

**POLI 130.005**  
**Introduction to Comparative Politics**

Fall 2019  
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Instructor: Katherine McKiernan ([kmck@live.unc.edu](mailto:kmck@live.unc.edu))  
Class Time: Tuesday & Thursday 5:00-6:15pm  
Classroom: Bingham 3019  
Office Hours: Thursday 1pm-4pm Hamilton 303

**Course Description and Objectives:**

This course is designed to be a broad overview of Comparative Politics, one of the subfields of Political Science. Over the course of the semester, we will discuss key concepts in political science, including the concept of the state, political systems, and challenges faced by state governments. By the end of the semester, you should be able to understand questions such as: What is a democracy? What are differences between authoritarian regimes? What are different ways to organize governments? How do different political institutions affect governance outcomes? To study these ideas, we'll use examples from a variety of different countries, including some you may be less familiar with. This course will also give you the opportunity to select a country to analyze in depth over the course of two papers throughout the semester. This is an introductory level course and no prior experience is required.

This class is divided into three large units. In the first part of the class, we will discuss the concept of a democracy. We will discuss what it means to be a democracy, how countries become democracies, and different models of democratic states.

In the second unit, we'll discuss democratic backsliding and non-democratic regimes. We'll study different styles of non-democratic regimes and how they maintain power.

Finally, we will analyze some key topics in comparative politics. Many of these are relevant issues in the world today that you are likely to hear about in the news. We will analyze each topic closely to help you understand what they are, why they're important, and how they affect politics.

This course combines lecture, discussion, and small group activities.

**Readings:**

There is one required reading for this course: Patrick O'Neil (2018). *Essentials of Comparative Politics, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition*, W.W. Norton and Company. All other readings will be posted to Sakai.

**Attendance:**

Attendance and Participation are mandatory for this course. I will take attendance during each course meeting. You are allowed 3 unexcused absences over the course of the semester. After 3 absences, your grade will reflect your failure to attend. I will excuse absences if given advanced notice.

### **Classroom Policies:**

- **Listen to, and respect, your classmates.** I aim to make this class a safe and open environment. Part of that is respecting all questions and comments that other classmates chose to share. Further, listening to dissenting opinions will help you to broaden your understanding of the material. Not everyone will share your view, but if we all agree to listen to and respect each other, then class will be a positive environment.
- **Be courteous with electronics.** Please turn off your cellphones and be courteous with your laptops. While both of these sources can be helpful for looking up information, they can be distracting to other students. If I notice that laptops are being used for purposes unrelated to class, I will ask you to refrain from using your laptop.
- **Ask Questions.** If you have a question about the material, it's likely that others have the same question. I encourage questions during class and if, due to time constraints, I cannot fully answer a question immediately please come to my office hours to continue the discussion.
- If, at any point during the semester, you are struggling with material, have any concerns, or are experiencing any difficulties please **come talk to me**. I am available during office hours and by appointment. There is a lot we can do if you are open and communicate with me, especially early in the semester.
- **Email Policies:** It is important to send emails in a professional manner with a proper greeting and sign off. Before sending emails with any administrative questions, I request that you read your syllabus to see if this can answer your question. I will respond to all emails within 24 hours, but I will not respond between 10pm and 7am. This means that if you send me an email the morning an assignment is due, I cannot guarantee a response.

### **Research requirement**

Students enrolled in POLI 100, POLI 130, or POLI 150 are required to take part in the Department of Political Science research activities as part of their course requirement. The research requirement can be fulfilled either by participating in research studies offered by the Political Science Subject Pool (PSSP) (Option 1) or by writing a 5-page research paper (Option 2). The total time commitment should not exceed 3 hours. This requirement does not substitute for other course requirements, nor does it generate extra credit.

**OPTION 1:** Students who choose to participate in the Political Science Subject Pool will be required to accumulate ten credits towards their research requirement. Typically, each study completed will satisfy one credit towards the requirement; occasionally, a study will count for more than one credit. Active studies for you to participate in will be listed on the [Subject Pool's website](#).

**OPTION 2:** Students who choose not to participate in the Political Science Subject Pool—or you fail to reach your 10 credit minimum—must satisfy the requirement by completing an alternative assignment, which consists of writing a five-page, double-spaced, research-oriented paper. Although it is not exactly the same as participating in an actual research study, this assignment has been designed to expand your understanding of the realm of political science research. At the end of the semester, you will be given a list of articles from The Monkey Cage—a blog intended to make political science research more accessible—where you will be required to react to the article you select. Articles from The Monkey Cage may present findings from a recently published academic article, introduce readers to a new topic, or present contemporary political events through the lens of political science research. It will be your responsibility, in your paper, to discuss how the article was conducted, what conclusion(s) the author of the article draws from their methodological approach, and detail how convincing you find their conclusions. This paper will be graded pass/fail by the Subject Pool Director, Professor Anna Bassi. Failure to satisfy the research requirement will result in an incomplete that will be removed only upon satisfaction of the requirement. Credit will be administered by the PSSP Director.

### **Honor Code:**

The University's Honor Code applies to all assignments for this course. This means all work must be original and completely your own – plagiarism, cheating and other violations will not be tolerated. For more information on the honor code, please visit <http://honor.unc.edu>. If you would like more information on what plagiarism means and how to avoid it in your work, you can take a look at the library's tutorial (<http://www.lib.unc.edu/instruct/plagarism/>). You should also feel free to come talk to me if you have any questions.

### **Grading:**

10% - Participation  
5% - Current Event Presentation  
10% - Midterm 1  
15% -Midterm 2  
15% - Paper 1  
20% - Paper 2  
25% - Final Exam

*Participation:* Your participation grade is a combination of the Political Science Research Requirement, attendance and **active, thoughtful** participation. To achieve a high participation grade, you not only have to attend class, you also need to contribute in

a relevant manner. You can earn credit towards participation by asking questions, answering questions, engaging in class discussion and debate, actively participating during group assignments, and attending office hours. These grades are assigned as a holistic evaluation of your engagement in the course. During the semester, I will give you three opportunities to evaluate your own participation, which will be used to calculate the final participation grade.

*Current Event:* The material we cover in this course is relevant to the world today and requires knowledge of what is happening. As a result, you are required to give a short 5-minute presentation on the current event of your choosing from a reliable news source. We will begin each class with a brief current event presentation. Your presentation should end with one discussion question for the class to help facilitate conversations surrounding your current event. You will sign up for your day on the first class of the semester.

*Exams:* You will have two midterms and a final. Each exam is worth more than the previous exam, so you have an opportunity to continue improving throughout a semester. Your first midterm will be held in class on **Thursday, September 26<sup>th</sup>** and your second midterm will be held in class on **Tuesday, October 29<sup>th</sup>**. Makeup exams will only be provided in extenuating circumstances with proper documentation. If I have not approved a makeup exam and you fail to take the exam on time, your grade will be penalized.

The final exam will be held on **Tuesday, December 10<sup>th</sup> at 4pm**. This is the date and time set by the registrar and cannot be changed without following proper procedures.

*Papers:* During the semester, you will write two 4-5 page analytical papers on the country of your choosing. You should select a country that interests you by **September 3<sup>rd</sup>** and turn in a very short (1 paragraph) proposal with the country you selected and why. This is a chance to be creative and learn about a place that interests you! Both of your papers will be on this country.

The first paper will be due at the start of class on **Tuesday October 29<sup>th</sup>** (the same day as the second midterm). In this paper, you will analyze the political regime in your country and evaluate what led to or prevented its democratization. The second paper will be due on the last day of class, **December 3<sup>rd</sup>**. In this paper, you will select one of the topics we cover in the final section of the course and analyze the effect it's had on your country. I will give more details a month before each deadline. Remember that you will need to begin research before we cover that topic in class to give yourself time to really analyze your country.

It is university policy that I **cannot** discuss grades over email. If you have any questions, please come to my office hours or email me to set up a time to meet in person.

I use the following grading scale:

<b>A</b> 93-100	<b>B+</b> 87-89	<b>C+</b> 77-79	<b>D+</b> 67-69
<b>A-</b> 90-92	<b>B</b> 83-86	<b>C</b> 73-77	<b>D</b> 60-66

**Class Schedule:**

Below is the course schedule, divided into our three units for the course. All readings should be completed prior to the class for which they are listed. I reserve the right to make changes to this schedule or the readings and will notify you of such adjustments.

**Introduction**

**August 20:** Course Introduction and Syllabus

- No Readings

**August 22:** Introduction *Tyler Steelman will attend to discuss the research requirement*

- O’Neil Chapter 1: Introduction

**August 27:** What is a state?

- *O’Neil Chapter 2: States*

**Unit 1: Democracy and Democratization**

**August 29:** What is a democracy? *Simon Hoellerbauer will teach*

- O’Neil (2018) P. 134-141 (stop at “Contemporary Democratization” Heading)
- Schmitter, Philippe C, and Terry Lynn Karl(1991) “What Democracy is...and is Not” *Journal of Democracy*. 2(3) 75-88.

**September 3:** Democratization

- O’Neil(2018) P. 141-146 (stop at “Institutions of the Democratic State” Heading)
- Geddes, Barbara(2001). “What Causes Democratization”. Oxford Handbook of Political Science.

**Due: Country Proposal**

**September 5:** Democratization II

- No New Readings

**September 10:** Consensus vs. Majoritarian Democracies

- Chapter 1 (Introduction) of Lijphart, Arend. 2012. *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. Second Edition. Yale University Press. New Haven.
- *Recommended: Read Chapters 2-3 of Lijphart*

**September 12:** Presidential vs. Parliamentary Systems

- O’Neil (2018) p. 150-156 (stop at “Political Parties” heading)
- Linz, Juan J (1990). “The Perils of Presidentialism”. *Journal of Democracy* 1(1): 51-69

**September 17:** Electoral Systems

- O’Neil (2018) p. 157-165 (stop at “Referendum and Initiative”)
- *Recommended:* ACE Project Electoral Systems Description of Electoral Systems: <http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/es/esd/esd03/esd03a/default>

**September 19:** Political Parties and Party Systems

- O’Neil(2018) p. 156-157 (political parties section)
- Boix , Carles (2009) “The Emergence of Parties and Party Systems”. Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics.

**September 24:** Federalism and Decentralization

- Chapter 10 (Division of Power: The Federal-Unitary and Centralized-Decentralized Contrasts) of Lijphart, Arend. 2012. *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. Second Edition. Yale University Press. New Haven.

**September 26: Midterm 1**

**Unit 2: Authoritarianism**

**October 1:** Colonialism

- O’Neil Chapter 10: Developing Countries

**October 3:** Democratic Backsliding and Reverse Waves of Democracy

- Anna Lührmann and Matthew Wilson. 2018. “One-third of the world’s population lives in a declining democracy. That includes the United States.” *The Washington Post*. July 4 2018
- Bermeo, Nancy. 2016 “On Democratic Backsliding”. *Journal of Democracy*. 27(1): 5-19.

**October 8:** Introduction to Authoritarianism

- O’Neil Chapter 6: Non-Democratic Regimes

**October 10:** Varieties of Non-Democracy: Dominant Party Regimes

- Magaloni, Beatriz and Ruth Kricheli. 2010. “Political Order and One-Party Rule”. *Annual Reviews of Political Science*. 13: 123-143.

**October 15:** Varieties of Non-Democracy: Communism

- O’Neil Chapter 9: Communism and Post-Communism

**October 17: No Class- Fall Break**

**October 22:** Varieties of Non-Democracy: Developmental State

- Wong, Joseph. 2004. “The Adaptive Developmental State in East Asia. *Journal of East Asian Studies*. 4(3): 345-362

**October 24:** Hybrid Regimes

- Diamond, Larry. 2002 “Thinking About Hybrid Regimes”. *Journal of Democracy*. 13(2).

**October 29: Midterm 2 and Paper 1 Due**

**Unit 3: Topics in Comparative Politics**

**October 31:** Social Movements

- Brownlee, Jason, Tarek Masoud, and Andrew Reynolds. 2013 “Tracking the “Arab Spring”: Why the Modest Harvest? “. *Journal of Democracy*. 24(4).
- Sataline, Suzanne. July 1, 2019. “How China Silenced Hong Kong’s Democracy Movement Until It Couldn’t Anymore”. *Foreign Affairs*.

**November 5:** Political Economy

- O’Neil Chapter 4: Political Economy

**November 7:** Globalization

- O’Neil Chapter 11: Globalization and the Future of Comparative Politics

**November 12:** The EU

- O’Neil p. 246-254 (stop at “Societal Institutions: New Identities in Formation?” heading)
- The Economist. The Future of the European Union. March 25, 2017.

**November 14:** Populism

- The Atlantic. What Populists Do to Democracies. December 26, 2018.

**November 19:** Diversity in Politics

- Htun, Mala (2004) “Is Gender like Ethnicity? The Political Representation of Identity Groups”. *Perspectives on Politics*. 2(3): 439-458

**November 21:** Political Violence

- O’Neil Chapter 7: Political Violence

**November 26:** Corruption and Clientelism

- Lawson, Chappell and Kenneth F. Greene (2014) “Making Clientelism Work: How Norms of Reciprocity Increase Voter Compliance” 47(1): 61-77.

**November 28: No Class- Thanksgiving**

**December 3:** Review

**PAPER 2 DUE**

**Final Exam is December 10 at 4pm**