

University of Rochester – PSCI 101/INTR 101
Fall 2025
Monday/Wednesday/Friday 10:25am – 11:15am
Goergen 108

Introduction to Comparative Politics

Professor Meguid (pronounced “Megeed”)

Email: bonnie.meguid@rochester.edu

Office: 306 Harkness Hall

Office Hours: Mondays 1-3pm (with mask)

Office hours are an opportunity for you to ask questions and seek clarifications about course material.

Teaching Assistants

Ruth Holloway: rhollow6@ur.rochester.edu, Harkness 315A, office hours Tuesdays 10-11:30am

Josiah Rath: jrath2@ur.rochester.edu, Harkness 315A, office hours Mondays 3-4:30pm

Course Description

This course will introduce students to comparative politics – the study of domestic political institutions, processes, and outcomes across and within countries. These important themes and concepts of contemporary comparative politics include the vibrancy of democracy, the centrality of political and electoral institutions, the possibility of revolution and the power of ethnicity. Cases will be drawn from different countries and historical periods to give students a grounding in the method of comparative analysis. This course is recommended for those thinking about a major, minor, or cluster in political science or international relations and others who are simply interested in learning more about the politics of developed and developing countries.

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Course Objectives:

In this course, we will learn about five key topics in comparative politics, understand theories used to explain them, test those hypotheses using comparative country cases, and develop writing skills.

Learning Outcomes:

After successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Explain central concepts in comparative politics (e.g., democracy, democratization, political institutions, revolution, ethnicity, democratic vibrancy).
2. Identify, compare and contrast the theories explaining democratization; ethnic conflict; revolution; democratic vibrancy.

3. Understand the different types of government and electoral rules and know their implications for democratic health.
 4. Apply comparative analysis by using cases from different countries to illustrate and evaluate theoretical claims.
 5. In assigned texts, be able to identify theories and hypotheses as well as identify key evidence to support and challenge those theories.
 6. Construct and defend arguments about political outcomes using evidence from course readings and lectures.
 7. Demonstrate effective communication of complex ideas through discussion and examinations.
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Readings

In this course, we will read a combination of books, book chapters and journal articles. The books are available for purchase at the Bookstore (either under PSCI or INTR 101) or, alternatively, are on reserve at Rush Rhees Library. Journal articles and chapters in edited volumes are accessible through the syllabus tab on the PSCI/INTR 101 course page on Blackboard.

Texts available for purchase at the Bookstore (but you can buy them from any source)

Allen, William Sheridan. The Nazi Seizure of Power. New York: Watts, 2014. (DO NOT PURCHASE EARLIER VERSIONS) 978-1626548725

Crnobrnja, Mihailo. The Yugoslav Drama. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1996.

Diamond, Larry and Marc Plattner, eds. The Global Resurgence of Democracy Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996.

Putnam, Robert D. Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993.

Wood, Elisabeth Jean. Forging Democracy from Below, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000.

This course follows the College credit hour policy for four-credit courses. This course meets three times weekly for 3 academic hours per week. For the fourth credit hour, students should review their lecture notes (in addition to completing the assigned readings) before recitation. This course also includes substantial reading assignments as well as a midterm and final exam.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to attend lectures every Monday and Wednesday (and Friday at the beginning of the semester) and keep up with the readings. All lecture dates are listed below.

Each student will be assigned to a recitation section which meets once a week. Attendance is mandatory. Sections will serve as an opportunity to discuss the readings, and thus, regular and active participation is expected. Participation in section will count for 20% of the final grade. An in-class midterm examination will be worth 35% and a final examination will count for 45% of the final grade. According to the Registrar, the date of the in-person final exam is Sunday, December 14 at 12:30pm. But because the date could change, *DO NOT arrange to leave for break before the end of the exam period. Barring extraordinary circumstances, there will be no make-up midterm or final exams.*

Basis of Grade Determination

Grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
Percentages	93-100%	90-92.99%	87-89.99%	83-86.99%	80-82.99%	77-79.99%	73-76.99%	70-72.99%	67-69.99%	63-67.99%	60-62.99%	59.99% and below

Academic Honesty Policy

All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy. More information is available at: www.rochester.edu/college/honesty

In this course, the following additional requirements are in effect:

You are encouraged to discuss course readings and lectures with your fellow students. However, all written work must be done independently and not in collaboration with another or using any AI software.

Disability Resources

The University of Rochester respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. In the event you encounter any barrier(s) to full participation in this course due to the impact of disability, please contact the Office of Disability Resources. The access coordinators in the Office of Disability Resources can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. You can reach the Office of Disability Resources at: http://disability@rochester.edu; (585) 276-5075; Taylor Hall.

Health Policies

*In light of the challenges that continue to be posed by Covid, I encourage all students to communicate with me as promptly as possible any concerns they have about missing class for illness/quarantine and for meeting class deadlines.

*For the safety of my students, my family and me, my office is a masked space. If you wish to not wear a mask, we can meet at an alternative time outside of my office. Please contact me.

Course Meetings and Assignments

****Each week, the assigned readings should be completed *before* the second lecture on a given topic.**

August 25, 27 and 29: Course Introduction and What is Democracy?

Terry L. Karl and Philippe Schmitter, "What Democracy Is...and Is Not," in Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner, eds, The Global Resurgence of Democracy, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. 49-62.

Larry Diamond, "Three Paradoxes of Democracy," in Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner, eds, The Global Resurgence of Democracy, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. 111-123.

NO CLASS on Sept 1: Labor Day

September 3, 5 and 8: How does Democracy Come About? Theories of Democratization

Daniel Lerner, The Passing of Traditional Society, Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1958. Chapter 1.

Seymour Martin Lipset, Political Man, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1981. Chapter 2.

Samuel Huntington, "Democracy's Third Wave," in Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner, eds, The Global Resurgence of Democracy, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. 3-25.

S.M. Lipset, "George Washington and the Founding of Democracy," Journal of Democracy, 9.4(1998): 24-38.

Elisabeth Jean Wood, Forging Democracy from Below, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. 3-22.

September 10, 12, 15 and 17: Democracy and Democratization: Cases

*First recitation the week of Sept 15

Elisabeth Jean Wood, Forging Democracy from Below, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. 25-144, 150-208.

September 22 and 24: Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict: Theories

Harold Isaacs, "Basic Group Identity: The Idols of the Tribe," in Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, eds, Ethnicity: Theory and Experience, Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1975. 29-52.

Posner, Daniel, "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi," American Political Science Review, 98.4 (2004): 529-545.

Hugh Trevor-Roper, "The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland," in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds, The Invention of Tradition, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990. 15-41.

September 29 and October 1: Ethnic Conflict: The Case of Yugoslavia

Mihailo Crnobrnja, The Yugoslav Drama, Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1996. 15-127; 141-188.

Aleksa Djilas, "A Profile of Slobodan Milosevic," Foreign Affairs, (Summer 1993): 81-96.

October 6 and 8: Revolutions

Karl Marx, "The Communist Manifesto," in Laurence H. Simons (ed), Selected Writings, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994. 157-176.

James Davies, "Toward a Theory of Revolution," American Sociological Review, 27.1(1962): 5-19.

Eric Selbin, "Revolution in the Real World: Bringing Agency Back In," in John Foran, ed, Theorizing Revolutions, London: Routledge, 1997. 123-136.

No class (or office hours) October 13 – Fall Break

October 15, 20, and 22: Revolutions around the World: Cases

Farideh Farhi, "State Disintegration and Urban-Based Revolutionary Crisis: A Comparative Analysis of Iran and Nicaragua," Comparative Political Studies, 21.2(1988). 231-256.

Theda Skocpol, "Rentier State and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian Revolution," Theory and Society, 11.3(1982). 265-83.

October 27: Midterm review

October 29: *In-class MIDTERM*

No recitation week of October 27

November 3 and 5: Do Institutions Matter? Presidentialism versus Parliamentarism

Juan Linz, "The Perils of Presidentialism," in Diamond and Plattner (eds), The Global Resurgence of Democracy, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. 124-142.

Juan Linz, "The Virtues of Parliamentarism," in Diamond and Plattner (eds), The Global Resurgence of Democracy, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. 154-161.

Donald Horowitz, "Comparing Democratic Systems," in Diamond and Plattner (eds), The Global Resurgence of Democracy, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. 143-149

S.E. Lipset, "The Centrality of Political Culture," in Diamond and Plattner (eds), The Global Resurgence of Democracy, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. 150-153.

November 10 and 12: Do Institutions Matter? Electoral Systems

Arend Lijphart, "Constitutional Choices for New Democracies," in Diamond and Plattner (eds), The Global Resurgence of Democracy, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. 162-174.

Guy Lardeyat, "The Problem with PR," in Diamond and Plattner (eds), The Global Resurgence of Democracy, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. 175-180

Quentin Quade, "PR and Democratic Statecraft," in Diamond and Plattner (eds), The Global Resurgence of Democracy, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. 181-186

Scott Mainwaring, "Presidentialism, Multipartism and Democracy," Comparative Political Studies, 26.2(1993): 198-228.

Arend Lijphart, "Reforming the House: Three Moderately Radical Proposals," P.S.: Political Science and Politics, 31.1(1998): 10-13.

November 17, 19 and 24: Politics and Culture: From Civic Culture to Social Capital

Robert D. Putnam, Making Democracy Work, Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993. Entire.

Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," in Diamond and Plattner (eds), The Global Resurgence of Democracy, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996: 290-303.

NB: No class on 11/26 or 11/27: Thanksgiving

December 1 and 3: Politics and Culture: From Civic Culture to Social Capital (cases)

William Sheridan Allen, The Nazi Seizure of Power, New York: Watts, 1984. 1-167, 183-200, 217-232, 293-303.

Morris Fiorina, "Extreme Voices: A Dark Side of Civic Engagement" Civic Engagement in American Democracy. Theda Skocpol and Morris Fiorina, eds. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1999. Chapter 11.

December 8: Course wrap-up

*****Note: There is an in-person cumulative final exam on Sunday, December 14 at 12:30pm***