

POL S 204: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Professor Asli Cansunar

Winter 2021

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Office Hours: Monday 3-5 pm ([Zoom Link](#)), or by appointment

Class Hours: Wednesday & Wednesday, 1:30 PM - 2:50 PM

Venue: 101 Thompson Hall

1 Course Description

Comparative politics is the field within political science that tries to explain why countries vary in their domestic political institutions, the political behavior of their leaders and citizens, their levels and rates of development, and their public policies. In this course, we will focus on three main questions that have long been central to research in comparative politics: How do democratic countries vary in their political institutions, and why do these differences matter? Why are some countries democracies and others dictatorships, and what are the consequences? Finally, why are some countries wealthy while others remain mired in poverty? The goal is not just to acquaint you with these questions and the debates surrounding them but also to help you develop the tools to reach your reasoned conclusions about them. To do this, you will need some fundamental vocabulary and some basic social science research tools. The “vocabulary” part includes an understanding of what social science is all about, what political scientists mean precisely by the terms they use (e.g., development, democracy, proportional representation, bureaucracy), and the kinds of institutions that major countries (and some minor ones) in all parts of the world now have or have had recently.

This course approaches Comparative Politics from the perspective of how political scientists conduct research in this field. Thus, the course is not simply a journalistic commentary on current events or a survey of the politics and institutions of three or four foreign countries. Instead, it is a course focused on using theory and evidence to identify and try to account for broad patterns in political behavior and outcomes in the countries of the world.

2 Course Requirements

1) Lectures: Professor Cansunar will lecture on the Monday and Wednesday sessions of the class at the allocated lecture time. In lectures, Professor Cansunar will cover the broad themes for the week’s topics, in addition to various theories, hypotheses, data, and case studies from around

the world that speak to these topics. While attendance is not recorded for lectures, Professor Cansunar highly recommends attending them as students' success in class is largely determined by their level of engagement. Professor Cansunar will provide additional information about the expectations for lectures and in-person (and possibility of move to remote) instruction in Week 1.

The first week of this course will be conducted via live Zoom sessions at the scheduled class times. These sessions will be recorded and will capture the presenter's audio, video and computer screen. Student audio and video will be recorded if they share their computer audio and video during the recorded session. The recordings will only be accessible to students enrolled in the course. These recordings will not be shared with or accessible to the public. Students may opt to keep their cameras off or change their Zoom screen name to conceal personal identifying information.

2) Participation & Quiz Section: The TAs will conduct Quiz Sections during the allotted class time on Fridays. TAs will lead discussions of the week's readings, focusing mainly on the case studies, and students will be able to ask questions on assigned readings for each week and regarding the discussion questions. The participation grade recorded in quiz section will be based on the discussion question assignments, and attendance in quiz section is necessary to improve the quality of a student's discussion question assignments and understanding of other course material, especially the country case studies. TAs will provide additional information about the policies and expectations of their Quiz Sections in Week 1.

3) Canvas & Zoom: Students should familiarize themselves with the course's Canvas website. On the Canvas page for the lecture, students will find course readings, syllabus, and other materials, including the Zoom plug-in and recorded lectures should any remote instruction be required. If students have any questions on course policies, logistics, due dates, etc. they should consult Canvas and the syllabus. Any question that has already been answered on the syllabus, Canvas, or in lecture, or should be directed to a student's TA, is unlikely to receive an email response from Professor Cansunar. Professor Cansunar and TAs will use Canvas to make class announcements and post news items or other links. Students will turn in their discussion question assignments on their Quiz Section's individual Canvas page as managed by their TA, the midterm and final exam will either occur in person in the allotted time in the schedule below or be due online via Canvas given instructions below. As such, students may want to set their Canvas settings to receive notifications via email and/or regularly check the Canvas page.

3 The Role of Quiz Section TAs:

2) TAs:

- Jana Foxe, jfoxe@uw.edu
AA (Fridays, 9:30am-10:20am)
AB (Fridays, 10:30am-11:20am)
- Jintong Han, jtonghan@uw.edu
AC (Fridays, 10:30am-11:20am)

AD (Fridays, 11:30am-12:20pm)

Quiz sections are vital to students' learning and students who do not engage with the discussion in quiz sections will not be successful in this class. Professor Cansunar therefore values the important role that TAs play in the success of his course management and instruction. This course will not be successful without the contributions from TAs, and students should view TAs as their "first line of defense" regarding any challenges that may arise due to the pandemic. First, TAs will be responsible for all of the grading of class assignments (discussion question responses, midterm, and final exam) under the direction of Professor Cansunar. TAs will manage their own quiz section Canvas pages that will be used by students to turn in discussion question assignments, and either in-person or remote midterm and final exams. Any questions about grading and assignments should therefore be directed to TAs. Second, TAs will manage and operate their own quiz sections during the allotted times that students are registered for on Fridays every week. TAs will not introduce any additional course material or lesson plans during quiz section, but they will often cover material not otherwise covered in lecture, and use that time to answer student inquiries on that week's material from lecture or regarding clarification or discussion on the country case studies and discussion questions. Any questions about quiz section or discussion questions should therefore be directed to TAs. Third, while Professor Cansunar will be in constant management of the TAs, students should view their TAs as the "first line of defense" should problems arise in students' experience with this class or the evolving nature of Covid-19 (see also below). They should avoid reaching out to Professor Cansunar for a matter that can be handled by a TA, they should reach out only to their TA assigned to their registered quiz section, and they should not contact their TA for this class with a matter related to problems in another class. Should students be required to quarantine, they should let their TA know immediately (see also below). Professor Cansunar will provide additional information about the expectations for TAs in Week 1, and TAs will provide additional information about the policies and expectations of their Quiz Sections in Week 1.

Neither Professor Cansunar nor the TAs will be in a position to offer students individual technology support, medical advice, or any alterations to UW, state, and federal policy with respect to the pandemic – we advise students to consult other UW and IT resources as needed to address specific problems related to accessibility or access, especially regarding use of Zoom should a shift to remote learning be required; and continually update themselves on Covid-related policies on campus.

4 Course Evaluation:

1. Quiz Section Participation and Assignments (30%)
2. In-class midterm exam (30%), Wednesday, February 2
3. Final exam (40%), Monday, March 14, 2022

5 Office Hours:

Professor Cansunar encourages students to utilize his office hours as needed on Wednesdays 3:00pm- 5:00pm. Professor Cansunar also prefers to avoid long substantive discussions over email and instead discuss things in office hours. Any students unable to make office hours can schedule individual appointments by email, at least 24 hours ahead of the intended meeting day, and providing Professor Cansunar with at least 4 hours (or a four hour block) that works on the intended days. Professor Cansunar makes it a point not to reply to emails asking questions that are answered on the syllabus.

Class Schedule

Monday, January 3: Introduction and Overview: What is Comparative Politics? (Lecture on Zoom)

No readings.

Wednesday, January 5: The State: Concept and Types (Lecture on Zoom)

- J. Tyler Dickovick, and Jonathan Eastwood, *Comparative Politics 3e: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.), Chapter 3.
- Vox video on [How this border transformed a subcontinent | India Pakistan](#)

Monday, January 10: The State: Why Do States Emerge and Expand? (Lecture on Zoom)

- Vu, Toung. 2010. "Studying the State Through State Formation." *World Politics*, 62(1): 148-75.
- "Neither Free Nor Fair?" podcast ["What's Happening in Uganda: Golooba-Mutebi"](#)

Wednesday, January 12: Democracy and Democratization (Lecture on Zoom)

- J. Tyler Dickovick, and Jonathan Eastwood, *Comparative Politics 3e: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.), Chapter 6.

Monday, January 17: No Class

Wednesday, January 19: Authoritarian Regimes and Democratic Breakdown (Lecture on Zoom)

- J. Tyler Dickovick, and Jonathan Eastwood, *Comparative Politics 3e: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.), Chapter 7.
- Explained by Netflix episode on [Whose Vote Counts, Narrated by Leonardo DiCaprio](#)

Monday, January 24: Democratic Backsliding (Lecture on Zoom)

- Bermeo, Nancy. 2016. "On Democratic Backsliding." *Journal of Democracy* 27(1): pp. 5-19.
- "Neither Free Nor Fair?" podcast ["Democratic Backsliding in American States: Jake Grumbach"](#)

Wednesday, January 26: Legislature, Legislative Elections, and Executives (Lecture on Zoom)

- J. Tyler Dickovick, and Jonathan Eastwood, *Comparative Politics 3e: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.), Chapter 9.
- Scope Conditions podcast on [How Strong Legislatures Emerge, with Ken Opalo](#)

Monday, January 31: Political Parties and Party Systems

- J. Tyler Dickovick, and Jonathan Eastwood, *Comparative Politics 3e: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.), Chapter 11.

Wednesday, February 2: In-class midterm

Monday, February 7: Revolutions and Social Movements

- J. Tyler Dickovick, and Jonathan Eastwood, *Comparative Politics 3e: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.), Chapter 12.
- Vox video on [Hong Kong's huge protests, explained](#)

Wednesday, February 9: Nationalism and National Identity

- J. Tyler Dickovick, and Jonathan Eastwood, *Comparative Politics 3e: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.), Chapter 13.
- Scope Conditions podcast [The Upside of Nationalism, with Aram Hur](#)

Monday, February 14: Race and Ethnicity

- J. Tyler Dickovick, and Jonathan Eastwood, *Comparative Politics 3e: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.), Chapter 14.
- Vox video on [Why South Africa is still so segregated?](#)

Wednesday, February 16: Religion in Politics

- J. Tyler Dickovick, and Jonathan Eastwood, *Comparative Politics 3e: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.), Chapter 15.
- Governance Uncovered podcast on [Yeşim Arat: Bridging Turkey's Islamist/Secularist Divide](#)

Monday, February 21: No class

Wednesday, February 23: Political Economy: Inequality

- J. Tyler Dickovick, and Jonathan Eastwood, Comparative Politics 3e: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.), Chapter 4.

Monday, February 28: Political Economy: Economic Development

- J. Tyler Dickovick, and Jonathan Eastwood, Comparative Politics 3e: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.), Chapter 5.

Wednesday, March 2: Migration and Citizenship

- Marco Scipioni (2018) Failing forward in EU migration policy? EU integration after the 2015 asylum and migration crisis, Journal of European Public Policy, 25:9, 1357-1375
- "Political Economy Forum" podcast "[Beautiful game, troubling results? - w/ Leah Rosenzweig and Yang-Yang Zhou](#)"

Monday, March 7, 2022: Populism

- Cas Mudde. 2004. "The Populist Zeitgeist", Government and Opposition, 39(4): 541-563.
- "AshCast" podcast "[Political Geographies of the Populist Right](#)"

Wednesday, March 9, 2022 Wrapping up

Monday, March 14, 2022: 2:30-4:20pm, FINAL EXAM

Grade complaints

You have the right to dispute a grade if you disagree with it. You must do so in writing, no more than 3 working days after we have returned the exam/paper to you. Upon receiving your appeal, your TA will re-grade the entire exam. Note that as I re-evaluate the exam, your TA may realize that while we were too strict with some answers, we were too generous with others. Your overall grade may go up, but it may also go down.

Accommodations

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy](#). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the [Religious Accommodations Request form](#).

COVID-19

We are all in this together! In this class, masks covering nose and mouth are required, and eating and drinking are prohibited. The instructor and TAs have the authority to cancel class if students

do not comply. Non-compliant students may be reported to the Community Standards and Student Conduct office.

If you have symptoms, do not come to class and do get tested. For FAQs about COVID-19 and UW Policy, go [here](#).