

PSC 32-144: Comparative Politics

Fall 2023

Cullen Building, Room 321

- Section 01: T/Th 1-2:15pm
- Section 02: T/Th 2:30-3:45pm

Dr. Katharine Aha

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Office hours:

- In person: Wednesdays, 9-10am in Mundy 110
 - These are drop-in office hours, no signup required
- Virtual: Wednesdays, 3-5pm
 - These are by appointment only, please signup via the link on Moodle

Course Description

This course is an introduction to comparative politics, a subfield of political science which attempts to answer questions like: Why do some countries become democratic, while others do not? Why do some authoritarian regimes fall, while others maintain stability? Why do political institutions matter, and can they be tailored to best fit particular societies? In the first section of class, we will discuss foundational topics like modern statehood and nationalism. In the second section, we will focus on democracy and authoritarianism. In the third section, we will examine institutions and how they shape political behavior and outcomes.

Aims and Outcomes

By the end of this course, your understanding of politics and the world we live in will have increased in three ways. First, you will learn the vocabulary that political scientists use to describe, classify, and explain political outcomes. Second, you will gain a deeper substantive knowledge of how politics work in a number of contexts outside of the United States, and conduct in-depth research on one country of your own choosing. Third, you will be able to use your knowledge to create and evaluate causal arguments about politics.

Required Book & Subscription

- Kate Turabian's *A Manual For Writers of Research Papers*
 - Available for purchase through the SU bookstore
 - This book is required for all political science courses
- *New York Times* subscription
 - Provided free by the library
 - [Use this link to activate your free access to The New York Times](#)

All other course materials are available on Moodle.

Course Grade Components

Pre-class Activities: 15%

Before most classes, you will submit a response on Moodle to a question designed to get you thinking about the course material in preparation for class discussion.

In order to receive full credit for your response, you need to fully answer the prompt. Most responses will require at least one to three paragraphs. Posts are due by the start of class.

The pre-class activities are designed to reflect your comprehension of course materials. You should not do outside research to complete these activities. Plagiarizing your pre-class activity response is an honor code violation, and will be reported accordingly.

Country Background: 5%

At the beginning of the semester, you will be assigned a country to focus on for your research throughout the course, both in class activities and in your papers. The countries we will be focusing on are those considered to be “partly free” by Freedom House. In order to familiarize yourself with your country (and with your classmates’ countries!), you will write a brief discussion board post covering key background information about your country.

Papers: 35%

You will write two papers, each worth 15% of your final grade. Before each paper, you will submit an introductory paragraph, each worth 2.5% of your final grade. Prompts for each paper will be posted on Moodle. Intros and papers are due by the start of class, and you must upload a copy to Moodle in addition to bringing a hardcopy to class.

Exams: 30%

There will be three exams in this course, which are meant to test comprehension of course materials. Exams 1 and 2 will be held during class time. Exam 3 will be held during our scheduled final exam time. The exams are not cumulative.

Attendance and Participation: 15%

I expect you to come to our class meetings prepared by having completed the assigned materials and any assignments. One of the goals of this class is to give you a safe environment in which to speak so that you can practice analyzing political events and applying the theories we’ve learned to real-world events. In order to improve your verbal communication and analytical skills, I expect you to participate in all of our class activities and discussions. If you are uncomfortable with participating, please reach out to me at the beginning of the semester so that we can discuss the best approach for successful completion of this course component. At the beginning of the semester, we will discuss as a class what we think are important components of a successful classroom environment in an online space.

In order to participate, you need to be in class. Absences and late arrivals will affect your participation grade. If you anticipate that you will be missing class for a prolonged period due to extenuating circumstances or illness, please communicate this with me as soon as possible and contact the Center for Academic Success.

Important Deadlines:

Pre-class Activities: (almost) all class dates

Country preferences: Aug. 31

Country background: Sept. 12

Intro for Paper 1: Sept. 21

Exam 1: Sept. 28

Paper 1: Oct. 19

Exam 2: Nov. 2

Intro for Paper 2: Nov. 9

Paper 2: Dec. 5

Exam 3: See university [final exam schedule](#)

How to Succeed in the Class

1. **Plan ahead!** Make sure that you know when assignments are due, and plan your work accordingly. All important due dates for this course are on this syllabus, as well as on Moodle, so that you can plan ahead. Prompts for the papers will be distributed well ahead of time so that you can complete these assignments early, if needed. Oftentimes, due dates for multiple classes will overlap – it is your responsibility to budget your own time and determine when you will need to complete assignments in order to ensure that everything is completed. Success in college (and beyond) is dependent on successful time management. Extensions will not be granted because of conflicts with assignments in your other classes or extracurricular activities.
2. **Come prepared to discuss!** On Moodle, a plan for each unit will be posted, listing all course materials to be completed for each class session, as well as providing questions below each to think about while engaging with the material to ensure that you are focusing on key pieces of information. Make sure that you have completed all required materials (whether it be reading an article, watching a video, or listening to a podcast), and be ready to share your thoughts in class!
3. **Ask questions!** I am here to help you. If something is confusing or unclear, please speak up in class or come to office hours. I will not know if you are having a difficult time with a particular topic unless you let me know, and it is in your interest to bring it up with me so I can clarify as soon as possible. I want to make sure that you are able to better understand course material moving forward (as we move through the course, there is an expectation that you understood/retained prior material) and that you can be successful on your exams/papers.

Course Policies

Citations

The Department of Political Science has decided that students in every course will use the Chicago Style of citation. We will be using the author-date style, which is covered in Chapters 18 and 19 in Turabian's Chicago Manual (9th ed.) *Papers that do not include citations will receive a failing grade, and incorrect citations will be penalized.* It is crucial that you understand how to cite your sources – you can unintentionally plagiarize by failing to cite your sources. If you have questions about citations, please reach out as soon as possible.

Honor Code

It is expected that all work you do in this course will be original work. Please make sure you are familiar with the Honor Code and understand what constitutes a violation, particularly in regards to cheating and plagiarism. You can find more information about the Honor Code [here](#). All written work for this course must include the following pledge: "I have acted with honesty and integrity in producing this work and am unaware of anyone who has not." Questions about the honor code may be directed to Shelley Story, Dean of Students (storys@southwestern.edu).

Late work

Late submissions for pre-class activities/country backgrounds/introductory paragraphs *will not be accepted.*

Late papers will receive a half letter grade deduction for each day it is submitted after a deadline.

Please contact me as soon as possible *before the assignment is due* if circumstances beyond your control arise that affect your ability to submit work in a timely manner. *I will not remind you to turn in late assignments.*

Incompletes

Per the Faculty Handbook: The grade of "Incomplete" shall be given only in the case of a medical emergency or some other emergency situation beyond the student's control. The grade of "Incomplete" may not be given for the sole reason of permitting additional time to complete assigned course work. An Incomplete form, including the student's signature, must be submitted to the Center for Academic Success and Records. If a student is unable to provide a signature (due to a medical emergency, for example), then acknowledgement from the CASAR will suffice. The deadline for posting a final grade following an Incomplete will be 4 weeks from the last day of class. If the Incomplete has not been replaced with a final grade by 5 pm on the last day to resolve the Incomplete, the grade becomes an F. Students may seek an extension to the deadline for posting a final grade, if approved by the instructor and the Director of Records.

Grading

A+	99-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69
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A	94-98	B	84-86	C	74-76	D	64-66
A-	90-93	B-	80-83	C-	70-73	D-	60-63

If you have questions about my comments on your assignments, I am happy to talk with you. If you want me to regrade something, you will need to write a few (at least 3) paragraphs responding specifically to my written comments and explaining why you feel you deserve a higher grade.

Course Credits and Expected Student Workload

Courses in the curriculum of the University are expressed in terms of credits. For courses that have a minimum class time of 150 minutes per week, students should expect to work outside of class a minimum of 2 and 1/2 hours per credit per week. For courses that have a minimum class time of 200 minutes per week, students should expect to work outside of class a minimum of 2 hours per credit per week. Class time and out-of-class work for courses yielding fewer than four credits will be expressed as some proportion of a four-credit course.

Recording Policy

Advance, written permission is required in order to record class lectures, discussions or presentations. Violations of this policy may constitute copyright infringement in violation of federal or state law and violators may be subject to University disciplinary action. Permission to allow lecture recording is not a transfer of any copyrights rights in the recording or related course materials. Such recordings and materials may be used only for individual or group study with other students enrolled in the same class, and may not be reproduced, transferred, distributed, or displayed in any public or commercial manner. Students must destroy recordings at the end of the semester in which they are enrolled in the class.

Paideia

Southwestern takes an interdisciplinary approach to education and encourages students to make connections across courses throughout your time at the university. I encourage you to bring up connections to other classes in our discussions as we move forward through the semester.

Accessibility and Accommodations

Southwestern University will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should contact [Services for Students with Disabilities](#) to determine their eligibility to receive accommodations. It is the student's responsibility to discuss any necessary accommodations with the appropriate faculty member.

Religious Holidays

Southwestern University recognizes that it has students from a variety of religious and cultural traditions that have special days of observance or celebration that may take students out of their regular activities on certain days during the school year. Since the academic calendar does not always coincide with these days, the following policy is to

be followed in order to facilitate student absences due to cultural and religious observances.

- As far in advance as possible, the student is expected to notify the professor(s) or instructor(s) of the class(es) to be missed.
- The student is expected to learn what assignments or exams are due or will be assigned on those dates and negotiate with the professor(s) or instructor(s) alternate times for fulfilling those requirements. Students should be prepared to fulfill the requirements prior to the class(es) to be missed.

[Religious Holidays](#) at Southwestern University.

Title IX and Mandatory Reporting

Southwestern University is committed to compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits sex discrimination in federally funded education programs and activities. According to Title IX and Texas law, SU Faculty and staff members are considered Mandatory Reporters of any instances of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual intercourse, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual exploitation, intimate partner violence, stalking, and related retaliation. If you share information with SU employees about any incidents of this nature, even if these instances occurred before you came to SU, employees are required to report all information to the Title IX Coordinator to make sure you have information about support resources and complaint resolution options. This report does not initiate a formal process, and you are in control over how you choose to engage with the Title IX Coordinator. You can read more about the full policy on SU websites [here](#) and also [here](#). The Title IX Coordinator is Katie Rallojay who can be reached at titleixcoordinator@southwestern.edu or by phone, 512-863-1111.

Questions

If you have questions about the course, please schedule a time to meet during office hours. Please do communicate with me early if you have any challenges that impact your performance in this course; I will not be able to help you if you do not ask for help.

Course Schedule

Please note: This schedule provides a general overview of the material for each unit. Detailed schedules for each week will be posted on Moodle.

Unit 1 (Aug. 29, 31, Sept. 5 & 7): Introduction to Comparative Political Analysis

Readings:

- Dickovick, J. Tyler and Jonathan Eastwood. *Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases 2nd Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 - Chapter 1
 - Chapter 2
- Hoover Green, Amelia. 2013. "[How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps](#)."

- Magni, Gabriele. 2020. "Economic Inequality, Immigrants and Selective Solidarity: From Perceived Lack of Opportunity to In-Group Favoritism." *British Journal of Political Science*

Assignments:

- Submit country preferences (by 8/31)
- Pre-class activities (8/31, 9/5, 9/7)

Unit 2 (Sept. 12 & 14): The State

Readings:

- O'Neil, Patrick H. 2020. *Essential of Comparative Politics 7th Edition*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
 - Chapter 2: States
- Herbst, Jeffrey. 1990. "War and the State in Africa." *International Security* 14(4): 117-139.

Assignments:

- Post brief introduction to your assigned country on discussion board (by 9/12)
- Pre-class activity (9/14)

Unit 3 (Sept. 19, 21, & 26): Nationalism

Readings:

- Nagel, Joane. 1994. "Constructing Ethnicity." *Social Problems* 41(1): 152-176.
- Barrington, Lowell W. 1997. "'Nation' and 'Nationalism': The Misuse of Key Concepts in Political Science." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 30(4): 712-716.
- Posner, Daniel N. 2003. "The Colonial Origins of Ethnic Cleavages: The Case of Linguistic Divisions in Zambia." *Comparative Politics* 35(2): 127-146.

Podcast:

- Barbaro, Michael and Jeffrey Gettleman. 2019. "The Rise of Modi: India's Rightward Turn." *The Daily* (podcast). May 21, 2019.

Assignments:

- Paper 1 intro (by 9/21)
- Pre class activities (9/19, 9/26)

Sept. 28: Exam 1 (Units 1-3)

Unit 4 (Oct. 3, 5, 12, & 17): Democracy & Democratization

Readings:

- Volokh, Eugene. 2015. "[Is the United States of America a Republic or a Democracy?](#)" *The Washington Post*. May 13, 2015.
- Gunitsky, Seva. 2015. "[How Do You Measure 'Democracy'?](#)" *The Washington Post*. June 23, 2015.
- Taub, Amanda and Max Fisher. 2016. "Why Referendums Aren't as Democratic as They Seem." *The New York Times*. October 4, 2016.

- Przeworski, Adam and Fernando Limongi. 1997. "Modernization: Theories and Facts." *World Politics* 49(2): 155-183.
- Boix, Carlos and Susan C. Stokes. 2003. "Endogenous Democratization." *World Politics* 55(4): 517-549.
- O'Donnell, Guillermo and Philippe C. Schmitter. 1986. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
 - Chapter 2: Defining Some Concepts (and Exposing Some Assumptions)
 - Read pp 6-8
 - Chapter 3: Opening (and Undermining) Authoritarian Regimes
 - Chapter 4: Negotiating (and Renegotiating) Pacts

Assignments:

- Pre-class activities (10/3, 10/5, 10/10 & 10/12)

Unit 5 (Oct. 19, 24, & 26): Varieties of Authoritarianism

Readings:

- Svolik, Milan W. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
 - Chapter 1: Introduction – The Anatomy of Dictatorship
- Hubbard, Ben. 2020. "[MBS: The Rise of a Saudi Prince](#)." *The New York Times*. March 21, 2020.
- Merieau, Eugenie. 2019. "[How Thailand Became the World's Last Military Dictatorship](#)." *The Atlantic*. March 20, 2019.
- Maclean, Ruth. 2020. "[Mali's President Exits After Being Arrested in Military Coup](#)." *The New York Times*. August 18, 2020.
- Gandhi, Jennifer and Ellen Lust-Okar. 2009. "Elections Under Authoritarianism." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12: 403-422.
- Goldman, Russell. 2021. "[Myanmar's Protests, Explained](#)." *The New York Times*. March 13, 2021.
- Beaubien, Jason. 2010. "[As the Drug War Rages On, Will Mexico Surrender?](#)" NPR. August 6, 2010.
- Kramer, Andrew E. 2020. "[She Used to Clean City Hall. Now, She Runs It](#)." *The New York Times*. October 24, 2020.
- Nechepurenko, Ivan and Andrew Higgins. 2020. "[Belarus Says Longtime Leader is Re-Elected in Vote Critics Called Rigged](#)." *The New York Times*, August 17, 2020.

Podcasts:

- Ranciman, David and Hans van de Ven. 2019. "[Talking Politics Guide to...The Chinese Communist Party](#)." *Talking Politics* (podcast). August 4, 2019.

Assignments:

- Paper 1 (by 10/19)
- Pre-class activities (10/24, 10/26)

Exam 2: Nov. 2 (Units 4 & 5)

Unit 6 (Nov. 7, 9, & 14): Parties & Elections

Readings:

- O'Neil, Patrick H. 2020. *Essentials of Comparative Politics 7th Edition*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
 - Selection from Chapter 5
- Fisher, Max. 2017. "[When a Political Movement is Populist, or Isn't](#)." *The New York Times* (May 10, 2017).
- Casas-Zamora, Kevin. 2023. "[Look at Latin America. This Is How Democracies Fail](#)." *The New York Times*. April 13, 2023.

Assignments:

- Paper 2 intro (by 11/9)
- Pre-class activities (11/7, 11/14)

Unit 7 (Nov. 16, 21, 28, & 30): Presidential & Parliamentary Systems

Readings:

- O'Neil, Patrick H. 2020. *Essentials of Comparative Politics 7th Edition*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
 - Selection from Chapter 5
- Reuters. 2022. "[Montenegro Prime Minister Faces No-Confidence Motion in His Cabinet](#)." *Reuters*. January 19, 2022.
- Rajvanshi, Astha. 2023. "Why Modi Is Facing a Rare No-Confidence Vote." *Time*. July 26, 2023.
- Schultheis, Emily, Laurenz Gehrke, and Nette Nöstlinger. 2021. "[Germany Coalition Talks: What are the Biggest Sticking Points](#)." *Politico.eu*. November 1, 2021.
- Encina, Carlota G. 2023. "[Whither Spain? The July 2023 General Election Results and Beyond](#)." *Center for Strategic and International Studies*. July 31, 2023.
- Kershner, Isabel. 2022. "[Why Does Israel Have So Many Elections?](#)" *The New York Times*. July 1, 2022.

Assignments:

- Paper 2 (by 12/5)
- Pre-class activities (11/16, 11/21, 11/28)

Unit 8 (Dec. 5 & 7): Moving Beyond the Nation State

Readings:

- Rodrik, Dani. 2011. *The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and the Future of the World Economy*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company.
 - Chapter 10: Is Global Governance Feasible? Is it Desirable?

Assignments:

- Pre-class activities (12/5)

Exam 3: See university exam [schedule](#) (Units 6, 7 & 8)