

Department of Political Science  
University of Colorado, Boulder

## PSCI 2012: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Professor Sokhey  
Summer 2019 Online Course

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“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)



*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)

## **About the Course: Description & Objectives**

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—*Foundations 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.

## **Professor Bio**

I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science. I have taught at the University of Colorado since 2009 including having taught Introduction to Comparative Politics (many times!), Russian Politics, East European Politics, and Eastern Europe & the EU. I also teach Ph.D. level seminars in Comparative Political Economy and Comparative Political Institutions.

I research and write primarily about Russian and post-communist politics and especially about economic policies and economic reforms. I am very passionate about learning and teaching about politics around the world. I have been regularly traveling to Russia since 2002 (where I have lived and worked) and have also travelled to many European countries (the UK, France, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Finland, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Austria, Latvia, Estonia, Ukraine, and Romania) as well as Kazakhstan, India, Mexico, and Canada.

## **Communication Policy**

My preferred method of contact is the email system within Canvas. Please contact me first through the Canvas email system. This allows me to more easily keep track of your messages and to insure that I do not miss important messages about the course. If you have trouble contacting me through the Canvas email system, I can also be contacted by email at [sarah.sokhey@colorado.edu](mailto:sarah.sokhey@colorado.edu).

I will always do my best to respond within 24 hours of your email, and will often respond more quickly than that. I will typically respond between 9am and 5pm from Monday through Friday. I will respond on Saturdays and Sundays, but on weekends I will respond more slowly and you will likely need to wait until the evening to receive a response.

If you do not receive a response within 24 hours, please send me a reminder in case I missed your message.

## **Course Overview**

This course follows the same content and organization of how it is taught in person, but has been adapted to fit into 5 modules which each address a different topic. The online course will include regular online discussions including small group discussions to facilitate your learning and comprehension and to encourage all students to be engaged with the material. Please see the course outline below for a detailed schedule for our class.

## Student Responsibilities

It is your responsibility to regularly complete the readings, listen to the recorded lectures, and participate in online discussions. You are also required to write a 3-page country report and upload a recorded presentation which will be discussed online in small groups. **All of your online discussion comments, exams, country report and presentation should be completed by the deadlines indicated on the Canvas website.**

Your course grade will be based on the following:

Exam #1	20%
Exam #2	20%
Exam #3	10%
Country Report (3 pages)	15%
Country Presentation	10%
Country Discussion	5%
Weekly Online Discussion (5 times)	10% (worth 2% each time)
Weekly Comments on News (5 times)	10% (worth 2% each time)

## Grading Scale

I use the following standard 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		

## Exams (50% total)

There will be two midterm exams (worth 20% each) and a final exam (worth 10%). Exam #1 and Exam #2 will each be 30 multiple choice questions and 2 short answer questions. Exam #3 will be several short answer questions. All of the exams will be timed. You will have 1 hour to take each exam as indicated on Canvas.

## Country Report (15%)

You will be asked to write a 3-page country report applying concepts from the class to any country in the world except for the United States (don't write about the United States). There is a detailed handout with all of the specific requirements for this report.

## Country Presentation (10%)

You should prepare a 5-minute recorded presentation with slides which will be posted on Canvas. You are welcome to use any recording software with which you are comfortable. The University of Colorado makes the Zoom software free for all students. Information about recording your presentation with Zoom is available on our Canvas course website (<https://canvas.colorado.edu>).

### **Country Discussion (5%)**

You will be assigned to a small group of students in the class. You should watch the presentations of your other group members and comment and ask questions about the presentation online. Your comments should, of course, be polite and professional. You are all smart people with interesting things to say and you should approach the discussion of each other's work with this perspective in mind.

### **Weekly Online Discussion (worth 2% of final grade for each of 5 discussions = 10% of final grade)**

By each Friday of the class, you will be asked to make 1 comment and respond to 1 comment by another student. There will be weekly discussion question prompts that you should respond to for this. Your comment and response should both substantively address the topic at hand and should be at least 75 words long (a short paragraph) although you may write more than that. As always, be courteous and professional in your comments just as you would be for an in-person class.

### **Weekly Comments on News (worth 2% of final grade for each of 5 news' comments = 10% of final grade)**

By each Friday of the class, you will be asked to make 1 comment and respond to 1 comment about current events articles that have been posted on our Canvas course website. Your comment and response should both substantively address the topic at hand and should be at least 75 words long (a short paragraph) although you may write more than that. As always, be courteous and professional in your comments just as you would be for an in-person class.

### **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 (double-spaced, 12-point font, Times New Roman, 1" margins, no big header at the top) 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 extra credit reaction paper you complete is worth 2 points added to 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.

### **Late Policy – Read This! It's Important!**

Because this is an online summer course which takes place over only 5 weeks, it is very important to submit your work on time in keeping with all of the deadlines indicated on our Canvas course website. **Late work will only be accepted for 24 hours after the deadline indicated on our Canvas course website. After 24 hours past the deadline, work will no longer be accepted. There is a 15-point penalty for any late work submitted after the time due as indicated on our Canvas course website. To be fair to all students, the same late penalty will apply regardless of when you submit it after the time due and before the 24 hours is up.**

## Required Books

*Foundations of Comparative Politics*, William Roberts Clark, Matt Golder, & Sona Nadenichek Golder, ISBN: 978-1-5063-6073-7.

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

## 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.

## Classroom Behavior Online (Netiquette)

All students should be aware that their behavior impacts other people, even online. We should strive to develop a positive and supportive environment and to be courteous to each other. Due to the nature of the online environment, these are some things to remember:

1. Always think before you write. In other words, without the use of non-verbal cues, your message can be misinterpreted. Please think twice before you hit submit.
2. Keep it relevant. Please do not stray from the discussion in the assigned questions.
3. Never use all caps. This is the equivalent of yelling in the online world. It is not fun to read. Only use capital letters when appropriate.
4. Make sure that you are using appropriate grammar and structure. In other words, you should not write “R U” instead of “are you”. There are people in the class that may not understand this type of abbreviation, not to mention it does nothing to help expand your writing and vocabulary skills. Emoticons are fine as long as they are appropriate. A smile ☺ is welcome, anything offensive is not.
5. Treat people the same as you would face-to-face. In other words, it is easy to hide behind the computer. In some cases, it empowers people to treat others in ways they would not in person. Remember there is a person behind the name on your screen. Treat all with dignity and respect and you can expect that in return.
6. Respect the time of others. This class is going to require you to work in groups. Learn to respect the time of others in your group and your experience will be much better. Do your best to post your discussion comments in a timely manner. Post your country presentation in a timely manner, and respond as soon as you are able.

See also: <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

## Accommodations for Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to me 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.

## **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.** I will also report any plagiarism or cheating to the Honor Council at the University of Colorado. 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.

Because this is a condensed 5-week summer class, if possible I would like to be notified at the beginning of the course if there are any requests for accommodations for religious observances. Nonetheless, 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](http://colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html) and at [colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student\\_code](http://colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code).

## **Extensions & Make-ups**

I understand that unexpected things happen during a course. 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 make alternate arrangements. I will make every effort to make accommodations in the event of unavoidable emergencies. **Please note that emergencies do not include having too much work in other classes, or trips or vacations. This is an online, intensive summer course and it is very important to keep up with the required deadlines.**

## Course Outline

I recommend doing the required reading before watching the online lectures. Exam questions will be taken from both the reading and the online lectures. This online course is organized around 5 modules (which correspond to the 5 weeks of this online course):

- Module 1: Introducing Comparative Politics
- Module 2: Where Democracy Comes From
- Module 3: Democratic Transitions
- Module 4: Different Kinds of Democracies
- Module 5: Promoting Democracy Around the World

### Module 1: Introducing Comparative Politics

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

##### Required reading

*Foundations of Comparative Politics*, Chapter 1: Introduction, pp. 1-12

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

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

##### Required reading

*Foundations of Comparative Politics*, Chapter 2 (What is Science?), pp. 13-31

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

##### Required Reading

- *Foundations of Comparative Politics*, Defining Democracy, Chapter 5, pp.71-74
- *Foundations of Comparative Politics*, read Box 8.2, “The Tale of Two Leopolds,” pages 191-192
- *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.

#### Lecture 4: Elections in Hard Times

##### 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)

#### Assignments for Module 1:

1. Online discussion about topics - Post 1 comment and 1 response
2. Online comments for current affairs – Post 1 comment and 1 response.

## Module 2: Where Democracy Comes From

### Lecture 5: Economic Origins of Democracy

#### Required reading

*Foundations of Comparative Politics*, Chapter 5, pp. 75-95

### Lecture 6: Cultural Origins of Democracy

#### Required reading

*Foundations of Comparative Politics*, Chapter 6, pp. 97-122

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

### Lecture 7: Electoral Origins of Democracy

#### Required reading

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

#### 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

#### Assignments for Module 2:

1. Online discussion about topics – Post 1 comment and 1 response
2. Online comments for current affairs – Post 1 comment and 1 response

## Exam #1 – Due at the End of Module 2

## Module 3: Democratic Transitions

### Lecture 8: Democratic Transitions

#### Required reading

- 1) Bottom-Up Transitions to Democracy: *Foundations of Comparative Politics*, Chapter 7, pp. 123-143
- 2) Top-Down Transitions to Democracy: *Foundations of Comparative Politics*, Chapter 7, pp. 143-154

Extra Credit Documentaries: CNN Cold War Documentary, “The Wall Came Down” Episode and “Conclusions” Episode (see the “Extra Credit” Module on our Canvas course website for a link these episodes on YouTube)

### Lecture 9: The Third Wave of Democracy

#### Required reading

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

### **Lecture 10: Contingent Legitimacy**

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

### **Assignments for Module 3:**

1. Online discussion about topics – Post 1 comment and 1 response
2. Online comments for current affairs – Post 1 comment and 1 response

<h2><b>Module 4: Different Kinds of Democracies</b></h2>
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### **Lecture 11: Parliamentary Systems**

#### Required reading

- 1) Classifying Democracies: *Foundations of Comparative Politics*, Chapter 10, pp. 217-220
- 2) Parliamentary Democracies: *Foundations of Comparative Politics*, Chapter 10, pp. 221-240

### **Lecture 12: Presidential Systems**

Presidential & Semi-Presidential Democracies: *Foundations of Comparative Politics*, Chapter 10, pp.240-251

Extra Credit Reading: Brazil & Afghanistan News Articles on Choosing Political Institutions (see the “Extra Credit Readings” Module on our Canvas course website)

### **Lecture 13: Electoral Systems, Part 1 (Overview & Majoritarian Systems)**

#### Required reading

*Foundations of Comparative Politics*

- “Majoritarian Electoral Systems,” pages 261-272 in Chapter 11
- Duverger’s Theory, read pages 315-318 (“Summarizing Duverger’s Theory) in Chapter 12
- Median Voter Theorem, read page 206 (Box 9.1: “The Median Voter Theorem and Party Competition”) in Chapter 9

### **Lecture 14: Electoral Systems, Part 2 (Proportional Representation)**

#### Required reading

*Foundations of Comparative Politics*

- “Proportional Electoral Systems,” pages 272-279 in Chapter 11

### **Assignments for Module 4:**

1. Online discussion about topics – Post 1 comment and 1 response
2. Online comments for current affairs – Post 1 comment and 1 response

## **Exam #2 – Due at the End of Module 4**

## Module 5: Promoting Democracy Around the World

### **Lecture 15: Democracy Promotion Around the World**

#### Required reading

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

Extra Credit Video: Interview with Professor Susan Hyde about her research on international election observers (see the “Extra Credit” Module on our Canvas course website for a link to this interview)

### **Lecture 16: Elections in Hard Times**

#### Required reading

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

Extra Credit Reading: Lisa Hultman, Jacobo Kathman, and Megan Shannon, “Beyond Keeping Peace: United Nations Effectiveness in the Midst of Fighting,” *American Political Science Review*, November 2014.

### **Lecture 17: Closing Thoughts**

#### Required reading

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

### **Assignments for Module 5:**

1. Country Report – Upload your 3-page country report.
2. Country Presentation – Post a 5-minute video about your country report.
3. Country Discussion - You will be assigned to a small group of students in the class. Each of you should watch each other’s videos and comment on your presentations.
4. Online discussion of material – Post 1 comment and 1 response
5. Online comments for current affairs – Post 1 comment and 1 response

**Exam #3 – Due at the end of Module 5**