

## **402.051 PS Introduction to Comparative Politics**

Vergleich politischer Systeme – Einführung

Tuesdays, 10.00-11.45 - SR 9 (SOWI)

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**Office hours:** Monday 11.00 – 12:00, or by appointment

### *Course description:*

Introduction to Comparative Politics is an entry level course designed to give students a first overview of the field of comparative politics. The class will focus on studying and evaluating the effect of democratic institutions such as the type of the executive (presidents vs. prime minister), the type of electoral system (first-past-the-post vs. proportional), the type of governing structure (unitary vs. federal), as well as the different type of systems of government (democracy vs. dictatorship). We will spend some time discussing the comparative method and its various empirical forms (qualitative and quantitative studies, case or large-N studies). Through discussions on real-world political phenomena, we will evaluate the usefulness of each method. Individual classes will consist of a lecture, discussion and presentations. By keeping up with the world political news, reading the assigned literature, and actively participating in class, students will learn the basic skills of how to do social science research and how to link theory and empirical phenomena. By the end of the course students are expected to have gained a good understanding of how polities operate and have a deeper knowledge about the various political institutions and their desired, as well as perhaps undesired, effects both theoretically, and within the country which they will focus on throughout the course. In addition to reading about politics and learning how to analyze current events, students will take part in a simulation game, which will mimic a real-world political scenario. This will allow the opportunity to experience how first-hand political decision-making is done and what potential effects one or another decision can have.

### *Grading:*

The grades will be determined based upon students' participation, attendance, midterm exam, final essays, and presentations. Each part will determine 20% of the grade. Participation will involve discussion of reading materials and real-life political events, as well as the performance in a simulation game which we will do in class. Students are required to read the international political news on daily basis (*CNN*, *BBC*, the *Economist*, the *NY Times*) and are expected to be able to give an up-to-date report on the situation of their chosen country. Reports are to be no more than 5 minutes long and are to cover politically relevant events from your chosen country. Students will be called upon randomly twice during the semester. Given that presence is imperative for learning, one fifth of the semester grade will be based on attendance. As part of the attendance grade, students will be asked to write a 2 pages response essay on a chosen topic for each of the four larger themes to be covered during the course. The

response papers should analytically discuss the studied material in light of the student's chosen country (with the exception of the first one). Response papers are due at the beginning of a new theme – 21.10; 11.11; 09.12; 20.01 – or any time before that, and are to be handed in in class. The one with the lowest grade will be dropped. There will be a midterm and a final exam. The midterm will be a multiple-choice test, aiming to evaluate students' grasp of the material taught in class. On the final exam you will be asked to develop two short essay questions. The final component of the semester grade involves the evaluation of your presentation skills. Students will present in pairs, comparing and contrasting the institutional set up of their chosen states. I also reserve the possibility of including one or more pop quizzes if attendance falls or there is evidence that students are not doing the reading.

*Required text:*

The required text for the course is ***Principles of Comparative Politics***, 2nd Edition, (2013) by William Roberts Clark (University of Michigan), Matt Golder (Pennsylvania State University) and Sona Nadenichek Golder (Pennsylvania State University) printed by SAGE and CQ Press. ISBN is 978-1-60871-679-1. Students are expected to purchase this book. The easiest place to get the book is Amazon. Additional reading materials will be provided by the professor in the form of .pdf files or links to online journal articles, which can be downloaded from the university library system.

*Useful online resources:*

Dictionary of Comparative Politics and Political Science, Palgrave, 2010  
(<http://www.palgrave.com/politics/hague/resources/dictionary/search.asp>)

***What is Comparative Politics?***

1. Tue 07.10. 10.00-11.45 - SR 9 (Sowi)
  - Introduction and discussion of syllabus
  - Assignment of countries and presentation dates
2. Tue 14.10. 10.00-11.45 - SR 9 (Sowi)
  - What is political science?
    - (Clark et al. 2013, chapters 2 and 3)
  - Why comparative politics?
    - (Newton and Van Deth 2010, introduction)
    - How do we do research? (Manheim et al. 1995)

***The Modern State***

3. Tue 21.10. 10.00-11.45 - SR 9 (Sowi)
  - The State – origins and development
    - (Clark et al. 2013, chapter 4)
  - Democracy and dictatorship: Conceptualization & Measurement
    - (Clark et al. 2013, chapter 5)
4. Tue 28.10. 10.00-11.45 - SR 9 (Sowi)
  - Determinants of democracy and dictatorship
    - (Clark et al. 2013, chapters 6 and 7)
  - Democratic change and persistence
    - (Clark et al. 2013, chapter 8)

5. Tue 04.11. 10.00-11.45 - SR 9 (Sowi)
  - Democracy or dictatorship
    - (Clark et al. 2013, chapter 9)
  - Presidential and parliamentary government
    - (Clark et al. 2013, chapter 12)

### ***The Polity: Structures and Institutions***

6. Tue 11.11. 10.00-11.45 - SR 9 (Sowi)
  - Constitutions
    - (Newton and Van Deth 2010, chapter 4),
    - Lijphart, Arend. 2004. "Constitutional Design for Divided Societies", in the *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 15 (2): 96-109.
  - Presentations
7. Tue 18.11. 10.00-11.45 - SR 9 (Sowi)
  - Elections and electoral systems
    - (Clark et al. 2013, chapter 13)
    - Golder, Math. 2005. "Democratic Electoral Systems Around the World, 1946-2000", in *Electoral Studies*, Vol. 24: 103-121.
  - Presentations
8. Tue 25.11. 10.00-11.45 - SR 9 (Sowi)
  - Midterm Exam
9. Tue 02.12. 10.00-11.45 - SR 9 (Sowi)
  - Social cleavages and party systems
    - (Clark et al. 2013, chapter 14)
    - Tavits, Margit. 2006. "Party System Change: Testing a Model of New Party Entry", in *Party Politics*, Vol. 12 (1): 99-119.
  - Presentations

### ***Citizens, Elites and Interest Mediation***

10. Tue 09.12. 10.00-11.45 - SR 9 (Sowi)
  - The mass media
    - (Newton and Van Deth 2010, chapter 11)
    - Khazaeli, Susan and Daniel Stockemer. 2013. "The Internet: A New Route to Good Governance." *International Political Science Review* 34(5): 463-482.
  - Presentations
11. Tue 13.01. 10.00-11.45 - SR 9 (Sowi)
  - Consequences of democratic institutions & Group decision-making
    - (Clark et al. 2013, chapter 11, 15, 16)
  - Discussing the simulation: roles and rules of play
12. Tue 20.01. 10.00-11.45 - SR 9 (Sowi)
  - SIMULATION GAME
13. Tue 27.01. 10.00-11.45 - SR 9 (Sowi)
  - Analyzing the simulation
  - Summary on what we've learned
14. Tue 03.02. 10.00-11.45 - SR 9 (Sowi) – Final Exam in class.