

Department of Political Science  
University of Colorado, Boulder

## PSCI 2012: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Professor Sokhey

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:30-1:45pm, Arnett N-200, Fall 2018

Office: Ketchum Hall 133  
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Phone: 303-492-7871  
Course website: Log in at <https://canvas.colorado.edu>  
Office hours: Tuesdays, 10am-noon & by appointment\*

\*Because no set of office hours will be convenient for every student, I am happy to find an alternate time to meet and to arrange meetings in Arnett Hall as necessary.

“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)

This is an introductory Political Science course with no required prerequisites. This course is required for Political Science majors. We cover many big concepts and ideas relevant for understanding politics in countries around the world. Our course is organized around a study of democracy. The course readings are primarily from two books—*Principles of Comparative Politics* (Clark, Golder, and Golder, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition) and *Elections in Hard Times* (Flores and Nooruddin 2016). Students are asked to write regular country reports applying the concepts covered in class to a particular country.



*The Largest Competitive Election in World History. India, April and May 2014.*  
Photo: Hindustan Times via Getty Images ([published in TIME](#) on April 11, 2014)

## Requirements

Your course grade will be based on the criteria below.

Exam #1	20%
Exam #2	20%
Final Exam	10%
5 Country Reports	25% total (worth 5% each)
Country Presentation	10%
Participation in-class	10%
Comment on News Online	5%

## Grading Scale

I 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 Website

All information about our course will be posted at <https://canvas.colorado.edu> including the syllabus, course assignments, and any readings not included in the two required books for the course.

## Exams (50% total)

There will be two midterm exams (worth 20% each) and a final exam (worth 10%). For the midterm exams, you will be allowed to choose in class to take either a multiple choice/short answer version of the exam OR a long essay version of the exam. The final exam will be one long essay question. More information about the exams will be provided in class.

## Country Reports (25% total, 5% each)

You will write 5 country reports throughout the semester in which you apply to experiences of one country to the concepts we are discussing in class. The first 4 reports should be 2 pages double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 point font with 1" margins. Do not include a large header in your paper to take up extra space. For the final country report, you will combine the previous 4 reports and revise and add to them to make a one 10-page paper.

You may choose to write about any country in the world except the United States. You will need to choose your country before the end of week 4 in the semester when the first report is due.

Your country report should address the specific country report assignment which will be posted on our course website and provided in class. You should also reference the grading rubric posted on Canvas and the example of a sample country report written by me.

### ***Due Dates for Country Reports***

- Country Report #1 – Thursday, September 20<sup>th</sup> (upload on Canvas before class at 12:30pm)
- Country Report #2 – Tuesday, October 9<sup>th</sup> (upload on Canvas before class at 12:30pm)
- Country Report #3 – Thursday, October 25<sup>th</sup> (upload on Canvas before class at 12:30pm)
- Country Report #4 – Tuesday, November 13<sup>th</sup> (upload on Canvas before class at 12:30pm)
- Country Report #5 – Tuesday, December 4<sup>th</sup> (upload on Canvas before class at 12:30pm)

### ***Important Notes about Country Reports***

- You may not change your country after the first country report. You must cover the same country throughout the semester.
- You will be penalized 10 points for every day your country report is late including Saturdays and Sundays.
- Assignments should be uploaded on our course website on Canvas. I cannot be responsible for any assignments that are not submitted on the course website on Canvas. If you submit your paper in any other way (by email or as a paper copy), there is a 10 point penalty and you should be sure to receive confirmation that I received it.
- The academic penalty for any instance of plagiarism in this course—no matter how small—is FAILING THE COURSE. Please do not risk failing the course by plagiarizing. If you are having trouble with the course assignments, please contact me. The penalty for plagiarism is not worth it.

### **Country Presentation (10%)**

In the last week of the semester, you will be asked to present highlights from your country reports. This is designed in part to help you prepare for the final exam. More detailed information about what is expected for the country presentation will be provided in class.

### **Participation: In-Class Assignments & Quizzes (10%)**

There is no official attendance policy. Instead, your participation will be evaluated by reading quizzes and other activities in class. There are no make-ups for missing quizzes or in-class assignments as these are designed specifically to grade in-class participation. We will, however, have a lot of these so that missing just a few will not have a significant impact on your grade. If you would like to offset missed in-class assignments or quizzes or make up for a poor performance on some of these, then please see the extra credit opportunity described below.

### **Comment on News Online (5%)**

On the class schedule (at the end of the syllabus), you will see various dates on which you are instructed to read a current news article and comment online on our course website on Canvas. For each of these times, you should: 1) read the article or articles, 2) make a relevant comment, and 3) post one response to another student's post.

### **Extra Credit Reaction Papers**

There is one opportunity for extra credit in this course. To receive extra credit, you should complete an optional recommended reading and write a two-page reaction paper 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 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.**

*Elections in Hard Times: Building Stronger Democracies in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Thomas Flores and Irfan Nooruddin, Cambridge University Press, 2016.

## **Cost of books**

In order to be conscientious about cost, I have only chosen 2 required books. The CU bookstore will carry both books, but used copies and rental options are available on Amazon and are generally cheaper.

## **Contacting Me**

For the purposes of this class, I prefer to be addressed as “Dr. Sokhey” or “Professor Sokhey”.

Email ([sokheys@colorado.edu](mailto:sokheys@colorado.edu)) is the quickest and easiest way to contact me outside of class and I always make an effort to respond promptly. Email is best for answering 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 cover in class. If this is the case, I may ask you to talk with me in person. Just as you would in class, please be polite and professional in your emails.

## **Accommodations for Disabilities**

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or [dsinfo@colorado.edu](mailto:dsinfo@colorado.edu) for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

## **Classroom Behavior**

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy.

## **Honor Code**

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu)); 303-492-5550). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#).

## **Plagiarism & Cheating**

In this course, the academic penalty for any instance of plagiarism or cheating—no matter how small—is FAILING THE COURSE. Please do not risk failing the course by plagiarizing. If you are having trouble with the course assignments, please contact me. The penalty for plagiarism is not worth it.

## **Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation**

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, exploitation, harassment, dating or domestic violence, and stalking), discrimination, and harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or [cureport@colorado.edu](mailto:cureport@colorado.edu). Information about the OIEC, university policies, [anonymous reporting](#), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

## **Religious Holidays**

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance.

In this class, I request a one-week notice before for any accommodation for religious observances, but I will do my best to honor your request whenever you make it. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

## **Names & Pronouns**

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 [colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html](https://colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html) and at [colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student\\_code](https://colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code).

## **Extensions & Make-ups**

I understand that unexpected things happen during the semester. In case of emergencies, extensions and make-ups should be discussed with me individually and will be arranged on a case-by-case basis contingent on proper documentation of any incident preventing you from meeting the deadline. Please talk to me as soon as possible in the event that you need to reschedule an exam, or request an extension on an assignment. I will make every effort to make accommodations in the event of emergencies. **Please note that emergencies do not include having too much work in other classes, or trips or vacations.**

## Course Schedule

Most readings are from the 2 required books: 1) *Principles of Comparative Politics*, or 2) *Elections in Hard Times*. Current events articles will be posted on our course website at <https://canvas.colorado.edu>. All readings should be completed before the class for which they have been assigned. A few extra credit readings are listed in case you want to write an extra credit reaction paper (see above on the syllabus). I will post more possible extra credit readings on Canvas.

As indicated below, the course is organized around 4 “blocks” which are different sets of topics:

- Block 1: Introducing Comparative Politics (Weeks 1-2)
- Block 2: Where Democracy Comes From (Weeks 3-7)
- Block 3: Democratic Transitions & Different Kinds of Democracies (Weeks 8-12)
- Block 4: Promoting Democracy Around the World (Weeks 14-16)

### Block 1: Introducing Comparative Politics

#### Week 1: What is Comparative Politics? Why Should You Study It?

**Tuesday, August 28**

**Thursday, August 30**

Required reading

*Principles of Comparative Politics*, Chapter 1: Introduction, pp. 2-14

Read & comment on current affairs article(s) posted on the course website (<https://canvas.colorado.edu>)

Extra credit reading: Adam Przeworski. 2016. “Democracy: A Never-Ending Quest,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 19:1-12

#### Week 2: How Do We Study Comparative Politics Scientifically?

**Tuesday, September 4**

Required reading

*Principles of Comparative Politics*

- Scientific Method: Chapter 2, pp.19-27
- Defining Democracy: Chapter 5, pp.150-162 & page 169

**Thursday, September 6**

Required reading

*Elections in Hard Times* (Flores and Nooruddin 2016), Preface, pages xv-xvii, and Chapter 1 (Introduction), pp.1-23

Extra credit reading: Samuel Huntington. 1991. *The Third Wave of Democratization: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Harvard University Press; Francis Fukuyama.1989. “The End of History?” *The National Interest* (Summer): 3-18.

## Block 2: Where Democracy Comes From

### Week 3: Democracy May Be Good, But It's In Decline

**Tuesday, September 11**

Required Reading

*Principles of Comparative Politics*, read Box 10.2, "The Tale of Two Leopolds," pages 395-396

**Thursday, September 13**

Required Reading

*Elections in Hard Times*, Chapter 3 (The Third Wave(s) and the Electoral Boom), pages 57-65, and pages 75-77 (the chapter's concluding discussion)

Read & comment on current affairs article(s) posted on the course website on Canvas

### Week 4: Economic Origins of Democracy

**Tuesday, September 18**

Required reading

*Principles of Comparative Politics*, Chapter 6, pp. 176-188, pages 198-206, "Modernization Theory"

**Thursday, September 20 (DUE: Country Report #1)**

Required reading

*Principles of Comparative Politics*, Chapter 6, pp. 206-212, "Some More Empirical Evidence"

Read & comment on current affairs article(s) posted on the course website on Canvas

### Week 5: Cultural Origins of Democracy

**Tuesday, September 25**

Required reading

Civic Culture: *Principles of Comparative Politics*, Chapter 7, pp. 224-232

**Thursday, September 27**

Required reading

Religion & Democracy: *Principles of Comparative Politics*, Chapter 7, pp. 237-254

Experiments & Democracy: *Principles of Comparative Politics*, Chapter 7, pp. 254-261

Extra credit reading: Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, "The True Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Policy*, No. 135 (Mar.-Apr., 2003), pp. 62-70

### Week 6: Electoral Origins of Democracy

**Tuesday, October 2**

Required reading

*Elections in Hard Times* (Flores & Nooruddin 2016), Chapter 2 (Why Have Elections Failed to Deliver?), pages 26-39

**Thursday, October 4**

Required reading

*Elections in Hard Times* (Flores & Nooruddin 2016), Chapter 2 (Why Have Elections Failed to Deliver?), pages 39-56 (Start with the section, “A Theoretical Synthesis”)

Read & comment on current affairs article(s) posted on the course website on Canvas

**Week 7: Review & Exam #1**

**Tuesday, October 9 (DUE: Country Report #2)**

Review for Exam #1

**Thursday, October 11: Exam #1 in class**

**Block 3: Democratic Transitions & Different Kinds of Democracies**

**Week 8: Democratic Transitions**

**Tuesday, October 16**

Required reading

Bottom-Up Transitions to Democracy: *Principle of Comparative Politics*, Chapter 8, pp. 270-291

**Thursday, October 18**

Required reading

Top-Down Transitions to Democracy: *Principle of Comparative Politics*, Chapter 8, pp. 292-312

Read & comment on current affairs article(s) posted on the course website on Canvas

**Week 9: When Elections Don't Improve Democracy**

**Tuesday, October 23**

Required reading

*Elections in Hard Times* (Flores & Nooruddin 2016), Chapter 3 (The Third Wave(s) and the Electoral Boom), pages 65-75

**Thursday, October 25 (DUE: Country Report #3)**

Required reading

*Elections in Hard Times* (Flores & Nooruddin 2016), Chapter 4 (The Ephemeral Power of Contingent Legitimacy), pages 81-95

**Week 10: Different Kinds of Democratic Systems (Presidential & Parliamentary)**

**Tuesday, October 30**

Required reading

Classifying Democracies: *Principles of Comparative Politics*, Chapter 12, pp. 454-458

Parliamentary Democracies: *Principles of Comparative Politics*, Chapter 12, pp.458-481

**Thursday, November 1**

Required reading

Presidential & Semi-Presidential Democracies: *Principles of Comparative Politics*, Chapter 12, pp.487-499

**Week 11: Different Kinds of Democratic Systems (Electoral Systems)**

**Tuesday, November 6**

Required reading

*Principles of Comparative Politics*, Chapter 13

- “Majoritarian Electoral Systems,” pages 534-38
- “Proportional Electoral Systems,” pages 549-560

*Principles of Comparative Politics*, read these two additional pages:

- Duverger’s Theory, read page 633 (“Summarizing Duverger’s Theory) in Chapter 14
- Median Voter Theorem, read page 426 (Box 11.1: “The Median Voter Theorem and Party Competition”) in Chapter 11

**Thursday, November 8**

Required reading

Read & comment on current affairs article(s) posted on the course website on Canvas

**Week 12: Review & Exam #2**

**Tuesday, November 13 (DUE: Country Report #4)**

Review for Exam #2

**Thursday, November 15: Exam #2 in class**

**Week 13: FALL BREAK (NO CLASS), November 19-23**

<b>Block 4: Promoting Democracy Around the World</b>
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**Week 14: Democracy Promotion Around the World**

**Tuesday, November 27**

Required reading

*Elections in Hard Times* (Flores & Nooruddin 2016), Chapter 8 (Democracy Promotion for the Twenty-First Century), pages 173-193

**Thursday, November 29**

*Elections in Hard Times* (Flores & Nooruddin 2016), Chapter 7 (Violent Votes: Conflict and Elections), Start with the section “What Types of Conflict Harm Democracy the Most?”, read pages 155-169

Read & comment on current affairs article(s) posted on the course website on Canvas

**Week 15: Student Presentations & Review**

**Tuesday, December 4 (DUE: Country Report #5)**

**Thursday, December 6**

**Week 16: Student Presentations & Review**

**Tuesday, December 11**

Required reading

*Elections in Hard Times* (Flores & Nooruddin 2016), Chapter 9 (Conclusions), pages 194-205

**Thursday, December 13 (DUE: Last day to turn in extra credit reaction papers!)**

Required reading

Read & comment on current affairs article(s) posted on the course website on Canvas

**FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, December 19, 4:30-7pm**