POLS 2200
Introduction to Comparative Politics

Dr. Selene Campion

Fall 2025

Course and Instructor Information

Meetings + Location: TuTh/10:45AM-12:05PM GC 2950

Email: selene.campion@utah.edu

Office Hours: Thursdays 2-4, GC 3227

Course Description

This course introduces students to the study of comparative politics, a subfield of political science that compares political systems and examines institutions and political processes within countries. It provides an overview of its major theoretical approaches and areas of research, including classic works and more recent contributions. This course is organized around the subfield's most pressing questions and interesting puzzles. Why are some countries democratic while others are authoritarian? Why are some countries rich while others are poor? We will explore the many and often conflicting answers to these questions by examining them comparatively and engaging case studies from around the world. By the end of the course, students will have acquired a broad perspective of the comparative politics subfield and its methods, as well as the ability to evaluate existing explanations to its most pressing questions.

Course Goals

1. Expose students to central debates and methods used in the study of comparative politics
2. Encourage students to think critically about issues of comparative politics
3. Improve ability to identify background factors that shape events in the news and in the world around us

Course Requirements

- **Class Participation and Attendance:** 10%
- **Quizzes:** 20%
- **Midterm:** 35%
- **Final Exam:** 35%

Course Information

Attendance and Participation Policy

Attendance is mandatory in this class and your grade will be negatively affected by more than one unexcused absence. Attendance is particularly important because we will be conducting small group work throughout the semester. If you need to miss class due to illness, family emergency, or a religious holiday, you must let me know before class and provide documentation where possible.

Students are expected to actively participate in the class. I expect you to arrive at each class having done all of the assigned readings, prepared to share and defend your opinions on them. You may be asked to contribute insights, ask questions, or provide comments that reflect your preparation. Levels of participation:

- In class but not engaged: If you are present but not actively participating—such as being distracted by your laptop, or otherwise disengaged—it will result in a poor participation evaluation (C-range)
- Contributing adequately: Being prepared and making reasonable contributions to class discussions or activities meets the expected level of participation (B-range)
- Making high-quality contributions: Actively and frequently engaging with thoughtful, insightful, and respectful contributions during class discussions reflects exemplary participation (A-range)

Weekly Reading Quizzes

We will have weekly reading quizzes every Tuesday at the beginning of class. Quizzes will be short, usually 2-3 questions, and are used to assess your knowledge of the week's readings. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped. If you miss a quiz due to an unexcused absence you cannot make it up.

Midterm

In-class, closed-notes midterm exam on 10/2 that will include topics covered from Week 1 through Week 8 of the course.

Final Exam

The final exam will be a take-home exam to be completed on Canvas. It will be made available Monday, December 8 and must be taken by Friday, December 12.

Grade Policies

All students will be graded on a 100-point scale. I will assign final letter grades based on the following scale: A: 94-100 A-: 90-93 B+: 87-89 B: 83-86 B-: 80-82 C+: 77-79 C: 73-76 C-: 70-72 D: 60-69 F: 60 or below. Late work is deducted one grade for every 12 hours that it is late (e.g., from a B+ to a B). Extensions will only be granted for justifiable reasons, and I must be notified well in advance of the due date. Last-minute extension requests will not be granted.

Academic Integrity

It is expected that students comply with University of Utah policies regarding academic honesty, including but not limited to refraining from cheating, plagiarizing, misrepresenting one's work, and/or inappropriately collaborating. This includes the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools without citation, documentation, or authorization. Students are expected to adhere to the prescribed professional and ethical standards of the profession/discipline for which they are preparing. Any student who engages in academic dishonesty or who violates the professional and ethical standards for their profession/discipline may be subject to academic sanctions as per the University of Utah's Student Code: Policy 6-410: Student Academic Performance, Academic Conduct, and Professional and Ethical Conduct.

Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and may be punished by failure on an individual assignment, and/or failure in the course. Academic misconduct, according to the University of Utah Student Code:

"...Includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one's work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information... It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct."

For details on plagiarism and other important course conduct issues, see the U's Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)

All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability and Access (CDA). CDA will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. Prior notice is appreciated. To read the full accommodations policy for the University of Utah, please see Section Q of the Instruction and Evaluation regulations. In compliance with ADA requirements, some students may need to record course content. Any recordings of course content are for personal

use only, should not be shared, and should never be made publicly available. In addition, recordings must be destroyed at the conclusion of the course.

Center for Disability & Access

- Phone: 801-581-5020
- Website: `https://disability.utah.edu`
- Address: 65 Student Services Building, 201 S. 1460 E., Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Safety at the U

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more safety information and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit SafeU. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, contact: Campus Police & Department of Public Safety 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677) dps.utah.edu 1735 E. S. Campus Dr. Salt Lake City, UT 84112.

Addressing Sexual Misconduct

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status, or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to university officials:

Title IX Coordinator & Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action

- Phone: 801-581-8365
- Website: `https://oeo.utah.edu`
- Address: 135 Park Building, 201 Presidents' Cir., Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Office of the Dean of Students

- Phone: 801-581-7066
- Website: `https://deanofstudents.utah.edu`
- Address: 270 Union Building, 200 S. Central Campus Dr., Salt Lake City, UT 84112

To File a Police Report

Contact:

Campus Police & Department of Public Safety

- Phone: 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677)
- Website: `https://dps.utah.edu`
- Address: 1735 E. S. Campus Dr., Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Victim-Survivor Advocates

If you do not feel comfortable reporting to authorities, the U's Victim-Survivor Advocates provide free, confidential, and trauma-informed support services to students, faculty, and staff who have experienced interpersonal violence.

To privately explore options and resources available to you with an advocate, contact:

Center for Campus Wellness

- Phone: 801-581-7776
- Website: `https://wellness.utah.edu`
- Address: 350 Student Services Building, 201 S. 1460 E., Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Course Schedule

Week	Dates	Topic
Week 1	August 19, 21	Introduction to Comparative Politics
Week 2	August 26, 28	The State and Nation
Week 3	September 2, 4	Regime Types
Week 4	September 9, 11	Regimes Types
Week 5	September 16, 18	Theories of Democracy and Autocracy
Week 6	September 23, 25	Regime Change - Democratic Backsliding
Week 7	September 30, October 2	Preparation and Midterm
Week 8	October 7, 9	*Fall Break – No Classes*
Week 9	October 14, 16	Political Economy - Development
Week 10	October 21, 23	Political Economy - Distributive Politics
Week 11	October 28, 30	International Migration
Week 12	November 4, 6	Religion and Politics
Week 13	November 11, 13	Populism
Week 14	November 18, 20	Democratic Solutions Part I
Week 15	November 25, 27	*Thanksgiving Break – No Class on 27th*
Week 16	December 2, 4	Democratic Solutions Part II

Course Readings

Please note that all readings should be completed by **Tuesday** unless otherwise noted.

Section I: Classic Debates in Comparative Politics

Week 1: Course Introduction and Comparative Methods
All readings should be completed by **Thursday** of this week.

- David Rohde. 2004. "India and Pakistan: So Close but So Different." *The New York Times*.
- Marc Fisher. 2011. "Arab Spring Yields Different Outcomes in Bahrain, Egypt, and Libya." *The Washington Post*.

Week 2: The State and Nation

- Hislope, Robert, and Anthony Mughan. *Introduction to Comparative Politics: The State and Its Challenges*. Cambridge University Press, 2012. Chapter 2: "The State."
- Dahir, Abdi Latif. 2025. African Breakaway State Offers U.S. a Chance to Stick It to China. *The New York Times*, April 12, 2025.

Weeks 3 and 4: Regime Types

- Siaroff, Alan. *Comparing Political Regimes: A Thematic Introduction to Comparative Politics*. 3rd ed., University of Toronto Press, 2013. Chapter 4: "Electoral Democracies, Liberal Democracies, and Autocracies."
- Malamud, Andrés. 2025. Can Liberal Democracy Adapt Before It Unravels? *Americas Quarterly*, August 7, 2025. Available at: `https://www.americasquarterly.org/article/liberal-democracy/`.

Week 5: Theories of Democracy and Autocracy

- Siaroff, Alan. *Comparing Political Regimes: A Thematic Introduction to Comparative Politics*. 3rd ed., University of Toronto Press, 2013. Chapter 5: "Factors Conducive to Democracy."
- Chira, Susan. 1987. South Koreans Obsessed by Dream of Democracy. *The New York Times*, December 15, 1987.

Week 6: Regime Change - Democratic Backsliding

- Bermeo, Nancy. "On Democratic Backsliding." *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2016, pp. 5–14.

- Anderson, Lisa. "Demystifying the Arab Spring: Parsing the Differences Between Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya." *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 90, May 2011, pp. 2–7.
- Yee, Vivian. "What Have We Done with Democracy? A Decade On, Arab Spring Gains Wither." *The New York Times*, 10 October 2021.

Week 7: Midterm and Midterm Preparation

- No readings this week - midterm on Thursday

Week 8: No classes – Fall Break

Week 9: Political Economy - Development

- Acemoglu, Daron. "Why Nations Fail?" *The Pakistan Development Review*, vol. 54, no. 4, 2015, pp. 301–12.
- Hausmann, Ricardo. "Prisoners of Geography." *Foreign Policy*, no. 122, Jan.–Feb. 2001, pp. 44–53.

Week 10: Political Economy - Distributive Politics

- Stokes, Susan C., Thad Dunning, Marcelo Nazareno, and Valeria Brusco. *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism: The Puzzle of Distributive Politics*. Cambridge University Press, 2013. Chapter 1 excerpt (pp. 3–12).
- Dasgupta, Aditya. "Rethinking Clientelism: Politics and Service Delivery in Rural India." *International Growth Centre*.

Section II: Contemporary Debates in Comparative Politics

Week 11: International Migration

- Carling, Jørgen. "Why Do People Migrate? Fresh Takes on the Foundational Question of Migration Studies." *International Migration Review*, vol. 58, no. 4, December 2024, pp. 1757–1771.

- Hansen, Randall. "Migration to Europe since 1945: Its History and Its Lessons." *The Political Quarterly*, vol. 74, 2003, pp. 25–38.

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- Carling, Jørgen. "Why Do People Migrate? Fresh Takes on the Foundational Question of Migration Studies." *International Migration Review*, vol. 58, no. 4, December 2024, pp. 1757–1771.
- Hansen, Randall. "Migration to Europe since 1945: Its History and Its Lessons." *The Political Quarterly*, vol. 74, 2003, pp. 25–38.

Week 12: Religion and Politics

- Taylor, C. 2007. *A Secular Age*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp. 1-4.
- Freedman, J. 2004. Secularism as a barrier to integration? The French dilemma. *International Migration*, 42(3): 5-27.

Week 13: Populism

- Cas Mudde. 2004. "The Populist Zeitgeist," *Government and Opposition*, vol. 39, no. 4: 541–551 (excerpt).
- Golder, Matt and Sona N. Golder (eds). 2016. Symposium: Populism in Comparative Perspective. *APSA Comparative Politics Newsletter* 26(2). Selected readings:
  - "Brexit, Populism, and the 2016 UK Referendum to Leave the EU" pp. 113-116.
  - Choose **one** additional case study that is of interest to you. Be prepared to discuss it in class.

Weeks 14 and 15: Democratic Solutions? Part I: Citizens' Assemblies

- Escobar, Oliver. "What Are Mini-Publics?" *Citizen Participation Network*, September 13, 2017.
- McNamara, Paul. "Vox Populi or Abdication of Responsibility?: The Influence of the Irish Citizens' Assembly on the Public Discourse Regarding Abortion, 2016-2019." *The Copernicus Journal of Political Studies*, vol. 2, 2019, pp. 131-156.

Week 16: Democratic Solutions? Part II: Participatory Budgeting

- Mejia, Mauricio. "Case Study: Participatory Budgeting in Brazil." *Medium*, April 5, 2021.
- De Renzio, Paola, Paolo Spada, and Brian Wampler. 2019. Paradise Lost? The Crisis of Participatory Budgeting in Its Own Birthplace. International Budget Partnership, November 25, 2019. Available at: `https://www.internationalbudget.org/2019/11/paradise-lost-the-crisis-of-participatory-budgeting-is-its-own-birthplace/`.