

THEORIES OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS

POLSCI 740

Term 2, Winter 2023

Instructor: Dr. Netina Tan

Email: netina@mcmaster.ca

Lecture: Monday, 2:30pm-5:20pm

Classroom: KTH 709

Office Hours: KTH 514, Mondays, 1-

2pm or via appointment (sign up via

Google docs)

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Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the main theoretical and conceptual issues in the field of Comparative Politics. Students will be offered a broad view of the selected themes, concepts and approaches that characterize the field, as well as an appreciation of how the field has evolved over time. The scope of the material will range from comparative paradigms, theoretical approaches, dominant methodologies, key issues, and debates in the understanding of contemporary politics and government in both developing and developed countries.

This course is intended for PhD political science students planning to write comprehensive exams and/or a thesis in Comparative Politics. Methodologically, you will learn how to develop a research design that will be useful for framing your grant application or a developing your doctoral prospectus.

Each week we will discuss a subset of the key scholarly literature, focusing on a major theme or theoretical debate. Key methodological or theoretical issues are addressed in context of the substantive and theoretical works, as well as in the written assignments for the class. Students who plan to take the comprehensive exams are strongly encouraged to read the recommended readings.

**PhD students taking the comprehensive exam in Comparative Politics should note that this course does not contain the complete readings and need to consult the detailed Comparative Politics exam reading list.*

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, graduate students should:

- be equipped with the necessary skills to formulate a meaningful research question, learn to draft a two-page research or grant proposal on a comparative politics topic
- be prepared to write a comprehensive field examination in Comparative Politics
- have a better sense of the breadth of the field, its intellectual history, the theoretical and methodological approaches and debates in Comparative Politics.

Recommended Materials and Texts

- Lichbach, Mark Irving, and Alan S. Zuckerman. 2009. *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*. Cambridge University Press. Available online from [McMaster's library](#)
- Dickovick, J. Tyler, and Jonathan Eastwood. 2013. *Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases*. New York: Oxford University Press. (*Recommended for MA students*).
- Caramani, Daniele. 2011. *Comparative Politics*. Second Edition. New York: Oxford University Press. (*Recommended for MA students*). Available in print at McMaster's library.

*Assigned book chapters are available on course reserves/department. Assigned journal articles can be downloaded via [ProQuest](#).

Class Format

This is a reading intensive and discussion-based seminar that will be conducted in-person (unless stated otherwise). Each seminar will typically begin with 15 mins overview of the key ideas or concepts presented in each week's readings by the instructor, followed by student's weekly leadership, sharing of article/book that best encapsulate the week's theme and deep discussions of the readings. Students must have done the required readings and be prepared to discuss and engage with the readings.

Office Hours

I will hold office hours every Monday (1-2pm or by appointment). I will be available to meet with you one-on-one for at least 15 mins time slot with you. Sign up on the Google Docs sheet (link available on Avenue to Learn).

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Class Discussion and Participation (10%)
2. 10 x Weekly Response (20%)
3. 2 x Reading Leadership (15% each, total 30%)
4. Research Design (20%), due 13 Mar
5. Take Home Final Exam (20%), due 12 Apr

Course Evaluation – Details

1. Class Discussions and Participation (10%)

This is a reading and discussion intensive seminar. All students are expected to complete the reading assignments for each week and contribute actively to class discussion. Your class attendance and participation are critical to your learning success. Regardless of medical note/emergencies, your absence will affect your participation grade. All students should be prepared to talk and respond to the day's required readings. Even if you're not the presenter, you should come prepared with a few key points and have something meaningful to say about each reading. You will be evaluated based on 1) attendance, 2) quality of your participation, and 3) the degree to which your interventions advance the discussion. You are welcome to see me during office hour to discuss your interim class participation grade/progress.

2. 10 X Weekly Response and 1 x Annotated Bibliography (20%)

Each student will submit one response (about 1 paragraph) on at least one assigned reading or

comment on the links between the readings for each week (Weeks 2-5 and 7-12). The weekly response should address these following questions:

- a. What are the key arguments/approach in the week's readings?
- b. What are the central debates in the field on the issue under consideration?
- c. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the article/book under study?
- d. Have the disputes been resolved and what more needs be done or discovered?

Your response is **not** a summary of the readings. Every response must include a thesis/key argument that is in reference to the week's readings. You may like to refer to the questions each week to get the key arguments/debates of the readings for each week.

Additionally, you will also identify and provide one annotated bibliography of a journal article or a book that best encapsulate the topic for the week. Find an academic or scholarly work that you think best represents the method/work discussed (e.g. comparative method, institutionalism, ethnic conflict etc) for the week. Try to go beyond the course readings. Sample of an annotated bibliography:

Balcells, Laia. 2017. *Rivalry and Revenge: The Politics of Violence during Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

What explains violence against civilians in civil wars and, more specifically, in conventional civil wars? Balcells argues for the importance of prewar political preferences to explain this phenomenon and drawing upon a rich body of quantitative and qualitative evidence primarily from the Spanish Civil War. *Another line here to explain how the book's method/thesis links with the week's work.*

Your response will be graded based on quality and depth of analysis. ***All weekly assignments must be uploaded onto the Avenue's folder by 12 pm the night before our lesson.***

3. 2 x Reading Leadership (15% each, total = 30%) [see Sign-up sheet]

You will serve as a discussion leader for 2 sessions from Week 2-11 (except Week 8). You will sign up for your presentations on the first day of class. Each presentation and discussion should be around 10 minutes (excluding 5 mins of Q and A). You are welcome to use power point slides or any other presentation tools that facilitate class discussion. As a guide, the presentation ought to include the following:

- Key thesis/argument/theoretical approach of the article;
- Strengths and weaknesses of the argument/findings;
- New insights/contributions/gaps in comparative politics;
- Links between readings, as well as provide a critical assessment of those readings;
- 1-2 questions for discussion.
- You are welcome to share your notes with the class on Avenue

Treat the leadership discussions as opportunities for you to act as an instructor to lead discussions. As an instructor, you will want to review and highlight issues/concepts from the readings that they may not have noticed on their own and raise pertinent questions that lay the ground for further discussion. Being a presenter offers you an opportunity to practice your presentation skills and demonstrate your ability to use technology to present your work. You will be assessed based on the content, quality, clarity, and delivery of the presentation. Plan ahead. Any last-minute changes/absence on your scheduled presentation will receive a zero grade.

4. Two-Page Research Proposal (20% due on 13 Mar)

Research method is key to comparative politics. As the great philosopher of science, Henry Poincare once said: “The natural sciences talk about their results. The social sciences talk about their methods”! In this course, you will learn to develop a two-page research proposal (similar to a SSHRC research statement) with a clear question, comparative method, theoretical approach and data sources for your investigation. To do well in this assignment, identify your topic/question early in the term. Sign up for office hours and develop your question and the body of literature that you will engage with, in consultation with me.

Key elements required:

- a. **Research question:** Drawing from your own research interests and the themes outlined in this class, develop a research question (explanatory, descriptive or policy oriented) for your research proposal.
- b. **Comparative method and case selection:** To answer your proposed question, identify a comparative method (e.g. case/variable oriented; within-case; single-case; controlled paired comparison; small or large-N analysis etc) and explain the logic of selecting the case/s in your study.
- c. **Body of literature:** Explain which body of literature that your research engages with but citing 2-3 key scholars/classic literature (e.g. ethnic conflict, gender, electoral system)
- d. **Unit of analysis:** Specify what exactly you intend to conduct your research on (e.g. individuals, groups, artifacts, towns, social interactions, policy etc)
- e. **Time period of analysis:** Identify the time period of your research (e.g. 1997 to 2020 or Jan-Mar 2022);
- f. **Sources:** Explain and specify where you are most likely to draw your evidence from for your research and use to answer the question (e.g. national archives, party newsletters, national statistics, interviews etc).

You ought to be able to develop your research topic based on our course’s weekly themes and readings. Be concise in your writing. Make every sentence count. A bibliography is required for all works cited. Use Chicago Manual of Style (in-text citation). Submit your proposal by uploading it electronically on Avenue’s “Assignment” folder.

5. Take Home Final Exam (20%), due 12 Apr 2021

The final exam will cover all the materials introduced through the term. You will choose two out of four questions provided. The exam questions will be circulated electronically on 6 Apr 2022. The exam questions will be drawn from current political events and resemble questions ask in the comparative politics comprehensive field examinations. Your answer for each question should be around 3-4 pages, single-spaced (around 2000 words each). A bibliography is required for all works cited.

Course Schedule

	Date	Topics	Assignment Due Dates
1	9 Jan	Introduction	<i>Sign up for presentations</i>
2	16 Jan	What is Comparative Politics?	<i>Weekly response 1</i>
3	23 Jan	Comparative Method 1	<i>Weekly response 2</i>
4	30 Jan	Comparative Method 2	<i>Weekly response 3</i>
5	6 Feb	Structural-Historical Analysis	<i>Weekly response 4</i>
6	13 Feb	Institutionalism	<i>Weekly response 5</i>
Mid-Term Recess			
7	27 Feb	Culture and Constructivism	<i>Weekly response 6</i>
8	6 Mar	Rational Choice	<i>Weekly response 7</i>
9	13 Mar	States, Regimes and Democratization	<i>Weekly response 8</i> <i>Research proposal due, submit on Avenue before class by 2:29pm</i>
10	20 Mar	Elections and Electoral Systems	<i>Weekly response 9</i>
11	27 Apr	Ethnicity, Gender, and Representation	<i>Weekly response 10</i>
12	3 Apr	Digital Technology and Democracy	<i>Circulate Take-Home Exam</i>
13	10 Apr	Course Overview	<i>Submit Take-Home Exam on Avenue on 12 Apr by 12pm</i>

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1: Jan 9 / Introduction

Required Reading

1. Lichbach, Mark Irving, and Alan S. Zuckerman. 1997. *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*. Cambridge University Press, Chapter 1.

Week 2: Jan 16 / What is Comparative Politics?

Required Reading

1. Kohli, Atul, Peter Evans, Peter J. Katzenstein, Adam Przeworski, Susanne Hoerber Rudolph, James C. Scott, and Theda Skocpol. 1995. "[The Role of Theory in Comparative Politics: A Symposium](#)." *World Politics* 48 (1) (October 1): 1–49.
2. Munck, Gerardo, and Richard Snyder. 2007. "[Debating the Direction of Comparative Politics An Analysis of Leading Journals](#)." *Comparative Political Studies* 40 (1):5–31.
3. Laitin, David. 2002. "Comparative Politics: The State of the Subdiscipline." In *Political Science: State of the Discipline*, 630–659. W.W. Norton & Co.
4. Wilson, Matthew Charles. 2017. "[Trends in Political Science Research and the Progress of Comparative Politics](#)." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50 (4):979–84.

Recommended Reading

1. Almond, Gabriel A. 1956. "[Comparative Political Systems](#)." *The Journal of Politics* 18 (3) (August 1): 391–409.
2. Wiarda, Howard J. 1998. "[Is Comparative Politics Dead? Rethinking the Field in the Post-Cold War Era](#)." *Third World Quarterly* 19 (5): 935–949.

Questions

- What do comparativists do?

- Is the comparative method an effective means of drawing inferences in social science?
- What is the role of comparative politics in empirical research? Use at least one of the readings to answer the question.

Week 3: Jan 23 / Comparative Methodology 1

Required Reading

1. Lijphart, A. 1975. "[The Comparable-Cases Strategy in Comparative Research.](#)" *Comparative Political Studies* 8 (2): 158–177.
2. Ragin, Charles. 1989. "The Distinctiveness of Comparative Social Science." In *The Comparative Method*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1–18.
3. Mahoney, James. 2007. "[Qualitative Methodology and Comparative Politics.](#)" *Comparative Political Studies* 40 (2) (February 1): 122–144.
4. Tarrow, Sidney. 2010. "[The Strategy of Paired Comparison: Toward a Theory of Practice.](#)" *Comparative Political Studies* 43 (2) (February 1): 230–259.

Recommended Readings

1. Collier, David. "The Comparative Method." SSRN ELibrary, 1993. http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1540884.
2. Dion, Douglas. 1998. "[Evidence and Inference in the Comparative Case Study.](#)" *Comparative Politics* 30 (2) (January 1): 127–145.
3. Rueschemeyer, Dietrich. 2003. "Can One or Few Cases Yield Theoretical Gains?" In *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, 305–336. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
4. QMMR. 2020. "[Symposium: Comparative Area Studies.](#)" *The Maxwell School of Syracuse University* 17–18 (1).

Some good books on Comparative Method

- Ragin, Charles C. *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. Univ of California Press, 2014.
- Peters, B. Guy. *Strategies for Comparative Research in Political Science*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Geddes, Barbara. *Paradigms and Sand-Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. University of Michigan Press, 2003.

Questions

- What is comparative method?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of comparative method?
- What is an area study?

Week 4: Jan 30/ Comparative Methodology 2

Required Reading

1. Bennett, Andrew, and Colin Elman. 2006. "[Qualitative Research: Recent Developments in Case Study Methods.](#)" *Annual Review of Political Science* 9 (1): 455–476.
2. Gerring, John. 2004. "[What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?](#)" *American Political Science Review* 98 (02): 341–354.
3. Geddes, Barbara. 1990. "[How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics.](#)" *Political Analysis* 2 (1) (January 1): 131–150.
4. Coppedge, Michael. "Thickening Thin Concepts and Theories: Combining Large N and Small in Comparative Politics." *Comparative Politics* 31, no. 4 (1999): 465–76. <https://doi.org/10.2307/422240>.

Recommended Reading

1. Collier, David, and James Mahoney. 1996. "[Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research](#)." *World Politics* 49 (1) (October 1): 56–91.
2. Goertz, Gary, and James Mahoney. *Within-Case versus Cross-Case Causal Analysis*. Princeton University Press, 2012.
<http://princeton.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.23943/princeton/9780691149707.001.0001/upso-9780691149707-chapter-007>.
3. Falletti, Tulia G., and Julia F. Lynch. "Context and Causal Mechanisms in Political Analysis." *Comparative Political Studies* 42, no. 9 (September 1, 2009): 1143–66.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414009331724>.
4. Thiem, Alrik. "Standards of Good Practice and the Methodology of Necessary Conditions in Qualitative Comparative Analysis." *Political Analysis*, September 25, 2016, mpw024.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/pan/mpw024>.
5. Morgan, David L. "Living Within Blurry Boundaries: The Value of Distinguishing Between Qualitative and Quantitative Research." *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 12, no. 3 (July 1, 2018): 268–79. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689816686433>.

Questions

- How should comparativists select their cases for comparison?
- Comparativists are often accused of selection bias or selecting cases based on the dependent variable. Is this a problem? If so, what can be done about it?
- What is "many variables-small n" problem? What are the ways to overcome this problem in comparative analysis?
- Why cross-case qualitative causal inference is weak, and why we should still compare?
- Is mixed method logically coherent and good approach for comparative research?

Some good books on case studies and qualitative research:

- George, Alexander, and Andrew Bennett. *Case Studies and Theory Development In The Social Sciences*. MIT Press, 2005.
- Goertz, Gary, and James Mahoney. *A Tale of Two Cultures: Qualitative and Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012.
- Ragin, Charles. *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.
- Collier, David, and John Gerring. *Concepts and Methods in Social Science: The Tradition of Giovanni Sartori*. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Porta, Donatella della, ed. *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198719571.001.0001>.
Very good book on the varied methods to conduct research on social movement (e.g. comparative historical analysis; QCA, observation, fieldwork, discourse and frame analysis, interviews, focus groups, surveys etc (e-copy available in Mill's library)

Week 5: Feb 6 / Structural Historical Analysis

Required Readings

1. Mahoney, James, and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, ed. 2003. *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge University Press, Chapter 1.

2. Katzelson, Ira. 2009. "Strong Theory, Complex History: Structure and Configuration in Comparative Politics Revisited." In *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture and Structure*, 96–116. Second Edition. Cambridge University Press.
3. Skocpol, Theda, and Margaret Somers. 1980. "[The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry](#)." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22 (2) (April 1): 174–197.
4. Capoccia, Giovanni, and R. Daniel Kelemen. 2007. "[The Study of Critical Junctures: Theory, Narrative, and Counterfactuals in Historical Institutionalism](#)." *World Politics* 59 (03): 341–69.

Recommended Reading

1. Mahoney, James. 2004. "[Comparative-Historical Methodology](#)." *Annual Review of Sociology* 30 (1): 81–101.
2. Thelen, Kathleen. 1999. "[Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics](#)." *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1): 369–404.
3. Pierson, Paul, and Theda Skocpol. 2002. "Historical Institutionalism in Contemporary Political Science." In *Political Science: State of the Discipline*, 693–721. NY: W.W. Norton.
4. Steinmo, Sven, Kathleen Thelen, and Frank Longstreth, ed. 1992. "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics." *Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis*. Cambridge University Press, 1-32.

Some good books on Comparative Historical Analysis:

- Mahoney, James, and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds. *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511803963>.
- Mahoney, James, and Kathleen Thelen, eds. *Advances in Comparative-Historical Analysis*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Questions:

1. What do we learn about the causes of macro-political change?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of structural-historical explanations?
3. What are the key strategies used by historical institutionalists to explain political developments? Do these analyses miss out anything important?

Advanced graduate students are encouraged to scan these classic texts:

- Moore, Barrington. 1993. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Beacon Press.
- Skocpol, Theda. 1979. *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*. Cambridge University Press.
- Tilly, Charles, ed. 1975. *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*. 1st Ed. Princeton Univ Pr.

Week 6: Feb 13 / Institutionalism

Required Readings

1. Hall, Peter A., and Rosemary C. R. Taylor. 1996. "[Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms](#)." *Political Studies* 44 (5): 936–957.
2. March, James G., and Johan P. Olsen. 1984. "[The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life](#)." *American Political Science Review* 78 (3) (September 1): 734–749.
3. Pierson, Paul. 2000. "[The Limits of Design: Explaining Institutional Origins and Change](#)." *Governance* 13 (4): 475–499.

4. Skarbek, David. "Qualitative Research Methods for Institutional Analysis." *Journal of Institutional Economics* 16, no. 4 (August 2020): 409–22.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S174413741900078X>.
5. North, Douglass C. 1990. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge University Press, 3-10.

Recommended Reading

1. Rhodes, R. a. W. "Old Institutionalisms: An Overview." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*, 2011. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199604456.013.0007>.
2. March, James G., and Johan P. Olsen. "Elaborating the 'New Institutionalism.'" In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*, 159–75, 2011.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199604456.013.0008>.
3. Remmer, Karen L. 1997. "[Theoretical Decay and Theoretical Development: The Resurgence of Institutional Analysis](#)." *World Politics* 50 (1) (October 1): 34–61.
4. Tsebelis, George. 2002. *Veto Players: How Political Institutions Work*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Preview of chapters available here:
http://politics.as.nyu.edu/docs/IO/4756/tsebelis_book.pdf

Questions

- What is the difference between new and old institutionalism?
- How is the comparative method used in institutionalist approach?
- The new institutionalism has been criticized for being too narrow and static. Is this a fair criticism?

Some books that adopt institutionalist approach

- North, D. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Pierson, Paul. *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- Tsebelis, George. *Veto Players: How Political Institutions Work*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2002.

Feb 20-24 / Mid-term recess

Week 7: Feb 27/ Culture & Constructivism

Required Reading

1. Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." In *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, 3–30. N.Y.: Basic Books.
2. Almond, Gabriel Abraham, and Sidney Verba, ed. 1989. *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Sage Publications, Inc, Chapters 1 and 3.
3. Wedeen, Lisa. 2002. "[Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science](#)." *The American Political Science Review* 96 (4): 713–28.
4. Finnemore, Martha, and Kathryn Sikkink. 2001. "[Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics](#)." *Annual Review of Political Science* 4 (1): 391–416.
5. Posner, Daniel N. 2004. "[The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi](#)." *American Political Science Review* 98 (04): 529–45.

Recommended Readings

1. Ross, Marc Howard. "Culture in Comparative Political Analysis." In *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*, edited by Alan S. Zuckerman and Mark Irving Lichbach, 2nd ed., 134–61. Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511804007.007>.
2. Berman, Sheri. 2001. "[Ideas, Norms, and Culture in Political Analysis](#)." *Comparative Politics* 33 (2) (January 1): 231–250.
3. Lichterman, Paul, and Daniel Cefaï. "The Idea of Political Culture." In *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, 2006. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199270439.003.0021>.
4. Tarrow, Sidney. 1996. "[Making Social Science Work Across Space and Time: A Critical Reflection on Robert Putnam's Making Democracy Work](#)." *The American Political Science Review* 90 (2) (June 1): 389–397.
5. Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. "[The Clash of Civilizations?](#)" *Foreign Affairs*, June 1.

Questions

- What is political culture? How are they created? How do we know culture matters?
- Do Almond and Verba provide a credible explanation?
- Is there a constructivist methodology? How do Constructivists propose to bridge the divide between international relations and comparative politics?
- Discuss the importance of ideas, norms, and values in the study of comparative politics. Support your argument with empirical examples.

Some good books that mobilize or refute culturalist explanations:

- Putnam, Robert D., Robert Leonardi, and Raffaella Y. Nanetti. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Revised ed. edition. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Posner, Daniel N. *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Wedeen, Lisa. *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria*. 1st edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Week 8: Mar 6 / Rational Choice

Required Reading

1. Munck, Gerardo L. (Gerardo Luis). 2001. "[Game Theory and Comparative Politics: New Perspectives and Old Concerns](#)." *World Politics* 53 (2): 173–204.
2. Huber, Evelyne, and Michelle Dion. 2002. "[Revolution or Contribution? Rational Choice Approaches in the Study of Latin American Politics](#)." *Latin American Politics and Society* 44 (3) (October 1): 1–28.
3. Dixit, Avinash K. 2009. *Games of Strategy*. 3rd ed. W. W. Norton & Co., Read Chapters 2 and 3 for basic concepts and techniques used in Game theory.
4. Magaloni, Beatriz. 2010. "[The Game of Electoral Fraud and the Ousting of Authoritarian Rule](#)." *American Journal of Political Science* 54 (3): 751–65.
5. Little, Andrew. 2015. "[Fraud and Monitoring in Non-Competitive Elections](#)." *Political Science Research and Methods* 3 (1): 21–41.

Recommended Readings

1. Levi, Margaret. 2009. "Reconsiderations of Rational Choice in Comparative and Historical Analysis." In *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*, 117–133. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

2. Green, Donald P., and Donald P. Green Ian Shapiro. 1994. *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science*. Yale University Press, 1-46.
3. Cox, Gary. 2004. "Lies, Damned Lies and Rational Choice Analyses." In *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*, 167–86. US: Cambridge University Press.

Questions

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of rational choice approach in comparative studies? Choose two or three major rational choice contributions in comparative politics and assess whether they have micro-foundations.
- Rational choice has often been accused of oversimplifying human behaviour, ignoring the origins of institutions and overlooking culture that shape preferences and decision-making processes. Discuss.

Week 9: Mar 13 / State, Regimes and Democratization

States and Regimes

Required Reading

1. Midgal, Joel. 2009. "Researching the State." In *Comparative Politics Rationality, Culture, and Structure*, 162–192. Second. Cambridge University Press.
2. Skocpol, Theda. 1985. "Bringing the State Back In." In *Bringing the State Back In*, 3–43. U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
3. Levi, Margaret, ed. 2002. "The State of the Study of the State." In *Political Science: State of the Discipline*, 33–55. U.S.: W. W. Norton & Company.
4. Lawson, Stephanie. 1993. "[Conceptual Issues in the Comparative Study of Regime Change and Democratization](#)." *Comparative Politics* 25 (2): 183–205.

Recommended Reading

1. Fishman, Robert M. 1990. "[Rethinking State and Regime: Southern Europe's Transition to Democracy](#)." *World Politics* 42 (3): 422–40.
2. Linz, Juan J. 2000. *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*. Lynne Rienner, Chapter 1.
3. Bogaards, M. 2009. "[How to Classify Hybrid Regimes? Defective Democracy and Electoral Authoritarianism](#)." *Democratization* 16 (2): 399–423.
4. Linz, Juan J., and Alfred Stepan. 1996. "Modern Nondemocratic Regimes." In *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, 38–54. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ Press.

Questions

- What is the difference between "state" and "regime"?
- What makes a strong state? What is a developmental state? What is a weak state?
- Define and differentiate between two or three major political regimes (democracy, authoritarianism, electoral authoritarianism, totalitarianism, communism etc.) in the articles.

Democratization

Required Reading

1. Levitsky, S, and D Collier. 1997. "[Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research](#)." *World Politics* 49 (3): 430–451.
2. Bunce, Valerie. 2000. "[Comparative Democratization Big and Bounded Generalizations](#)." *Comparative Political Studies* 33 (6-7) (September 1): 703–734.

3. Schedler, Andreas. "[Elections Without Democracy: The Menu of Manipulation.](#)" *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 2 (2002): 36–50.
4. Howard, Marc, and Philip G. Roessler. "[Liberalizing Electoral Outcomes in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes.](#)" *American Journal of Political Science* 50, no. 2 (April 2006): 365–381.
5. Geddes, Barbara. "[What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?](#)" *Annual Review of Political Science* 2, no. 1 (1999): 115–144.

Recommended Readings

1. Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late 20th Century*. University of Oklahoma Press, 3-108 (read selectively and note key arguments).
2. Brownlee, Jason M. "[Low Tide after the Third Wave: Exploring Politics under Authoritarianism.](#)" *Comparative Politics* 34, no. 4 (July 2002): 477.
3. Carothers, T. "[The End of the Transition Paradigm.](#)" *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 1 (2002): 5–21.
4. Linz, Juan J. and Alfred C. Stepan. "[Toward Consolidated Democracies.](#)" *Journal of Democracy* 7, no. 2 (1996): 14–33.
5. Art, David. 2012. "[What Do We Know About Authoritarianism After Ten Years?](#)" *Comparative Politics* 44 (3): 351–373.

Questions

- What are the causes of the "third wave" of democratizations?
- What are the key challenges of democratization in the post-third wave era?
- Do mass protests necessarily bring about regime change and stability?
- Why do authoritarian regimes persist in the age of democracy

Week 10: Mar 20 / Elections and Electoral Systems

Required Reading

1. Norris, Pippa. "[Choosing Electoral Systems: Proportional, Majoritarian and Mixed Systems.](#)" *International Political Science Review* 18, no. 3 (July 1, 1997): 297–312.
2. Remmer, K. 2008. "The Politics of Institutional Change: Electoral Reform in Latin America, 1978-002." *Party Politics* 14: 5–30.
3. Blais, André, Romain Lachat, Airo Hino, and Pascal Doray-Demers. 2011. "The Mechanical and Psychological Effects of Electoral Systems: A Quasi-Experimental Study." *Comparative Political Studies* 44 (12): 1599–1621. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414011407472>.
4. Ordeshook, Peter C., and Olga V. Shvetsova. 1994. "Ethnic Heterogeneity, District Magnitude, and the Number of Parties." *American Journal of Political Science* 38 (1): 100–123. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111337>.
5. Birch, Sarah. 2007. "[Electoral Systems and Electoral Misconduct.](#)" *Comparative Political Studies* 40 (12): 1533–56.

Recommended Reading

1. Lust-Okar, Ellen, and Amaney Ahmad Jamal. 2002. "Rulers and Rules Reassessing the Influence of Regime Type on Electoral Law Formation." *Comparative Political Studies* 35 (3): 337–66. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414002035003004>.
2. Lehoucq, Fabrice. 2003. "[Electoral Fraud: Causes, Types, and Consequences.](#)" *Annual Review of Political Science* 6 (1): 233–56.
3. Svensson, Palle, and Jørgen Elklit. 1997. "[The Rise of Election Monitoring: What Makes Elections Free and Fair?](#)" *Journal of Democracy* 8 (3): 32–46.

4. Reynolds, Andrew, Benjamin Reilly, and Andrew Ellis. *Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook*. Accessed February 12, 2013.

A very good book on effects of electoral systems:

Grofman, Bernard, and Arend Lijphart. *Electoral Laws and Their Political Consequences*. New York: Algora Publishing, 2003. Read selectively.

Questions

- Are some electoral systems more democratic and representative than others?
- Is there a best electoral design to ensure the representation of ethnic minorities?
- Is there an electoral system that is most vulnerable to electoral manipulation and fraud?

Week 11: Mar 27 / Ethnicity, Gender and Political Representation

Required Reading

1. Anderson, Benedict. 2006. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New Edition. Verso, Chapter 1.
2. Horowitz, Donald L. 1985. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, pp.3-54.
3. Lijphart, Arend. "[Constitutional Design for Divided Societies](#)." *Journal of Democracy* 15, no. 2 (2004): 96–109.
4. Mansbridge, Jane. 1999. "[Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent 'Yes.'](#)" *The Journal of Politics* 61 (3): 628–57.
5. Wängnerud, Lena. "[Women in Parliaments: Descriptive and Substantive Representation](#)." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12, no. 1 (2009): 51–69.
6. Htun, Mala. 2004. "[Is Gender Like Ethnicity? The Political Representation of Identity Groups](#)." *Perspectives on Politics* 2 (03): 439–458.

Recommended Readings

Ethnic Conflict

1. McCauley, John F. 2017. "[Disaggregating Identities to Study Ethnic Conflict](#)." *Ethnopolitics* 16 (1): 12–20.
2. Lublin, David, and Shaun Bowler. 2018. "[Electoral Systems and Ethnic Minority Representation](#)." *The Oxford Handbook of Electoral Systems*, April, 2018.
3. Fearon, James D., and David D. Laitin. "[Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War](#)." *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 01 (2003): 75–90.
4. Lake, David A., and Donald Rothchild. 1996. "[Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict](#)." *International Security* 21 (2) (October 1): 41–75.

Gender

1. Rule, Wilma. 1981. "[Why Women Don't Run: The Critical Contextual Factors in Women's Legislative Recruitment](#)." *Political Research Quarterly* 34 (1): 60–77.
2. Bush, Sarah Sunn. "[International Politics and the Spread of Quotas for Women in Legislatures](#)." *International Organization* 65, no. 1 (2011): 103–37.
3. Dahlerup, Drude. 2007. "[Electoral Gender Quotas: Between Equality of Opportunity and Equality of Result](#)." *Representation* 43 (2): 73–92.
4. Hughes, Melanie. 2011. "[Intersectionality, Quotas, and Minority Women's Political Representation Worldwide](#)." *American Political Science Review* 105 (3): 604–20.

5. Rule, Wilma. 1987. "[Electoral Systems, Contextual Factors and Women's Opportunity for Election to Parliament in Twenty-Three Democracies.](#)" *Political Research Quarterly* 40 (3): 477–98.

Questions

- What is "ethnicity" and why is it a main source of national conflicts?
- Theories of ethnic conflict are usually premised on opposite assumptions. Where the theory of cultural pluralism conceives ethnic conflict as the clash of incompatible values, modernization and economic-interest theories of conflict as the struggle of resources and opportunities; others have posited "ancient hatred" and elite persuasion as sources of conflict.
- What is the best electoral design to contain ethnic conflicts? What is the best electoral system to ensure fair representation of ethnic minorities in government?
- Institutional remedies for the underrepresentation of women and ethnic minorities often assume distinct forms. Women tend to receive candidate quotas in political parties, whereas ethnic groups are granted reserved seats in legislatures. Discuss why there is a divergence between the modes of gender and ethnic representation in different countries.
- What is the best electoral system to ensure the women's political representation?

Week 12: Apr 3 / Digital Technology and Democracy

Required Reading

1. Moore, Martin. 2019. "[Protecting Democratic Legitimacy in a Digital Age.](#)" *The Political Quarterly* 90 (S1): 92–106.
2. Gunitsky, Seva. 2015. "Corrupting the Cyber-Commons: Social Media as a Tool of Autocratic Stability." *Perspectives on Politics* 13 (1): 42–54.
3. Greitens, Sheena Chestnut. 2013. "[Authoritarianism Online: What Can We Learn from Internet Data in Nondemocracies?](#)" *PS: Political Science & Politics* 46 (2): 262–70.
4. Feldstein, Steven. 2019. "The Road to Digital Unfreedom: How Artificial Intelligence Is Reshaping Repression." *Journal of Democracy* 30 (1): 40–52. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2019.0003>.
5. Wahlström, Mattias, and Anton Törnberg. 2019. "Social Media Mechanisms for Right-Wing Political Violence in the 21st Century: Discursive Opportunities, Group Dynamics, and Co-Ordination." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 0 (0): 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2019.1586676>.
6. Polyakova, Alina, and Chris Meserole. 2019. "Exporting Digital Authoritarianism: The Russian and Chinese Models." Policy Briefs. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/exporting-digital-authoritarianism/>.

Recommended Reading

1. Aro, Jessikka. 2016. "[The Cyberspace War: Propaganda and Trolling as Warfare Tools.](#)" *European View* 15 (1): 121–32.
2. Allcott, Hunt, Matthew Gentzkow, and Chuan Yu. 2019. "Trends in the Diffusion of Misinformation on Social Media." *Research & Politics* 6 (2): 2053168019848554. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168019848554>.
3. Howard, Philip N., Samuel Woolley, and Ryan Calo. 2018. "[Algorithms, Bots, and Political Communication in the US 2016 Election: The Challenge of Automated Political Communication for Election Law and Administration.](#)" *Journal of Information Technology & Politics* 15 (2): 81–93.

Questions

- Does digital technology promote or disrupt democracy?
- Is digital authoritarianism on the rise?
- Is it possible to regulate the growing cyber-chaos? Who's responsible?

Week 13: Apr 10 /Course Overview

No required reading

Course Policies

Submission and Grading of Assignments

MA and PhD students

While the course requirements are identical for MA and PhD students, I expect a different level of understanding and engagement depending on a student's level of graduate study. MA students are expected to focus primarily on the assigned readings read recommended literature only for the research papers. PhD students are expected to read the recommended readings each week, draw upon those readings and respond in greater depth in their written assignments and oral presentations.

Citation and Style Guidelines

All written work ought to follow the author-date citation style according to the [Chicago Manual of Style](#) available through the McMaster University Library site.

In-class Behaviour

All cell-phones must be turned off and stowed away during class.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
69-0	F

Late Assignments

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due dates. Assignments turned in after the beginning of the class will not earn full credit. **2% will be deducted each day after the submission deadline. Late assignments will not be accepted 48 hours after the original due date.** If you anticipate having problems meeting these deadlines, please contact me before the assignment is due to discuss your situation. To avoid late penalties and ensure fairness, written documentation of your emergency may be required

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should contact me via email as soon as possible to work out an alternative assignment or submission deadline.

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Turnitin.com

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via Avenue to Learn (A2L) plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work through A2L and/or Turnitin.com must still submit an electronic and/or hardcopy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com or A2L. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more information please refer to the [Turnitin.com Policy](#).

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a RISO accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty

- Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- Improper collaboration in group work.
- Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-

525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#).

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.