

Foundations of Comparative Politics

POLI 140

Professor: Eric Mosinger
Office: Carnegie 203H
Office Hours: Thursday 2–4 pm
Email: emosinge@macalester.edu

Spring 2019
Monday, Wednesday, & Friday
Time: 10:50 am–11:50 am
Classroom: Carnegie 208



Group photo of leaders at 10th BRICS Summit. Photo credit: www.kremlin.ru.

1 Course Summary

Welcome to Foundations of Comparative Politics! In this course we will use the method of comparison to better understand the domestic politics of different societies. We will compare different trajectories of institutions, states, and economies; the characteristics and consequences of different regimes; and the causes of revolution and political violence. We will examine different theoretical approaches (Modernization, Marxist, cultural, institutionalist, and agency-centered) and apply them to cases across the world. Examples of questions in Comparative Politics are diverse. Does capitalism support or subvert democracy? What explains intercommunal conflict in Lithuania or India? Why do some authoritarian regimes survive and others fall? Which of today's political actors

are revolutionary? Why do individuals mobilize to participate in protest, ethnic violence, revolution, and civil war? How can we best fight poverty? These questions may seem daunting due to their broad substantive and geographical scope, but in this course we will learn to consider them all through the framework of the comparative method.

2 Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Use the method of comparison to analyze divergent outcomes and their causes across cases.
- Define and identify different types of regimes, from totalitarian to democratic and everything in between.
- Gain an understanding of theories of regime change, democratic and authoritarian governance, civil society, revolution, civil war, ethnic conflict, and political economy.
- Independently investigate and write a research paper, comment intelligently on others' work, and revise your own work based on feedback.

3 Student Evaluation

Course Assessment		Grading Scale			
Assignment	% of Total	Grade	Range	Grade	Range
1) Participation	15%	A	93–100	C	73–76.9
2) Single-Point Paper	10%	A-	90–92.9	C-	70–72.9
3) Analytic Paper	25%	B+	87–89.9	D+	67–69.9
4) Peer Review Memo	10%	B	83–86.9	D	63–66.9
5) Reviewer Response Memo	10%	B-	80–82.9	D-	60–62.9
6) Comparative Research Paper	30%	C+	77–79.9	F	Below 60

4 Required Books

- Robert D Putnam, Robert Leonardi, and Raffaella Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).
- Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution, 1917-1932* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).
- Alberto Alesina and Edward L Glaeser, *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe: A World of Difference* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

5 Other Readings

All of the other readings are available in one of two places: either posted on the class Moodle page as a PDF, or (for academic articles) on Google Scholar. Macalester provides internet access to most academic journals, and if you don't already know how, I'd like you to learn how to search for them. So try this:

Step 1: Connect to Wi-Fi while you are on the Macalester campus (or through [Mac's VPN service](#) if you are off-campus)

Step 2: Go to <http://scholar.google.com>.

Step 3: Search for the reading: e.g. "Schmitter and Karl What Democracy Is . . . and Is Not".

Step 4: Find our article and click on "MACLINKS FULL TEXT".

Step 5: Read the article, while taking careful notes filled with brilliant insights.

6 Expectations

The most important expectation is simple: be respectful of everyone in the class, and of each other's views. In an environment as diverse as Macalester's, everyone has a different perspective to offer, to teach, and to learn. Engage with the course fully and listen as carefully to your fellow students as you would to your professor.

Although this is an "introduction," this is not an easy class. There's plenty of reading and a lot of it is tough—but rewarding. I expect you to *leap* into the readings with enthusiasm from the very first class. If we all do that, we'll have a lively classroom discussion.

It's also essential to take notes as you read. Different methods work for different students: some try to create an outline of the main points, others may write a summary paragraph of the reading as soon as they finish it, while others might pull out five to seven quotes that capture key ideas. It would be a good idea to experiment with different styles throughout the course to learn what works best for you.

Arrive on time and ready to participate. **If you will be late or absent, please email me at least 30 minutes before class.** I will notice repeated absences and penalize your class participation grade.

I will ask a lot from you in this course, but you can expect to receive a lot from me in return. I hope that by the end of the semester, you will conclude that this was one of your most challenging courses at Macalester, and one of your best.

7 Evaluation

Format and Required Citation Style: Submit written work online through our Moodle (you will get my feedback through the Moodle as well) and use the [APSA style guide](#) to format citations and bibliography.

Language Options for Written Assignments: English or Spanish

On-Time Work Policy: My expectation is that you will complete your work by deadlines listed on this syllabus. When sufficiently compelling circumstances arise, I will grant students an extension without imposing a grade penalty. I will only grant extensions that students request *prior* to the original deadline. Students should tell me when they expect to complete their work and *communicate* with me about its progress.

Summary of Assignments

1. **Class Participation:** Do the readings before class! On many occasions I will lecture, but more often, we will engage in class and group discussions in which students are expected to share their thoughts, ideas, and questions with the class. We also will engage in a handful of classroom simulations, each of which is based on the theories covered in the readings. Students who fail to do the readings will be at a decisive disadvantage in these simulations. But don't worry! There will be lots of opportunities—and different ways—to be engaged with the class, and I am happy to give feedback and discuss your participation during office hours. 15% of course grade.
2. **Single Point Paper:** This short paper is your response to an individual reading or set of readings. Think about the key ideas that you see emerging from your reading or your reading notes. Advance a single argument or assertion, which may be substantive, analytic, methodological, theoretic, or any combination of these. Due on February 11th. 500 words *maximum*. 10% of course grade each.
3. **Analytic Paper:** This paper should demonstrate your ability to synthesize and—naturally—analyze the material that we've covered in this class. I will present a set of possible topics, and will also give you the opportunity to develop your own. This paper will be graded on its argumentation, evidence, and written communication. Due on March 3rd / March 10th. 6 pages. 25% of course grade.

Writing Workgroups: For your Analytical Paper, you'll be meeting up with a small group of peers to "workshop" your papers together. This means you must have your first draft of each paper written a week before the final due date. I'll divide you into groups and it will be up to you to arrange a meeting. I recommend that you begin the meetings by exchanging hard copies of your papers, and writing comments in the margins. Then you can talk over your comments and recommendations. Note that the due dates for the Analytic Paper above are presented as first draft/final draft.

4. **Comparative Research Paper:** For this research paper, you will ask a “why” question about some aspect of world politics. An example might be, “Why have mass pro-democracy protests broken out in some longstanding African dictatorships (for example, Zimbabwe and Uganda), but not others (Angola and Mozambique)?” Ask: How have political scientists tried to answer this question? What do you think is the answer to this question? What evidence would you need to collect to answer it? In order to develop your own argument, you will compare two (or more) cases in a most-similar-systems (MSS) or most-different-systems (MDS) research design. A template for these research designs is available on the Moodle. We will talk much more about how to conduct a comparative politics research project throughout the course. Due on April 28th / May 12th. 8–10 pages. 30% of course grade.

Peer Review: Similar to the Writing Workgroups, for your Research Paper you will be paired with a “peer reviewer”—another student in the class who will give you a two-page written feedback on your paper (a Peer Review Memo). Using this feedback, you will revise the Research Paper, and along with the final draft, you will submit a Reviewer Response Memo, which explains how you addressed the Peer Review Memo’s comments in your revisions. Each memo is worth 5% of the course grade.

8 Academic Integrity

The academy is an ancient tradition founded on the pursuit of truth at all costs. Honesty, personal responsibility, and integrity are therefore core values indispensable to any academic pursuit. You will be judged, justly, on the extent to which you uphold these values for the rest of your life, and your integrity is far more important than your final grade in this course.

One common form of academic dishonesty will result in an automatic failure of any assignment, or more likely, an F in the course along with a referral to the university honor board: plagiarism, presenting another person’s words, ideas, or work as if it were your own. Plagiarism is more than simply copying and pasting language found on the internet into your paper (although this is certainly plagiarism). Plagiarism also consists of taking someone’s ideas, or paraphrasing their language, without proper attribution. That is, you must always cite the original author, even when not using their original words. Citing your sources does not detract from the originality of your argument; rather, it situates your contribution within a long conversation with other scholars. This long conversation, including your contribution, is the academic pursuit.

As a final note, Macalester punishes academic dishonesty severely. Professors count on extremely sophisticated data analysis tools to detect most forms of plagiarism, and after thousands of exams and essays, most of us are able to spot plagiarism and other forms of cheating at a glance. The consequences may include expulsion from the college—a serious penalty in exchange for the possibility of a minor advantage on an assignment.

9 Laptop Policy

Students are permitted laptops in this course. However, I strongly discourage them. Electronic devices, with all their flashy lights and noises, distract your attention from where it belongs: your professor, your fellow students, and the incisive arguments flying around the classroom. It would be best to write notes in your notebook with pen and ink. If you would like your notes digitized, you can always photograph them after class. Great political thinkers from Aristotle to Hobbes to Skocpol made do with pen and ink (or in Aristotle's case, most likely a wax tablet and stylus), and you can too. Your most important role in the classroom is not passive notetaker, but active interlocutor. **The best way to incorporate laptops into the classroom—if you must—is to tilt the screen down when you are not using it.** If you require the use of any electronic device for accessibility reasons, I'm more than happy to accommodate your needs in this regard.

10 Other Resources for Students

Writing Help

The Macalester Academic Excellence (MAX) Center, located in Kagin Commons, has peer tutors available for assisting students in all stages of their writing. Hours are 9:00am–4:30pm Mon-Fri and 7-10pm Sun-Thur. Becky Graham and Jake Mohan also provide writing assistance to students during the daytime hours, Mon-Fri. You may drop in for help or call x6121 (day) or x6193 (evening) to schedule an appointment.

Students with Special Needs

I am committed to providing assistance to help you be successful in this course. Students seeking accommodations based on disabilities should meet with Lisa Landreman, Associate Dean of Students. Call x6220 for an appointment. I encourage you to address any special needs or accommodations with me as soon as you become aware of your needs. More info [here](#).

11 Schedule of Classes and Assignments

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

of Democracy 2, no. 3 (1991): 75–88.

Friday, January 25th

No reading.

Zachary Elkins, “Gradations of Democracy? Empirical Tests of Alternative Conceptualizations,” *American Journal of Political Science* 44, no. 2 (2000): 293–300.

Monday, January 28th

Patrick H O’Neil, *Essentials of Comparative Politics* (New York; London: W. W. Norton, 2015), Chapter 1.

Friday, February 8th

Amartya Kumar Sen, “Democracy as a Universal Value,” *Journal of Democracy* 10, no. 3 (1999): 3–17.

STATES AND STATE-BUILDING

Wednesday, January 30th

Charles Tilly, “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime,” in *Bringing the State Back In*, ed. Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (Cambridge University Press, 1985).

Monday, February 11th

Daron Acemoglu and James A Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 1–47.

Friday, February 1st

Jeffrey Ira Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 1–31.

DUE before class on Monday, February 11th: Single-Point Paper.

Wednesday, February 13th

Elisabeth Jean Wood, “An Insurgent Path to Democracy: Popular Mobilization, Economic Interests, and Regime Transition in South Africa and El Salvador,” *Comparative Political Studies* 34, no. 8 (2001): 862–888.

In-class simulation: Mapping Colonial Africa.

Monday, February 4th

Herbst, *States and Power in Africa*, pp. 35–57, 96–126, and 254–255.

Friday, February 15th

Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi, “Modernization: Theories and Facts,” *World Politics* 49, no. 02 (1997): 155–183.

REGIMES: DEMOCRACY

Wednesday, February 6th

Philippe C Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, “What Democracy Is . . . and Is Not,” *Journal*

In-class simulation: Democracy, Dictatorship, and Redistribution.

Note: There will be cookies.

CIVIL SOCIETY**Monday, February 18th**

Robert D Putnam, Robert Leonardi, and Raffaella Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 3–16 and 83–120.

Wednesday, February 20th

No class. The Political Science Department invites you to attend the Pi Sigma Alpha student research conference.

Friday, February 22nd

Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work*, pp. 163–86.

Monday, February 25th

Ashutosh Varshney, “Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society: India and Beyond,” *World Politics* 53, no. 03 (2001): 362–398.

Sheri Berman, “Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic,” *World Politics* 49, no. 3 (1997): 401–429.

REGIMES PART II: AUTHORITARIANISM**Wednesday, February 27th**

Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, “The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism,” *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 2 (2002): pp. 3-24.

Friday, March 1st

Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), Chapter 1.

DUE at NOON on Sunday, March 3rd: First Draft of Analytical Paper.

Schedule and attend writing workgroup meeting.

Monday, March 4th

Minxin Pei, “Is CCP Rule Fragile or Resilient?,” *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 1 (2012): 27–41.

REVOLUTION**Wednesday, March 6th**

Theda Skocpol, “France, Russia, China: A Structural Analysis of Social Revolutions,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 18, no. 2 (1976): 175–210.

Friday, March 8th

Timur Kuran, “Now out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989,” *World Politics* 44, no. 01 (1991): 7–48.

In-class simulation: Threshold Models of Revolution.**DUE at NOON on Sunday, March 10th: Analytical Paper Final Draft.****Monday, March 11th**

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution, 1917-1932* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 1–67.

Wednesday, March 13th

Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution, 1917-1932*, pp. 68–92.

Friday, March 15th**In-class simulation: Dual Power in Revolutionary Russia.**

the Genocide in Rwanda (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), read pp. 41–59, 73–75 and 87–102.

March 16th – 24th: Spring Break**Friday, April 5th**

Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, read pp. 184–218.

CIVIL WAR**DUE before class on Friday, April 5th: Comparative Research Paper Design Template.****Monday, March 25th**

James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War,” *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 01 (2003): 75–90.

Monday, April 8th

Virginia Page Fortna, “Does Peacekeeping Keep Peace? International Intervention and the Duration of Peace After Civil War,” *International Studies Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (2004): 269–292.

Wednesday, March 27th

Elisabeth Jean Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), Chapter 1.

Wednesday, April 10th

Séverine Autesserre, “Hobbes and the Congo: Frames, Local Violence, and International Intervention,” *International Organization* 63, no. 02 (2009): 249–280.

Friday, March 29th

Jeremy M. Weinstein, “Resources and the Information Problem in Rebel Recruitment,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 4 (2005): 598–624.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**Friday, April 12th**

Joseph T. Siegle, Michael M. Weinstein, and Morton H. Halperin, “Why Democracies Excel,” *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 5 (2004): 57–71.

Monday, April 1st

John Mueller, “The Banality of “Ethnic War”,” *International Security* 25, no. 1 (2000): 42–70.

Monday, April 15th

Matthew Lange, James Mahoney, and Matthias vom Hau, “Colonialism and Development: A Comparative Analysis of Spanish and British Colonies,” *American Journal of Sociology* 111, no. 5 (2006): 1412–1462.

Wednesday, April 3rd

Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and*

Wednesday, April 17th

Mancur Olson, *The Rise and Decline of Nations: Economic Growth, Stagflation and Social Rigidities* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1982), Chapter 2.

Friday, April 19th

Olson, *The Rise and Decline of Nations*, Chapter 3.

Monday, April 22nd

Robert H Bates, *Markets and States in Tropical Africa: The Political Basis of Agricultural Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 1–3, 11–44.

Wednesday, April 24th

Bates, *Markets and States in Tropical Africa*, pp. 62–77, and 96–105.

INEQUALITY**Friday, April 26th**

Alberto Alesina and Edward L Glaeser, *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe: A World of Difference* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 1-2; 15-44; and 77-95.

DUE at NOON on Sunday, April 28th: Research Paper Rough Draft

Monday, April 29th

Alesina and Glaeser, *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe*, 95-166.

Wednesday, May 1st

Alesina and Glaeser, *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe*, 177–216.

Friday, May 3rd

Gabriel A. Almond, “Capitalism and Democracy,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 24, no. 3 (1991): 467–474.

In-class: Debate over Democracy and Capitalism.

DUE at NOON on Sunday, May 5th: Research Paper Reviewer Memo

Monday, May 6th

Concluding discussion.

DUE at NOON on Sunday, May 12th: Research Paper Final Draft & Reviewer Response Memo