

Global Comparative Politics

Academic Year 2023-2024

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Description

The course provides a general introduction to Comparative Politics with a special focus on the present state of democracy around the world. The readings material will not include advanced interpretations and sophisticated quantitative analyses. However, a basic knowledge of political science and political geography is required.

The course develops along three main parts. To begin, the course will introduce students to the main conceptual tools of comparative politics, providing a general overview of the historical development of democracy. This first part will centre on the concept of political regime, the patterns of representative institutions and the actors involved in the democratic governance, more relevantly, political parties and public opinion. Then, in the second part, the course will focus on the current challenges to democratic governance, especially, the transformative power of economic and political integration for national polities, the problem of citizens' disaffection with democratic institutions, and the main proposed explanations for the surge of (authoritarian) populism. In the final part, the course will resort to illustrative case studies to apply the conceptual tools and to assess the problem of democratic crisis and transformation in a series of seminars.

Students are expected to read the required material before coming to class and will be stimulated to make use of the most prominent comparative politics literature to produce critical analyses on the state of democracy in a comparative perspective.

Goals

The course aims at providing skills and information for anyone looking for a robust knowledge of the major issues in comparative politics and some practical abilities to

gather data and analyse trends concerning the changes within the current political systems, nowadays. In times of deep social and political transformations, these skills are important not only for prospective scholars but, also, for an increasing number of public servants and professionals who want to pursue a career in media, national and supranational NGOs, international agencies, governmental and multilateral organizations, non-profit organizations and international corporations.

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- apply the comparative method framework to engaging with scholarly research;
- contrast patterns of democratic representation in established and developing democracies;
- critically assess the current challenges to democratic governance.

Evaluation and grading

The course promotes participation of students in class and grading is different for attending and non-attending students. Attending students must take part in at least 80% of the course, that is, 16 out of 20 classes.

Attending students

- 30% on the attendance, participation in class and presentation;
- 30% final paper on a topic chosen along with a previous agreement with the professor;
- 40% a 4-question written exam to be taken at the end of the course.

Non-attending students

- 30% final paper on a topic chosen along with a previous agreement with the professor;
- 70% a 6-question written exam to be taken at the end of the course.

Material

The written exam will be based on Caramani (2023) and other articles assigned as required readings in the course schedule.

Class presentations

Presentations will address democratic processes and challenges from either a theoretical or empirical perspective in a specific country or area and will be assigned by the professor, though students' proposals are welcome. The calendar of presentations will be drafted during the first part of the course depending on student attendance and will take place in the third part of the course during seminar sessions. The course schedule provides a list of provisional readings.

Students must prepare a presentation to be delivered in class with (likely) the following structure:

- an introduction that illustrates the topic and its relevance;
- a focus on theories, design, data adopted as well as on the findings provided;
- the presentation should not last more than 15-20 minutes.

At the end of the presentation the student will address questions emerging during discussion in class.

Final paper

The paper must be between 3,500 and 5,000 words and includes:

- title
- author
- abstract (max. 150 words)
- up to 5 keywords
- at least 4 sections, including an introduction, a theoretical section with a review of the literature; one empirical section; a conclusion
- a list of references (use [APA](#) citation style and [Zotero](#) to compile your bibliography in word)

Students must propose a topic to the professor sending a 1-page outline (including topic, research question and how this will be addressed) and they can start writing only after receiving a formal confirmation.

The students are expected to demonstrate ability in drafting original work also based on autonomous research of data among the several sources discussed in class.

The paper must be sent to the professor **by the day before a student takes the written exam. Students cannot take the written exam if they have not submitted the paper.**

Plagiarism

Plagiarism, as well as other forms of academic dishonesty, is forbidden both in written exams and in final papers. Plagiarism implies failing the exam. See the following [guide](#) for further clarifications. Final papers will be checked with anti-plagiarism and AI detection software. The use of AI writing tool is forbidden as well.

Schedule

| Class | Topic |
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| Class 1 | Course presentation |
| Part 1: Conceptual tools | |
| Class 2 | What is Comparative Politics? Required readings: Caramani (2023), Ch. 0, 1, 2. <i>Additional readings:</i> Keman (2011). |
| Class 3 | A primer to the “comparative method” Required readings: Caramani (2023), Ch. 3. <i>Additional readings:</i> Della Porta (2008); King et al. (1994), Ch. 1; Lieberman (2005); Lijphart (1975); Morton & Williams (2008); Schmitter (2008); Seawright & Gerring (2008). |
| Class 4 | Democratization: the historical context Required readings: Caramani (2023), Ch. 4, 5, 6. <i>Additional readings:</i> Huntington (1991); Lijphart (2012), Ch. 1, 2, 3; Wahman et al. (2013). |
| Class 5 | Institutions: Legislatures and cabinets Required readings: Caramani (2023), Ch. 7, 8. <i>Additional readings:</i> Lijphart (2012), Ch. 6, 7. |
| Class 6 | Actors and processes: Political parties Required readings: Caramani (2023), Ch. 11, 13, 14. <i>Additional readings:</i> Farrell & Webb (2000); Lijphart (2012), Ch. 5, 8. |
| Class 7 | Actors and processes: Political culture and action Required readings: Caramani (2023), Ch. 17, 18, 19. <i>Additional readings:</i> Esser & Strömbäck (2014), Chapter 1; Norris (2017). |

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Part 2: Current challenges

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| Class 8 | Democracy today: From the triumph of democracy to backsliding? Required readings: Caramani (2023), Ch. 25; Bermeo (2016). <i>Additional readings:</i> Little & Meng (2024); Lührmann & Lindberg (2019), Papada et al. (2023). |
| Class 9 | Democracy today: The rise of (authoritarian) populism and its consequences Required readings: Mudde (2017), Ch. 1, 2, 5. <i>Additional readings:</i> Caramani (2017); Kriesi & Pappas (2015), Ch. 1; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser (2012). |
| Class 10 | Context: The transformative power of economic and political integration Required readings: Caramani (2023), Ch. 23, 24. <i>Additional readings:</i> Börzel & Risse (2018); Kriesi et al. (2008); Kriesi & Hutter (2019); Morlino & Raniolo (2017) Ch. 2. |
| Class 11 | Drivers of change: Citizens' discontent and attitudes towards democracy Required readings: Przeworski (2019) Ch. 5; Shin (2017). <i>Additional readings:</i> IDEA international (2017); Martini & Quaranta (2020), Ch. 4; Van der Meer (2017). |
| Class 12 | Drivers of change: Economic grievances, values and political intolerance Required readings: Norris & Inglehart (2016), Ch. 2; Przeworski (2019) Ch. 6. <i>Additional readings:</i> Rooduijn (2018); Norris & Inglehart (2016), Ch. 8; Schäfer (2022). |
| Part 3: Case studies seminars (provisional) | |
| Class 13 | Democracy in Europe Seminar readings: Bernhard (2021); Morlino & Raniolo (2017); Ch. 4. |
| Class 14 | Democracy in the US Seminar readings: Galston (2018); Liebeman et al. (2019). |
| Class 15 | Democracy in Latin America Seminar readings: Hunter & Power (2019); Mainwaring & Pérez-Liñán (2023). |
| Class 16 | Democracy in the Middle-East and North Africa I |

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Seminar readings: Diamond (2010); (Josua 2021).

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| Class 17 | Democracy in the Middle-East and North Africa II Seminar readings: Akman & Akçalı (2017); Grubman (2022); Cofman Wittes & Mizrahi-Arnaud (2019) |
| Class 18 | Democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa Seminar readings: Alence (2004); Yagboyaju & Akinola (2019). |
| Class 19 | Democracy in Asia Seminar readings: Ganguly (2020); Slater (2023). |
| Class 20 | Q/A session and organization of papers This section will be dedicated to students who will need to resume on some concepts or have specific questions on the evaluation procedure, the paper and the written exam. |

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