

POLS 5171: Topics in Comparative Politics

M.A. course, Winter semester 2018

Instructor: Matthijs Bogaards (Visbogaards@ceu.edu)

Teaching assistant: Andrei Mascut

Classes

Mondays and Wednesdays, 9.00-10.40, place TBA

Office hours

TBA

Credits

4 CEU credits, 8 ECTS credits

Course description

Topics in Comparative Politics has the same function in the curriculum as the course *Comparative Politics*, which is offered in the fall semester: to introduce students to the fundamental concepts, findings, and methods of comparative politics. Through the papers and the presentation, students practice comparative politics and reflect on its status as an academic subdiscipline. The course analyzes in depth key institutional configurations across democracies and authoritarian regimes. Special attention is paid to the comparative performance of political systems.

Course requirements

This is a four-credit core course. The course does not presuppose any particular prior knowledge. Students are expected to be present at all sessions. If one is unable to attend the class, (s)he should e-mail the instructor in advance. The use of electronic devices (laptops, tablets, e-readers, phones, etc.) is not allowed in class.

Assessment

- 1) Two 1500-word (everything included) research papers (20% each)
- 2) Nine in-class quizzes (5% each) (only the best 8 grades count)
- 3) Presentation (20%)

Students are expected to come to class prepared and to contribute actively to the discussion.

Students write two research papers. The first paper is based on the reading for week 3. The aim is to apply guidelines for conceptual analysis to a **bad** concept in comparative politics. The second paper is based on the reading for week 6. The aim is to evaluate a recent academic debate about the empirical accuracy of a particular theory of democratization. The research papers are due the following week.

The second session each week starts with an in-class quiz on the topic of that week. The quiz covers the reading and the discussion in the first session that week. With the exception of weeks 2, 3, and 6, there is a quiz every week. Only the best eight grades out of the total of nine count.

In every week, except for weeks 1, 2, and 3, there will be the opportunity for students to do a presentation. The aim is to obtain an insight in the way that comparative politics is practiced around the world. For that reason, each student is asked to select a comparative politics textbook from a country of his/her choice and to present on this text book, using the reading in week 2 as a starting point.

Please note that for all assessments, late submission and violation of the word or time limit will result in a lower grade.

The syllabus only lists the mandatory reading. Every week, further readings will be suggested in class.

Learning outcomes and their assessment

By the end of the course students are expected to understand the institutional and cultural embeddedness of political processes and be aware of the methodological opportunities and dangers involved in comparative research. The research papers are expected to improve the ability to critically engage with concepts, to do empirical research, and to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches. The discussion of the readings encourages a multi-faceted approach to political phenomena and will increase the students' ability to see their discipline within a broader social science and humanities context. The presentations benefit both the presenter and the audience: the presenter has the opportunity to develop his/her presentation skills while all learn about the way that comparative politics is studied and taught in a variety of countries, helping students to reflect on the socially and politically constructed nature of the science of politics. The weekly quizzes help students to test their knowledge and understanding on a regular basis, allowing for regular and quick feedback on learning processes. All aspects of the class contribute to develop the skill of problem analysis: the ability to understand problems in a cross-national comparative perspective and to discuss these with students of a different cultural background.

Week 1: How to Do Political Science?

Mandatory reading:

Matthew Flinders (forthcoming) The Future of Political Science? The Politics and Management of the Academic Expectations Gap, *European Political Science*, DOI: 10.1057/s41304-017-0118-7.

Karl Gustafsson and Linus Hagström (forthcoming) What is the Point? Teaching Graduate Students How to Construct Political Science Puzzles, *European Political Science*, DOI: 10.1057/s41304-017-0130-y.

Week 2: How to Do Comparative Politics?

Mandatory reading:

Ingrid van Biezen and Daniele Caramani (2006) (Non)Comparative Politics in Britain, *Politics* 26(1): 29-37.

Andrew Levin (2016) Diversity in Textbooks in Nonwestern Comparative Politics: Review of *Comparative Politics of the "Third World": Linking Concepts and Cases* and *Politics in the Developing World*. *Journal of Political Science Education* 12(1): 111-114.

Week 3: What is a Good/Bad Concept?

Mandatory reading:

John Gerring (1999) What Makes a Concept Good? A Criterial Framework for Understanding Concept Formation in the Social Sciences, *Polity* 31(3): 357-393.

Peter Mair (2008) Concepts and Concept Formation, in: Donatella della Porta and Michael Keating (eds.) *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.177-197.

Week 4: What is the best form of government?

Mandatory reading:

José Antonio Cheibub, Zachary Elkins and Tom Ginsburg (2014) Beyond Presidentialism and Parliamentarism, *British Journal of Political Science* 44(3): 515-544.

Young Hun Kim (2015) A Troubled Marriage? Divided Minority Government, Cohabitation, Presidential Powers, President-Parliamentarism and Semi-Presidentialism, *Government and Opposition* 50(4): 652-681.

Week 5: Does Type of Democracy Make a Difference?

Mandatory reading:

Matthijs Bogaards (2017) Comparative Political Regimes: Consensus and Majoritarian Democracy, in William Thompson (ed.) *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.65

Josif Kovras and Neophytos Loizides (2014). The Greek Debt Crisis and Southern Europe: Majoritarian Pitfalls? *Comparative Politics* 47(1): 1–20.

Week 6: What Drives Democratization?

Mandatory reading:

Sirianne Dahlum and Carl Henrik Knutsen (2016) Democracy by Demand? Reinvestigating the Effect of Self-expression Values on Political Regime Type, *British Journal of Political Science* 47(2): 437–461.

Chris Welzel, Ronald Inglehart and Stefan Kruse (2017) Pitfalls in the Study of Democratization: Testing the Emancipatory Theory of Democracy, *British Journal of Political Science* 47(2): 463-472.

Week 7: Is Democratic in Decline?

Mandatory reading:

Wolfgang Merkel (2010) Are Dictatorships Returning? Revisiting the “Democratic Rollback” Hypothesis, *Contemporary Politics* 16(1): 17-31.

Valeriya Mechkova, Anna Lührmann and Staffan Lindberg (2017) How Much Democratic Backsliding? *Journal of Democracy* 28(4): 162-169.

Week 8: Is There Such a Thing as “Non-Western Democracy”?

Mandatory reading:

Uday Chandra (2013) The Case for a Postcolonial Approach to the Study of Democracy, *New Political Science* 35(3): 479-491.

Richard Youngs (2015) Exploring “Non-Western Democracy”, *Journal of Democracy* 26(4): 140-154.

Week 9: Populism and Technocracy: Two Sides of the Same Coin?

Mandatory reading:

Daniele Caramani (2017) Will vs. Reason: The Populist and Technocratic Forms of Political Representation and Their Critique to Party Government, *American Political Science Review* 111(1): 54-67.

Christopher Bickerton and Carlo Invernizzi Accetti (2017) Populism and Technocracy: Opposites or Complements? *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 20(2): 186-206.

Week 10: Why Do Autocracies Need Institutions?

Mandatory reading:

Rex Brynen, Pete Moore, and Bassel Salloukh (2012) *Beyond the Arab Spring: Authoritarianism and Democratization in the Arab World*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner (Chapter 7: Electoral Politics, pp.147-172).

Jennifer Gandhi (2014) The Role of Presidential Power in Authoritarian Elections, in: Tom Ginsburg and Alberto Simpser (eds.) *Constitutions in Authoritarian Regimes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.199-217.

Week 11: Are All Autocracies the Same?

Mandatory reading:

Edeltraud Roller (2013) Comparing the Performance of Autocracies: Issues in Measuring Types of Autocratic Regimes and Performance, *Contemporary Politics* 19(1): 35-54.

Steffen Kailitz and Daniel Stockemer (2017) Regime Legitimation, Elite Cohesion and the Durability of Autocratic Regime Types, *International Political Science Review* 38(3): 332-348.

Week 12: China: How Much Change?

Mandatory reading:

Henry Rowen (2007) When Will the Chinese People Be Free? *Journal of Democracy* 18(3): 38-52.

Francis Fukuyama (2012) The Patterns of History, *Journal of Democracy* 23(1): 14-26.

Carl Minzner (2015) China After the Reform Era, *Journal Democracy* 26(3): 129-143.

Appendix: Presentation Assessment Sheet

CEU, Winter semester 2018

POLS 5171: Topics in Comparative Politics (MA course)

Prof. Matthijs Bogaards

Student name:

Session:

Date:

Academic content

1	Connection to main reading	
2	Structure of presentation	
3	Original contribution	
4	Critical engagement	
5	Evidence of research	
6	Accuracy of information	

Presentation skills

1	Visualization	
2	Contribution to discussion	
3	Time management	
4	Referencing	
5	Contact with audience	
6	Hand out (maximum one page)	

Comments:

Grade: