

**POL 2: Introduction to Comparative Politics**  
UC Davis  
Department of Political Science  
Spring 2019

**Tu/Th 9-10:20am**  
**Hunt 100**

**Professor Lauren Young**  
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**Office Hours: R 1-3pm in Kerr 665**

**Teaching Assistants:**  
Slande Erole ([serole@ucdavis.edu](mailto:serole@ucdavis.edu)), OH R 12-2pm in Kerr 585  
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## I. COURSE SUMMARY

This course has two main learning objectives. By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Apply the logic and tools of comparative political analysis.
2. Show introductory knowledge on a range of topics in comparative politics, particularly theories of state formation, democratic accountability, redistribution, and regime change.

Our overview will be guided by a textbook, *Principles of Comparative Politics*, by Clark, Golder and Golder. The textbook will be supplemented with academic articles that present original theoretical contributions and/or results of relevant empirical research.

The second half of this course draws on a [multi-campus collaboration](#) to teach theories and evidence on how democracies decline. Debate over whether and why the quality of democracy has declined, both in the US and globally, has shot into the public discussion in recent years. This course aims to give students the theoretical and empirical tools to empirically evaluate claims made about democratic decline. What is democratic decline? How can we measure the quality of democracy around the world? What historical patterns exist? What social or economic forces might cause it? Can the quality of democracy and democratic accountability be strengthened? During the 2017-18 academic year, faculty at over a dozen universities are teaching elements from the same syllabus at the same time.

## II. REQUIREMENTS

There are **two graded take-home assignments** for this course. By **the start of class on 6/5** you will turn in a **4-5 page research paper** analyzing the causes of democratic decline

in a single country case study. You will select the case from a list that we will provide. Successful papers will 1) use the case to critically engage with theories from the assigned readings, and 2) make an argument about the causes of democratic decline based on historical facts in the case. You may make any argument that you wish about the case, but your analysis should 1) clearly identify key important moments of democratic decline, 2) incorporate themes from the course, and 3) be argumentative rather than descriptive. As preparation for this final paper, you will also do **one short take-home assignment due by the start of class on 5/21**.

There are also **two exams**. The midterm will take place in class on **5/10** and the final during the scheduled time on **6/12 from 1-3pm**. The exams will test your knowledge of the material covered in the course in readings, lectures, and sections, as well as your ability to advance and defend a clear argument.

### III. GRADING

1. Section participation and assignments (25%). You must attend and actively participate in discussion section each week. When reading guides or activities are assigned, you must fill them out and bring a hard copy of your answers to section.
2. Short take-home assignment (5% of grade)
3. An in-class midterm (25% of grade)
4. A country case study that evaluates the theories discussed in the course (25% of grade)
5. A final exam (20% of grade)

Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of one partial letter grade (ex. B to B-) for every 24 hours.

We hope there will be no reason to contest a grade. If you strongly feel that your grade on an assignment does not reflect the quality of your work, you may appeal through the following procedure: Write a memo that explains, in as much detail as possible, why you think you should have received a different grade. Give the memo to your TA, along with your graded assignment and a letter in which you formally request a re-grade. If you and your TA cannot reach agreement on your grade, your TA will pass the materials to another member of the teaching staff who will reevaluate the work and assign a new grade, which may be higher, lower, or identical to the one you originally received. This new grade will be final.

### IV. RESOURCES

Writing assistance: <https://tutoring.ucdavis.edu/writing>

Student health and counseling services: <https://shcs.ucdavis.edu/>

Student disability center: <https://sdc.ucdavis.edu/students>

Code of academic conduct: <https://ossja.ucdavis.edu/code-academic-conduct>

## V. BOOKS AND PROGRAMS FOR PURCHASE

Clark, William R., Matt Golder, and Sona N. Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics* 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press.

Other readings and materials will be posted to the course page on Canvas.

## VI. LECTURES, READINGS, AND SECTIONS

1. Students are required to attend all lectures. Lectures will include material *in addition* to what is covered in the readings. Please note that **computer use will not be permitted during lectures**.

2. Although the class will be larger than a seminar, participation in class is *encouraged*. There will be regular opportunities for students to ask questions, answer questions, and make arguments drawing on the material you have read. Please be prepared to participate.

3. Sections are *required*. New material will often be covered in sections, including graded assignments, although there will also be time for discussion and clarification of the material covered in class. TAs will also hold office hours and be available to answer questions about the assignments. Please note that sections will usually require that you have done the readings for the *entire week* of lectures. Participation in section is graded.

If you miss a section or in-class graded assignment, you will receive credit if and only if: (1) you missed the section for reasons beyond your control, i.e. illness, scheduled athletic event, or family emergency; (2) you notify your TA prior to the scheduled section or demonstrate why advance notification was impossible; and (3) you write a one-page single-spaced commentary on the readings for that section and submit it electronically to your TA by the start of class on Tuesday following the section you missed. This commentary should not just summarize but put forward an argument about the theory or empirical evidence in one or more of the readings. If an activity is covered in section, we also recommend that you do the activity on your own time as these are usually “scaffolding” to prepare you for exams or bigger assignments.

## Introduction

Section 1: Introduction. (Week of 4/1)

Lecture 1: What is comparative politics? (4/2)

NO CLASS (4/4) – professor at Midwest Political Science Association

Lecture 2: What is science? (4/9)

Read CGG, Chapter 2, pp. 14-40. [27 pp.]

### **How did states form, and why do they fail?**

Section 2: Prisoners' dilemma exercise and primer on regression analysis. (Week of 4/8)

Read before section: CGG, Appendix: An intuitive take on statistical analysis, pp. 212-218. [7 pp.]

Lecture 3: Order and disorder (4/11)

CGG, Chapter 4: The Origins of the Modern State, pp. 89-119. [31 pp.]  
Fukuyama, Francis. 2014. *Political order and political decay: From the industrial revolution to the globalization of democracy*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Chapter 3: "Bureaucracy," pp. 52-65. [14 pp.]

### **Why are some countries democratic?**

Section 3: In-class exercise coding the quality of democracy in one case. (Week of 4/15)

Skim before section: Freedom in the World 2019 Methodology,  
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/methodology-freedom-world-2019>.  
Bring a laptop or tablet to section if possible.

Lecture 4: Democracy and its alternatives (4/16)

CGG, Chapter 5, pp. 145-167. [23 pp.]

Huntington, Samuel. 1991. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*.

Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. Chapter 1, pp. 3-30. [27 pp.]

Lecture 5: Why are some states democratic? Economic theories (4/18)

CGG, Chapter 6: The Economic Determinants of Democracy, pp. 175-212. [43 pp.]

Section 4: Discussion of economic and cultural explanations for democracy. (Week of 4/22)

Lecture 6: Why are some states democratic? Political culture (4/23)

CGG, Chapter 7: The Cultural Determinants of Democracy and Dictatorship, pp. 175-212. [43 pp.]

### **Democracy, accountability, and redistribution**

Lecture 7: When do governments redistribute? (4/25)

CGG, Chapter 9: Does Democracy Make a Difference? pp. 329-349. [22 pp.]

Section 5: Varieties of democracy discussion and exercise (Week of 4/29)

Lecture 8: Varieties of democratic institutions (4/30)

CGG, Chapter 12: Parliamentary, Presidential, and Semi-Presidential Democracies, pp. 453-458 only. [6 pp.]

CGG, Chapter 13: Elections and Electoral Systems, pp. 521, 533-576. [45 pp.]

\*\*\*NB: skip section on Electoral Integrity

Lecture 9: Parties and social cleavages (5/2)

CGG, Chapter 14: Social Cleavages and Party Systems, pp. 585-639. [55 pp.]

Section 6: Electoral systems discussion and exercise (Week of 5/6)

Lecture 10: Representation and accountability (5/7)

CGG, Chapter 16: Consequences of Democratic Institutions, pp. 701-726. [26 pp.]

## **IN CLASS MIDTERM (5/9)**

### **Why do some democracies decline?**

Section 7: Data on democratic decline exercise (Week of 5/13)

Bring a laptop or tablet to section for a data exercise.

Lecture 11: When does democracy decline? How does it happen? (5/14)

Bermeo, Nancy. 2016. "On Democratic Backsliding." *Journal of Democracy* 27(1): 5–19. [14 pp.]

Scheppele, Kim Lane. 2013. "Not Your Father's Authoritarianism: The Creation of the 'Frankenstate'." *European Politics and Society Newsletter* 5-9. [4 pp.]

Lecture 12: Why does democracy decline? (5/16)

Lust, Ellen & Waldner, David. 2015. *Unwelcome Change: Understanding, Evaluating, and Extending Theories of Democratic Backsliding*. Washington, DC: USAID. pp. 1-14. [15 pp.]

Naim, Moises, and Francisco Toro. 15 Oct 2018. "Venezuela's suicide: Lessons from a failed state." *Foreign Affairs*. [8 pp.]

Levitsky, Steven, & Daniel Ziblatt. 2018. Excerpt from “Fateful Alliances.” Chapter 1 in *How Democracies Die*. NY: Crown Publishing, pp 16-19 on Venezuela only. [4 pp.]

Section 8: Discussion of symptoms and causes of democratic decline (Week of 5/20)

### **SHORT WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE BY 9AM 5/21**

Lecture 13: Do institutions affect democratic decline? (5/21)

Linz, Juan. 1992. “The Perils of Presidentialism” and “The Virtues of Parliamentaryism”, in *Parliamentary versus Presidential Government*, ed. Arend Lijphart. Oxford University Press, pp. 118-127, 212-216. [15 pp.]

Shugart, Matthew Soberg, and John M. Carey. 1992. *Presidents and Assemblies: Constitutional Design and Electoral Dynamics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 28-49 only. [22 pp.] \*\*\*NB: you can skip the last section on premier-presidentialism

Lecture 14: Do economic conditions drive democratic decline? (5/23)

Przeworski, Adam, and Francisco Limongi. 1997. “Modernization: Theories and Facts.” *World Politics* 49(2): pp. 155-169. Sections I and II only. [15 pp.]

Rodrik, Dani. 2018. “Populism and the economics of globalization.” *Journal of International Business Policy*. [22 pp.]

Section 9: Discussion of democratic decline and final paper research exercise (Week of 5/27)

Lecture 15: Does ethnic heterogeneity and migration drive democratic decline? (5/28)

Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. 2016. “Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism: Economic have-nots and cultural backlash.” HKS Faculty Research Working Paper Series RWP16-026. [53 pp.]

Lecture 16: Do parties or partisanship drive democratic decline? (5/30)

Levitsky, Steven, & Daniel Ziblatt. 2018. “Fateful Alliances.” Chapter 1 in *How Democracies Die*. NY: Crown Publishing. [22 pp.]

Svolik, Milan. 10 Apr 2017. "This explains why Venezuelans reelect leaders who dismantle democracy." *The Washington Post: Monkey Cage*.

### **Can democratic institutions be strengthened?**

Section 10: Discussion of political participation and social movements (Week of 6/3)

### **FINAL PAPER DUE BY 9AM 6/4**

Lecture 17: When do people hold politicians accountable? (6/4)

Ferraz, Claudio, and Fred Finan. 2011. Exposing Corrupt Politicians. *J-Pal Policy Briefcase*. [4 pp.]

Weitz-Shapiro, Rebecca, and Matthew Winters. 2017. "Can citizens discern? Information credibility, political sophistication, and the punishment of corruption in Brazil." *Journal of Politics* 79(1). [15 pp.]

Eugenio Jr., Amauri. 11 Oct 2018. "How Brazil's far right is weaponizing fake news." VICE News. [15 pp.]

Koponen, Henri Mikael. 24 Jan 2018. "Finland remains resistant to 'fake news', disinformation." International Press Institute. [9 pp.]

Lecture 18: When do social movements emerge? When do they succeed? (6/6)

Chenoweth, Erica, and Maria J. Stephan. 2012. *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*. Reprint. New York: Columbia University Press. Chapter 1: pp. 1-29. [30 pp.]

Yarwood, Janette. 2016. "The struggle over terms limits in Africa: The power of protest." *Journal of Democracy* 27(3): pp. 51-60. [10 pp.]

### **FINAL EXAM 6/12 1-3PM**