participation for a total of 100 points. The exams constitute two parts. The first part is a set of “identification” questions that ask important concepts, events, and proper names; students should identify what they are in one or two sentences. The second part is a set of “essay questions” that ask to explain some political phenomena and competing theories; students’ answers should be in four to six sentences. Multiple choice would be included in exam as well.

- 1) First mid-term examination (25%) , Tuesday, Feb 6, 9:00-10:20am
- 2) Second mid-term examination (25%) , Thursday, Mar 8, 9:00-10:20am
- 2) Final examination (30%) – Thursday, May 3, 12:30-2:30PM
- 3) Attendance and participation (20%)

GRADING SCALE

A+ 100 ~ 97	B+ 89 ~ 87	C+ 79 ~ 77	D+ 69 ~ 67	F 59 ~ 0
A 96 ~ 93	B 86 ~ 83	C 76 ~ 73	D 66 ~ 63	
A- 92 ~ 90	B- 82 ~ 80	C- 72 ~ 70	D- 62 ~ 60	

IMPORTANT DATES – NO CLASS

Mardi Gras holiday, Feb 13, Tuesday ; Spring Break, Mar 27&29, Tuesday & Thursday
Conference, Apr 5, Thursday

READING ASSIGNMENTS AND SPECIFIC TOPICS

(subject to change)

PART I: POWER, IDEOLOGY, AND THE CAPITAL-NATION-STATE

Week 1-2 (01/11, 01/16) Introduction

Introduction. Why is politics so important? Why compare? Causality, comparisons, and counterfactuals. Theory and empirics. Role of history. Analytical framework. Political science and comparative politics.

No require reading.

Week 2-3 (01/18, 01/23) What Is Politics?

Concept of the political. Collectivities vs. individuals. Conceptions of power – four faces. Choice under constraints. Why comply? Sources of legitimacy.

Shively, Chapter 1.

Week 3-4 (01/25, 01/30) Political Ideology. What Do We Believe, and Why?

Three classical blueprints: conservatism, liberalism, and socialism. Marxism vs. social democracy. Liberalism vs. libertarianism. Communitarianism vs fascism. Polanyi's thesis. Neoliberalism.

Alternative?

Shively, Chapter 2.

Week 4-6 (02/01, 02/08, 02/13) State & Nation. Where Does the State Come from, and Where Will It Go?

Polities, the modern nation-state. Importance of war and capitalism in the formation of the state. Why Europe? Capital-nation-state (market-society-state) and three blueprints. Future of the state.

Shively, Chapter 3.

Tilly, Charles. 1985. "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime." In *Bringing the State Back In*, ed. Peter Evans, Dietrich Reuschmeyer, and Theda Skocpol. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Week 6 (02/15) First Midterm Examination

9:00-10:20 am in our classroom.

INTERMEZZO

Week 7 (02/20, 02/22) Three Research Traditions and Methods of Comparison

Structure, culture, and rationality. Importance of theory. Providing a "compelling story." Inferences. Testable implications. Single-case studies, comparative methods, and large-N studies. Sufficient and necessary conditions.

Shively, Appendix, and the section on "Political Science" in Chapter 1.

Landman, Todd. 2013. "How to Compare Countries." In *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics: An Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge

Week 8 (02/27, 03/01) Democracy & Dictatorship. What Is Democracy? Which Countries Are Democratic?

Competition and participation. Minimalist vs. maximalist definitions. Institutionalization of uncertainty. “Miracle” of democracy. Authoritarian regimes. Trend and pattern of political regimes around the world.

Shively, Chapter 7.

Przeworski, Adam, et al. 2000. “Democracies and Dictatorships.” In *Democracy and Development: Political Regimes and Material Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Week 9 (03/06, 03/08) Democratization. Why and How Do Democracies Emerge and Endure?

Modernization theory. Structure vs. agency. Strategic interaction model. Top-down vs. bottom-up transitions Crisis-driven vs. non-crisis transitions. Mobilization curve. Tipping (threshold) model. Year 1989: “Autumn of Nations” in Eastern Europe vs. “Tiananmen solution” in China.

Shively, Chapter 7 (continue) and Chapter 13.

Przeworski, Adam, and Fernando Limongi. 1997. “Modernization: Theories and Facts.” *World Politics* 49: 155-183.

Week 10 (03/13) Does Culture Matter for Democracy?

Political socialization. Social capital. Is culture a dependent variable or independent variable? “Civic culture.” Three views. Culture as a religiosity vs. distribution of answers vs. epiphenomenon.

Shively, Chapter 8.

Week 10 (03/15) Second Midterm Examination

10:30 – 11:50 am in our classroom.

PART III: DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN

Week 11 (03/20, 03/22) Voting & Electoral system. How Are the Elections Organized?

Constitutional design. Incentive compatibility. Unitary vs. federal states. Paradox of voting. Electoral participation. Majoritarian vs. proportional systems vs. mixed systems.

Shively, Chapter 9 and Chapter 10.

Week 12 (03/27, 03/29) Fall Break

No class meeting.

Week 13-14 (04/03,04/10) Political Party. Where Do Parties Come from? Are They Indispensable?

“Iron law of oligarchy.” Representation and accountability. Social cleavages and party systems. Lipset-Rokkan “freezing hypothesis.” Duverger’s law. Pluralism vs. neocorporatism. Extra-parliamentary politics. Collective action problem. Party politics vs. movement politics.

Shively, Chapter 11 and Chapter 12.

Week 14-15 (04/12, 04/17) Parliamentary vs. Presidential. How Are Governments Formed in a Democracy?

Executive-legislative relationships. Parliamentary vs. presidential vs. semi-presidential democracies. Cabinet formation. Coalitional politics. Perils of presidentialism? Majoritarian and consensus visions of democracy.

Shively, Chapter 14 and Chapter 15.

Week 15 (04/19) East Asian Politics. Why Are There “Miracles” and “Disasters”?

Why are some countries richer than others? Trend and pattern of economic growth. Import substitution vs. export-led industrialization. Rent-seeking. East Asian “miracle.” Developmental state vs. predatory state. Is “Asian miracle” miracle? The rise of China *again*.

Shively, Chapter 5.

Evans, Peter. 1989. “Predatory, Developmental, and Other Apparatuses: A Comparative Political Economy Perspective on the Third World State.” *Sociological Forum* 4(1): 561-587.

Week 16 (04/24, 04/26) Globalization. Is Globalization Inevitable? Conclusion

History of globalization. Neoliberalism revisited. Socioeconomic policies in an era of financial globalization. Role of China in the world economy. Problems with “market society.” Summary of the course. Importance of democratic politics revisited.

Shively, Chapter 5 and Chapter 18.

Week 17 (05/03) Final Exam.

12:30- 2:30 pm