

PSC 211

Introduction to Comparative Politics

Dr. Austin Horng-En Wang

Spring 2019

TuTh 2:30PM-3:45PM

Classroom: WRI C239

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Office: WRI – A210

Office Hour: W 9:00AM – 11:59 AM and by appointment

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Course Description and Learning Goals

Before the parallel universe is found and time machine is invented, people learn, interpret, predict, then change the world through comparisons. We compare now with the past, and we compare ourselves with the neighbors. Why do we choose the democracy? What will happen if we change the presidential system, electoral college, or even the single member district rule? If we cannot go back to 1776, we learn the lesson and make inferences from other countries with various regime types, rules, and cultures. As a student of political science, we learn it scientifically.

This course provides a general introduction to comparative politics. Introduction does not mean that the material covered is easy to understand. Instead, it means that the material provided is the foundation of comparative politics and allows you to comprehend the subject in the future upper-level courses. We will go through the important concepts, theories, tools, and findings in this subfield. Students will learn about some of the contemporary topics in comparative politics such as political institutions, political development, and democratization.

Required Textbooks

Clark, William Roberts, Matt Golder, and Sona Nadenichek Golder. 2018. *Principles of Comparative Politics*, 3rd Edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press. ISBN: 9781506318127 (**CGG hereafter**)

Grades and Exams

Your grade is based on the quality of your performance on 4 dimensions:

- **Quiz: 15%**

I will randomly assign quizzes in the class for the purposes of checking your attendance and whether you have done your assigned readings. The format of these quizzes will be either ONE multiple-choice question or ONE true-or-false question. I will distribute the quiz at the beginning of the class, and there will be 15 quizzes during the semester.

- **The Movie Project: 15% (Deadline: 5pm, April 5)**

In the first half of this semester, you will learn the definition of the state and various forms of democracy and dictatorship. When you work in the Freedom House or the United Nations in the future, you also need to evaluate the development and improvement of different countries or regions.

In this project, you can choose ONE of the six different cases below. You can find them in the library:

- (1) The Gotham City ruled by Bane in <The Dark Knight Rises> (2012).
- (2) The United Kingdom government ruled by Adam Sutler in <V for Vendetta> (2005).
- (3) Zion in <The Matrix> series (1999, 2003)
- (4) Wakanda in <Black Panther> (2018)
- (5) The Citadel in <Mad Max: Fury Road> (2015)
- (6) Arendelle in <Frozen> (2013)

After you choose one of the cases, answer the TWO questions below in one page.

- (1) Is the case a state? (You will learn the definition in week 3)
- (2) If the case is NOT a state, why not? What elements of state do the case lack?
If the case is a state, what type of democracy or dictatorship it is?
(You will learn the categorization in week 4 and 5.)

You can get the full credit if you succinctly explain how some movie scenes match or do not match the definition of state and democracy/dictatorship from the textbook and lecture. It could be possible that the case is somewhere in between the different types of regime, but you must provide your reason, evidence, and logic.

Please submit your answer directly to austin.wang@unlv.edu before 5pm, April 5. Late submission will not be graded.

If you have any problem on this project (including if you do not want to, or cannot watch any of the movies above), please let me know.

- **Midterm Exam, March 14, 2019: 30%**

An in-class, hour-long, open-book examination which you will succinctly demonstrate what you have learned. Yes, You can bring your textbooks and (printed) class notes as your references. However, all electronic sources (laptops, cell-phones, etc.) are strictly prohibited in this exam. The exam will include 30 multiple-choice/true-or-false questions. The questions will be drawn from the lectures and required readings.

- **Final Exam, TBA, 2019: 40%**

An in-class, hour-long, open-book examination which you will succinctly demonstrate what you have learned. Yes, You can bring your textbooks and (printed) class notes as your references. However, all electronic sources (laptops, cell-phones, etc.) are strictly prohibited in this exam. The exam will include 40 multiple-choice/true-or-false questions. The questions will be drawn from the lectures and required readings from the whole semester

Make-up exams will not be given except in the case of extreme circumstances. The student must be able to provide documentation that the absence is for a reason recognized by the university (e.g., illness, death in the family, observance of a religious holiday) and make arrangements with me **prior** to the scheduled exam date. If it is absolutely impossible to make prior arrangements with me, students must contact me as soon as possible about the situation. Students who represent UNLV at any official extracurricular activity shall also have the opportunity to make up assignments, but the student must provide an official written notification to the instructor no less than one week prior to the missed class(es). **Please notify me of any planned absences for religious holidays by Feb 1, 2019.**

Grading policy:

The grade will be rounding to one decimal place. No additional rounding will be executed.

A = 93-	A- = 90-92.9	
B+ = 87-89.9	B = 83-86.9	B- = 80-82.9
C+ = 77-79.9	C = 73-76.9	C- = 70-72.9
D+ = 67-69.9	D = 63-66.9	D- = 60-62.9

F = Below 60

Subject to Change

I reserve the right to modify the course syllabus. Students will be responsible for knowing any changes made to the syllabus during class time whether they were in attendance or not.

Course Schedule and Required Reading

Week 1

1/22 No Class – Buy the textbook, read this syllabus, and book your movie

1/24 Course overview

Week 2

1/29 What is Comparative Politics?
CGG Chp. 1-2

1/31 How do we study comparative politics scientifically?
CGG Chp. 1-2

Week 3

2/5 What is the state?
CGG Chp. 4

2/7 Do we really need a state?
CGG Chp. 4

Week 4

2/12 Democracy and Dictatorship: Conceptualization
CGG Chp. 5

2/14 Democracy and Dictatorship: Measurement
CGG Chp. 5

Week 5

2/19 Democracy and Dictatorship: Critics
CGG Chp. 5

2/21 Determinants of Democracy: Economy
CGG Chp. 6

Week 6

2/26 Determinants of Democracy: Economy
CGG Chp. 6

2/28 Determinants of Democracy: Culture
CGG Chp. 7

Week 7

3/5 No Class – Work on your movie project

3/7 No Class – Work on your movie project

Week 8

3/12 Review Session

3/14 **Midterm Exam**

Week 9

3/19 No Class – Spring Break Recess

3/21 No Class – Spring Break Recess

Week 10

3/26 Transition to Democracy
CGG Chp. 8

3/28 Transition to Democracy
CGG Chp. 8

Week 11

4/2 Types of Democratic Regime
CGG Chp. 12

4/4 Types of Democratic Regime **(Movie project deadline: 5pm, April 5)**
CGG Chp. 12

Week 12

4/9 Types of Electoral System
CGG Chp. 13

4/11 Types of Electoral System
CGG Chp. 13

Week 13

4/16 Social Cleavage and Party System
CGG Chp. 14

4/18 Social Cleavage and Party System
CGG Chp. 14

Week 14

4/23 Formal model and Comparative Politics
CGG Chp. 11

4/25 Formal model and Comparative Politics
CGG Chp. 15

Week 15

4/30 Dictatorship
CGG Chp. 9, 10

5/2 Dictatorship
CGG Chp. 9, 10

Week 16

5/7 “The China Model”
No reading assigned, just come to the classroom

5/9 Review Session

Week 17

TBA **Final Exam - TBA**

Classroom Conduct

Students have a responsibility to conduct themselves in class and in the libraries in ways that do not interfere with the rights of other students to learn or of instructors to teach. Actually, there are scientific evidence showing that using laptop in the classroom will influence yourself and classmates nearby you (shown below). If your laptop content indicates a lack of attentiveness to lecture or your laptop usage disturb others, I will ask you to leave. Undoubtedly, electronic devices may not be used during exams. Finally, show respect for the range of views in the reading materials and of fellow students.

Sana, F., Weston, T., & Cepeda, N. J. (2013). Laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers. *Computers & Education*, 62, 24-31.

Hembrooke, H., & Gay, G. (2003). The laptop and the lecture: The effects of multitasking in learning environments. *Journal of computing in higher education*, 15(1), 46-64.

As a father of two kids, I understand the childcare policy and the unstable schedule parents always face. If there are circumstances that you must bring your little ones to the classroom, please let me know and we can figure out what to do. Breastfeeding is allowed in the classroom.

Rebelmail

By policy, faculty and staff should e-mail students’ Rebelmail accounts only. Rebelmail is UNLV’s official e-mail system for students. It is one of the primary ways students receive official university communication such as information about deadlines, major campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the university. Students’ e-mail prefixes are listed on class rosters. The suffix is always @unlv.nevada.edu.

Academic Misconduct

Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility, and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always

take the ethical path. Students enrolling at UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV's function as an educational institution.

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources. I reserve the right to have students' materials submitted electronically and assessed by plagiarism detection software. Plagiarism of any form will result in a failing grade for the course, and I will file a case with the Office of Student Conduct. See the Student Academic Misconduct Policy (approved December 9, 2005) located at:

<https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/student-conduct>

If you find this paragraph, it means that you really read this syllabus, as is assigned in the first class. To prove that you read this syllabus, you should send an email to my Rebelmail account with your Full name as the subject before 8:00am, Jan 25, 2019. After I replied to your mail as a confirmation, you will receive extra 2 points to your final grade at the end of this semester. Hooray.

Copyright

The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The university will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional information can be found at: <http://provost.unlv.edu/copyright/statements.html>.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) determines accommodations that are "reasonable" in promoting the equal access of a student reporting a disability to the general UNLV learning experience. In so doing, the DRC also balances instructor and departmental interests in maintaining curricular standards so as to best achieve a fair evaluation standard amongst students being assisted. In order for the DRC to be effective it must be considered in the dialog between the faculty and the student who is requesting accommodations. For this reason faculty should only provide students course adjustment after having received an "Academic Accommodation Plan." If faculty members have any questions regarding the DRC, they should call a DRC counselor.

UNLV complies with the provisions set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The DRC is located in the Student Services Complex (SSC-A), Room 143, phone (702) 895-0866, fax (702) 895-0651. For additional information, please visit: <http://drc.unlv.edu/>.

Religious Holidays Policy

Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor no later than the end of the first two weeks of classes, **Feb 1, 2019**, of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall

on state holidays or periods of class recess. This policy shall not apply in the event that administering the test or examination at an alternate time would impose an undue hardship on the instructor or the university which could have been avoided. For additional information, please visit: <http://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=164>.

Tutoring and Coaching

The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring, academic success coaching and other academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, visit <http://www.unlv.edu/asc> or call 702-895-3177. The ASC building is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of SSC A (ASC Coaching Spot). Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library and College of Engineering TBE second floor.

UNLV Writing Center

One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-3-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 895-3908. The student's Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. More information can be found at: <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>