

## Introduction to Comparative Politics

Course Number : POLI 130-004  
Meeting Time : Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 8:00-8:50  
Classroom : [Zoom](#) (Password: POLI130)  
Term : Spring 2021  
Instructor : Nicolás de la Cerda Coya  
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Office Hours : Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 9:00-10:00  
[calendly.com/ndelacerda](https://calendly.com/ndelacerda).

### Course Description

This course provides an undergraduate-level overview of major topics, approaches, methods, and findings in the comparative politics subfield. It emphasizes landmark, canonical work that have had a lasting influence and are central in comparative politics research.

The course will address three big general topics:

- State, state formation, and state development: What is a state? How have states historically developed?
- Regime types, varieties of democratic and authoritarian regimes: What is a political regime? What are the main characteristics of these different institutional and social arrangements?
- Party Linkages: On which grounds are politicians accountable and responsible to citizens?

### Objectives

The goal of this class is to introduce students to the central topics in comparative politics research. It intends to familiarize them with the literature and with the central empirical findings of the discipline.

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

1. Recall and describe central topics in comparative politics.
2. Identify central arguments and theoretical positions in comparative political research.
3. Apply concepts, theoretical insights, and competing explanations for political phenomena to cases beyond those discussed in class.

## Requirements and Evaluations

Assignment	Points	Due
Research Requirement	-	
Attendance	10	
Quizzes	20	Fridays
Response Papers	20	Mondays
Midterm	20	March 10
Final	30	May 11

### Research Requirement

Students enrolled in POLI 100, POLI 130, or POLI 150 are required to participate in the Department of Political Science research activities as part of their course requirement. A principal goal of the requirement is for students to gain an appreciation of how political science research works, while simultaneously acquiring new knowledge about areas of the discipline that they may not encounter in their POLI courses.

The research requirement is administered by the Political Science Subject Pool (PSSP) Administrators. To satisfy the research requirement, students must complete eight (8) credits of research by participating in actual political science research studies. Research studies are typically research experiments or surveys. Typically, each study's completion satisfies one (1) credit towards the requirement; occasionally, a study will count for more than one credit. The research requirement is fulfilled when eight (8) credits are earned. Students can participate in research studies and track their requirement fulfillment status by logging into their [PSSP Portal](#) using their UNC onyen and password.

Students who object or fail to total eight credits through participation in research studies will be given the opportunity to fulfill the research requirement by writing a 1300-word research-oriented reaction paper to one of The Monkey Cage articles listed on their PSSP Portal.

The total time commitment to complete the research requirement should not exceed 3 hours. The research requirement does not substitute for other course requirements, nor does it generate extra credit. Failure to satisfy the research requirement will result in an incomplete grade (I) that will be removed only upon satisfaction of the requirement. For additional information and contacts, please email [pssp@unc.edu](mailto:pssp@unc.edu).

## Attendance

Students are expected to come to every class. An important part of each lecture will be devoted to discuss the papers we will be reading every week, this is impossible if students miss class or come to class unprepared.

I strongly recommend students to read class by class and take advantage of lectures and office hours to solve doubts.

Students can miss two classes without having to provide any type of justification. After that, for each class a student miss, one point will be deducted from their attendance grade.

## Quizzes

Students are expected to come prepared to class. To make sure that is the case, each Friday the class will start with a short five minutes three questions quiz that will evaluate the required reading for the next week. For example, during the first Friday of class, students will be evaluated on the required reading for week 2.

The quizzes will have three multiple choice questions. Each correct answer will be equivalent of 0.6 points which adds up to 1.8 per quiz. We will have 13 quizzes during the semester. This means that a student can get a total of 23.4 points for this item (3.4 more than the maximum that you can get on this item)<sup>1</sup>.

If a student gets one or more questions wrong, they will have until Sunday at 11:55pm to submit a short document with the following information<sup>2</sup>:

- Their answer.
- The correct answer.
- A brief explanation of why the alternative they chose is wrong.
- A brief explanation of why the correct alternative is correct.

Students that correctly complete this assignment will get full credit for the quiz. If a student misses a quiz for whatever reason, they will have the opportunity to submit this document too. If they do not do it, they will get 0 points on the quiz.

I will not accept late submissions for this document or absentee excuses for the quizzes.

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<sup>1</sup>If a student gets more than 20 points, the extra points will still be included in their final grade.

<sup>2</sup>See document template under the resources tab on Sakai.

## Response Papers

By the end of the semester, each student must submit 5 two-page long response papers. In their response papers, students are expected to summarize both the required reading and the optional reading for that week, and provide a brief reflection related to the topic of the paper.

A good reflection should not only show an adequate level of understanding of the readings, but also that the student is capable of applying central concepts of the readings. Good reflections typically do one of the following things:

- Critically contrast both readings.
- Apply one or more of the concepts reviewed in the papers to a contemporary political event.
- Apply one or more of the concepts reviewed in the papers to an historically relevant political event.
- Present an alternative point of view that is not addressed by any of the two readings assigned for that week.

Response papers will be evaluated on a scale from 0 to 5:

Dimension	Criteria	Points
Organization	Lacks organization, the argument is difficult to follow.	0
	Mostly well-organized but could be improved.	0.5
	Well-organized and easy to follow, has a clear introduction, body and conclusion.	1
Summaries	Fails to summarize the main arguments, omission of key points, or inaccurate characterization of the main points. The summary is a copy of the abstract of the article.	0
	Provides a fairly accurate and descriptive summaries, or the summaries are not concise, or the arguments are not presented in a logical order.	1
	Provides an accurate, descriptive and concise summary of the articles' information in a logical order.	2
Opinion	Fails to present an opinion, or the opinion is unrelated to the readings assigned for the week, or the opinion is not at all insightful or thorough.	0
	The opinion reflects some misunderstanding of the readings, or the opinion is only partially informed by the readings assigned for that week, or the opinion is not very insightful or thorough.	1
	Thoughtfully presents an opinion that is informed by the readings assigned for the week. The opinion reflects an adequate understanding of the readings and it is, at least to some extent, insightful or thorough.	2

Please note that if you get 5 points in the five response papers you will get 25 points (5 more of the maximum that you can get on this item). If that is the case, those points will still be added to your final grade.

Response papers should be turned in following this schedule:

Week	Response Papers
Week 4	1
Week 7	2
Week 10	3
Week 13	4
Week 15	5

This means that by the beginning of week 4, each students should have turned in at least one response paper, by week 7, two, and so on. Each response papers must be submitted before Monday at 7:55 am and should review the reading assigned for that specific week. **If a student submits a response paper related to the readings of a previous week, they will not get any credit for it.**

I will not accept late submissions for these documents.

### Midterm

The midterm will take place on March 10. It will consist of 4 short questions. It will be designed to evaluate the extent to which students understand the main concepts and theoretical perspectives reviewed so far in the semester.

Each question will be evaluated on a scale from 0 to 5:

Points	Criteria
0	The student did not provide an answer or the answer provided does not reflect any understanding of the course material.
1	The answer reflects a very poor understanding of the course material.
2	The answer reflects some understanding of the material but it has major impressions or misunderstandings.
3	The answer reflects a general understanding of the material.
4	The answer reflects a good understanding of the material with some minor impressions.
5	The answer reflects a good understanding of the material.

## Final Exam

The final will take place on May 11 at 4:00pm. It will consist of 6 short questions. It will be designed to evaluate the extent to which students understand the main concepts and theoretical perspectives reviewed during the semester. Each question will be evaluated using the midterm scale.

## Grading Scale

Points	Final Grade
93 <	A+
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
60-66	D
60 >	F

## Course Schedule and Readings

### **Week 1: Introduction**

Required: -

Recommended: -

### **Week 2: State, State Failure, and State-Building**

Required: Francis Fukuyama, "The Imperatives of State-Building." *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2004, pp. 17-31.

Recommended: Jeffrey Herbst, "War and the State in Africa." *International Security*, vol. 14, no. 4, 1990, pp. 117-139.

### **Week 3: Modernization and Development**

Required: Samuel Huntington, "The Change to Change: Modernization, Development, and Politics." *Comparative Politics*, vol. 3, no.3, 1971, pp. 283-293.

Recommended: Andre Gunder Frank, "The Development of Underdevelopment." in *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution*, pp. 4-16.

### **Week 4: Democracy and Democratization I**

Required: Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi, "Modernization: Theories and Facts." *World Politics*, vol. 49, 1997, pp. 155-184.

Recommended: Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes, "Endogenous Democratization." *World Politics*, vol. 55, 2003, pp. 517-549.

### **Week 5: Democracy and Democratization II**

Required: Evelyne Huber, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and John D. Stephens, "The Impact of Economic Development on Democracy." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, vol. 7, no. 3, 1993, pp.71-85.

Recommended: Ben Ansell and David Samuels, "Inequality and Democratization: A Contractarian Approach." *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 43, no. 12, 2010, pp. 1543-1574.

### **Week 6: Varieties of Authoritarianism**

Required: Barbara Geddes, "What do we Know about Democratization after Twenty Years?" *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 2, 1992, pp. 115-144.

Recommended: Larry Diamond, "Elections Without Democracy: Thinking About Hybrid Regimes" *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2002, pp. 21-35.

### **Week 7: Authoritarian Persistence**

Required: Margaret E. Roberts. *Censored: Distraction and Diversion Inside China's Great Firewall*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018, Chapter 1.

Recommended: Beatriz Magaloni. *Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and its Demise in Mexico*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, Chapter 1.

### **Week 8: Review and Midterm**

Required: -

Recommended: -

### **Week 9: Varieties of Democracies I**

Required: Juan Linz, "The Perils of Presidentialism." *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1990, pp. 51-70.

Recommended: Matthew Shugart and John M. Carey, *Presidents and Assemblies: Constitutional Design and Electoral Dynamics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 28-54.

### **Week 10: Varieties of Democracies II**

Required: Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999, Chapter 1 and 5.

Recommended: Andrew Reynolds, "Electoral Systems Today: The Curious Case of Afghanistan", vol. 17, no. 2, 2006, pp. 103-117.

### **Week 11 Programmatic Party Competition**

Required: Simon Bornschie. "Cleavage Politics in Old and New Democracies: A review of the Literature and Avenues for Future Research." EUI European University Institute Working Papers, 2009, pp.1-20.

Recommended: Anthony Downs. "An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy." *Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 65, no. 2, 1957, pp. 135-150.

### **Week 12: Clientelism**

Required: Susan Stokes. "Perverse Accountability A Formal Model of Machine Politics with Evidence from Argentina." *American Political Science Review*, vol. 99, no. 3, 2005, pp. 315-325.



Recommended: Federico Finan and Laura Schechter. “Vote-Buying and Reciprocity”. *Econometrica*, vol. 80, no. 2, 2012, pp. 863-881.

### **Week 13: Populism**

Required: Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira-Kaltwasser. “Exclusionary vs. Inclusionary Populism: Comparing Contemporary Europe and Latin America.” *Government and Opposition*, vol. 48, no. 2, 2013, pp.147-174

Recommended: Steven Levitsky and James Loxton. “Populism and Competitive Authoritarianism in the Andes”, *Democratization*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2013, 107-136.

### **Week 14: Ethnic Politics**

Required: Daniel Posner, “The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi.” *American Political Science Review*, vol. 98, no. 4, 2004, pp. 529-545.

Recommended: Claire Adida, “Do African Voters Favor Coethnics? Evidence from a Survey Experiment in Benin.” *Journal of Experimental Political Science*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2015, pp. 1-11.

### **Week 15: Democratic Backsliding**

Required: Nancy Bermeo. “On Democratic Backsliding”, *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 27, no.1, 2016, pp. 5-19.

Recommended: Michael Coppedge. “Eroding Regimes: What, Where, and When?”, *V-Dem Institute Working Papers*, 2017, pp. 1-30.

### **Week 16: Review**

Required: -

Recommended: -