

Department of Political Science
University of Colorado, Boulder

PSCI 2012: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Professor Sokhey

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 3:30-4:45pm, Arnett N-200, Fall 2016

Office: Ketchum Hall 133
E-mail: sokheys@colorado.edu
Office hours: Tuesdays, 1-3pm & by appointment

“To eat and to talk, to be free from hunger and oppression—these elementary values animate a worldwide quest for political democracy and economic rationality.”

-Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market* (1991)

What is “Comparative Politics” & Why Should You Study it?

Comparative politics is the study and comparison of politics in countries and places around the world. We live in an increasingly global world. Whether or not you are especially interested in politics, if you are interested in better understanding why countries and places are different, this course is for you. And because we live in a highly interconnected world, you have an advantage in getting a job and succeeding if you better understand that world.

We will talk about a wide range of questions including:

- Why are some countries democratic and others authoritarian?
- What does it mean to be democratic?
- Why are some countries rich and some countries poor?
- Does democracy matter? Are democratic countries better off?
- Why is Mexican politics plagued by corruption? Why is Iran the only theocracy in the world? Why is Russia authoritarian? What kind of leader is Putin? What’s the Brexit, and how does it affect me!?

In the first half of the course, we will look at where democracy comes from. In the second half, we will talk about how democracies are different around the world. We will talk in a bit more depth about politics in **Mexico, Iran, Russia, and the UK.**

For many of the questions listed above, there are not definitive answers. They may not even be the right questions to ask. For the course to work and as interesting as possible, you should come to class prepared to discuss the readings for that day. You should expect to read, write, and talk...a lot!

Requirements

Your course grade will be based on the following criteria:

Exam #1	25%
Exam #2	25%
Daily Quizzes/Participation	25%
Country Paper	15%
Final Exam	10%

No Laptops in Class

I will be strictly enforcing a policy of no laptops in our classroom. You will not be allowed to use a laptop to take notes. Some research indicates that taking notes by hand can be more beneficial. See this article from *Scientific American*: <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop>. There is also a very real risk that your use of a laptop will distract other students; see this article about how open screens distract others: <http://www.rcinet.ca/en/2013/08/20/new-study-shows-computers-in-class-distract-both-users-and-non-users>. Other faculty, like Professor Drezner at Tufts University, have reported that students are more engaged when laptops are restricted; see https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/04/28/confessions-of-a-luddite-professor/?utm_term=.fc3ac91715d9.

Especially in a small setting like a Global Studies RAP class, having just one student use a laptop can hurt our class dynamic. Even when a student is using a laptop for class-related purposes, I have found that the student is so focused on their computer that they are not listening to other students or to what is going on around them. I will only consider allowing laptops if you have been approved for special accommodations; if this is the case, please talk to me early in the semester.

Exams

There will be two midterm exams and a final exam. The midterm exams will be short answer and essay questions. The final exam will be one long essay question. More information about the exams will be provided in class.

Current Affairs (Read the News!)

Current affairs will be incorporated into class and will be covered on reading quizzes and exams. I have noted on the syllabus the days on which we will devote a portion of class to discussing current events. You should regularly consult the BBC news website at www.bbc.co.uk/news. We will regularly devote a portion of class to discussing current events. When we are covering particular country case studies (of Mexico, Russia, Iran, and the UK), keep an eye out for news about those countries.

Daily Quizzes/Participation

There is no official attendance policy. Instead, your participation will be evaluated by daily reading quizzes and other daily activities in class.

Country Paper

Our course focuses on major ideas and lessons from comparative politics and uses 4 country cases as illustrative examples—Mexico, Iran, Russia, and the United Kingdom.

For the country paper, you will be asked to write a 5-page paper applying the political experiences of one country (other than the United States, Mexico, Iran, Russia, or the United Kingdom) to the concepts covered in class. The idea behind this assignment is to give you the opportunity to engage the course material in the context of a country in which are you most interested. This will also give you the opportunity to share what you learn with your classmates.

The country paper is due in class. You are required to submit a paper copy in class AND an electronic copy on D2L. Points will be deducted from your paper grade if you fail to submit both a paper copy and an electronic version. More information will be provided in class.

Extra Credit

There is one opportunity for extra credit in this course. To receive extra credit, you should complete an optional recommended reading and write a one-page summary which: 1) *briefly* summarizes the content of the reading, and 2) gives *your reaction & thoughts* about the reading. Your response paper should tie into what we are covering in the course. You may complete TWO recommended readings for extra credit. Each recommended reading response you complete is worth 2 points on your final grade. You may only receive 1 extra credit point if the response paper does not summarize the reading correctly or does not give your reaction to the reading.

If you are especially interested in a topic on the syllabus for which there is not a recommended optional reading, please let me know and I may be able to recommend readings for extra credit.

The response paper does not have to be turned in on the day for which it is listed. You must turn in your extra credit response papers by the last day of class.

Required Books

Principle of Comparative Politics, William Roberts Clark, Matt Golder, & Sona Nadenichek Golder, ISBN: 978-0-87289-289-7, ***Be sure to get the 2nd edition.** Used copies and rental options are available on Amazon. The CU bookstore should also be carrying this.

Contacting Instructor

I am available for office hours. I am also happy to make arrangements to meet with you at a time that is more convenient for your schedule. Please let me know what times would be more convenient for you if you are unable to meet during my office hours.

A note about e-mail

Email is the quickest and easiest way to contact me outside of class and I always make an effort to respond promptly. Email is most efficiently used to answer short informational questions about the course, or to arrange a time to talk. Many questions are better discussed in person including substantive questions about material we have covered in class or will be covering. In many cases, I will indicate that we should talk in person to answer your question or questions. Although e-mail is an easy and convenient form of correspondence, **you should think of e-mails to any of your instructors as professional correspondence.** This means that your message should adhere to

norms of academic writing including the use of proper punctuation. You should also avoid IM style language or excessive use of abbreviations. The better I can understand your e-mail, the better I am able to help you in a constructive manner.

Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, and <http://www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices>. Disability Services' letters for students with disabilities indicate legally mandated reasonable accommodations. The syllabus statements and answers to Frequently Asked Questions can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices>.

Religious Observance

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Please note, however, that requests for special accommodations need to be presented in a timely manner: at least one week prior to scheduled exams/assignments. See full details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html-student_code

Discrimination and Harassment

The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>

Academic Honesty & Student Conduct

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All

incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion).

Other information on the Honor Code can be found at:

<http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and at:

<http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>

All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own and should not be work you have submitted in any other course. No cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper attribution) will be tolerated. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be handled according to university policy. **If you plagiarize, you will fail the course.** Plagiarism does not only include lifting text verbatim from another source and using it as your own, but includes (among other things) paraphrasing a work and not properly citing it in your paper.

When considering whether or not to plagiarize, consider whether you are willing to fail the course and possibly facing other university sanctions for doing so. If you are having difficulty completing course assignments, consider alternatives to cheating including contacting me (or your other instructors) for help. The consequences of turning in a poorly done assignment are always much less severe than plagiarizing.

Extensions & Make-ups

As a general rule, I will not grant any extensions or make-ups. All deadlines have been clearly marked on the course schedule and you should make note of them. In case of extreme emergency (such as serious illness), extensions and make-ups must be discussed with the instructor individually and will be arranged on a case-by-case basis contingent on proper documentation of any incident preventing the student from meeting the deadline.

***IMPORTANT NOTE: Assignments should be submitted in class, not via e-mail or left in my mailbox in the political science department. If extenuating circumstances require you to submit your assignment by e-mail or by leaving it in my mailbox, it is your responsibility to make sure I get it. You should be sure to get confirmation that I have received your assignment in this case.

Country papers will be penalized one letter grade for each day they are later (including weekends). I really want you to turn the paper in on time.

Grading

I will use the following scale in assessing grades:

A	94+	C+	77-79	E	59 and below
A-	90-93	C	74-76		
B+	87-89	C-	70-73		
B	84-86	D+	67-69		
B-	80-83	D-	60-66		

Course Schedule

Unless otherwise noted, all readings from chapters refer to *Principles of Comparative Politics*, 2nd edition (Clark, Golder, and Golder). Additional readings will be posted on D2L.

	Date	Topic & Reading Assignment	Deadlines
Week 1	Tuesday, Aug. 23	What is Comparative Politics & Why Should You Study It? Adam Przeworski, 2016, “Democracy: A Never-Ending Quest,” <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> , 19” 1-12. (D2L)	
	Thursday, Aug. 25	What is Comparative Politics? Chapter 1, : Introduction (in <i>Principles of Comparative Politics</i>) , pp. 1-18	
Week 2	Tuesday, Aug. 30	What is Politics? What is Science? Chapter 2, pp. 19-30, 43-44 Chapter 3, pp. 49-75 (This is a difficult section – pay attention to what I tell you in class about how to read this section!) Chapter 5. pp.149-151	
	Thursday, Sep. 1	Read BBC World News (www.bbc.com/news)	
Week 3	Tuesday, Sept. 6	Economics & Democracy Chapter 6, pp. 171-202, Modernization Theory	
	Thursday, Sept. 8	Read BBC World News (www.bbc.com/news) Chapter 6, pp. 203-208, “Some More Empirical Evidence”	
Week 4	Tuesday, Sept. 13	Mexican Politics Andreas Schedler, “The criminal Subversion of Mexican Democracy,” <i>Journal of Democracy</i> , 25:1, January 2014. (D2L)	
	Thursday, Sept. 15	Read BBC World News (www.bbc.com/news) Gustavo A. Flores Macías, “Mexico’s Stalled Reforms,” <i>Journal of Democracy</i> , 27:2, April 2016. (D2L)	
Week 5	Tuesday, Sept. 20	Culture & Democracy <i>A Civic Culture</i> Chapter 7, pp. 213-229	

	Thursday, Sept. 22	<p><i>Religion & Democracy</i> Chapter 7, pp. 229-248</p> <p><i>Experiments & Democracy</i> Chapter 7, pp. 248-259</p> <p><u>Recommended:</u> Ronald Inghart and Pippa Norris, "The True Clash of Civilizations," <i>Foreign Policy</i>, No. 135 (Mar.-Apr., 2003), pp. 62-70</p>	
Week 6	Tuesday, Sept. 27	Iranian Politics Abbas Milani, "Iran's Paradoxical Regime," <i>Journal of Democracy</i> , 26:2, April 2015. (D2L)	
	Thursday, Sept. 29	<p>Read BBC World News (www.bbc.com/news)</p> <p>Ali Ashari H. Graham Underwood, "The Student Movement's Struggle," <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, 18:4, October 2007. (D2L)</p>	
Week 7	Tuesday, Oct. 4	Review for Exam #1	
	Thursday, Oct. 6		Exam #1
Week 8	Tuesday, Oct. 11	<p>Democratic Transition <i>Bottom-Up Transitions to Democracy</i> Chapter 8, pp. 265-290</p> <p><u>Recommended:</u> Huntington, <i>The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century</i>, 1991, Chapter 1: What?, pp.1-30</p> <p>Thomas Carothers, <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, "The End of the Transition Paradigm"</p>	
	Thursday, Oct. 13	<p><i>Top-Down Transitions to Democracy</i> Chapter 8, pp. 290-307</p> <p>Read BBC World News (www.bbc.com/news)</p>	
Week 9	Tuesday, Oct. 18	Russian Politics Lilia Shvetsova, "Forward to the Past," <i>Journal of Democracy</i> , 26:2, April 2015. (D2L)	
	Thursday, Oct. 20	<p>Read BBC World News (www.bbc.com/news)</p> <p>Henry Hale, "25 Years after the USSR: What's Gone Wrong?" <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, 27:3, 2016. (D2L)</p>	

Week 10	Tuesday, Oct. 25	Does Democracy Matter? (Answer: Sometimes!) <i>Democracy & Inequality</i> Chapter 9, pp. 325-346	
	Thursday, Oct. 27	<i>Selectorate Theory</i> Chapter 10, pp.384-403 Read BBC World News (www.bbc.com/news)	
Week 11	Tuesday, Nov. 1	Parliamentary & Presidential Systems <i>Classifying Democracies</i> Chapter 12, pp. 457-464 <i>Parliamentary Democracies</i> Chapter 12, pp.465-491	
	Thursday, Nov. 3	<i>Presidential Democracies</i> Chapter 12, pp.499-512	
Week 12	Tuesday, Nov. 8 (Election Day!)	British Politics & the Brexit Brian Wheeler & Alex Hunt, “Brexit: All you need to know about the UK leaving the EU,” <i>BBC News</i> , July 21, 2016 (D2L) Amanda Taub, “Brexit, Explained: 7 Questions About What It Means and Why It Matters,” <i>New York Times</i> , June 20, 2016. (D2L) Read BBC World News (www.bbc.com/news)	
	Thursday, Nov. 10	Elections Around the World Single-Member Districts (SMD) vs. Proportional Representation (PR) Downs’ Median Voter Theorem & Duverger’s “Law” Chapter 13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Elections: An Overview” (pp.535-542, skip the “Who Can Vote in Democracies?” section) • “Majoritarian Electoral Systems” (pp.542-546) • “Proportional Electoral Systems” (pp. 564-566) Also take a look at these two other pages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 14, p. 653 (“Summarizing Duverger’s Theory) • Chapter 11, p. 430 (Read Box 11.1 Insert: “The Median Voter Theorem and Party Competition”) 	
Week 13	Tuesday, Nov. 15	Review for Exam #2 Read BBC World News (www.bbc.com/news)	
	Thursday, Nov. 17		Exam #2
Week 14		Fall Break (No Class), November 21-25	

Week 15	Tuesday, Nov. 29	Democracies Around the World Chapter 16, pp. 788-815 & conclusion of chapter (p. 825)	
	Thursday, Dec. 1	Read BBC World News (www.bbc.com/news)	
Week 16	Tuesday, Dec. 6	Student Presentations	Country Paper Due
	Thursday, Dec. 8	Student Presentations	
		FINAL EXAM: Thursday, December 15th, 4:30-7pm	