

# GOVT 040

## Comparative Political Systems (Spring 2017)

*Please report nonperforming links to [kingch@georgetown.edu](mailto:kingch@georgetown.edu)*

Prof. Charles King, School of Foreign Service and Department of Government  
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**Lectures:** Tuesday/Thursday, 2:00pm-3:15pm, REI 103

**Discussion sections:** You were assigned to a discussion section when you registered for the course

**Teaching assistants:** Andrew Szarejko (aas247), DongJoon Park (dp687), Andy Marshall (am3108), Einav Yogev (ey123)

**Prof. King's office hours:** I will have open office hours (first come, first served) on Thursdays from 3:30pm to 6:00pm. No need for an appointment during that time. I will also usually be in the classroom before and after each class session and am happy to speak with you then if you have urgent issues.

### *1. What Do I Need to Know About This Course?*

#### **OVERVIEW**

This course provides a general introduction to the concepts, methods, and substance of comparative politics—the comparative study of political institutions and political behavior in countries around the world. The focus will be on “doing” political science: using theories to help explain individual cases, and using cases to refine our theories of behavior. In the first part of the course, we will discuss the nature of political science as a scholarly discipline and explore themes in comparative politics such as the relationship between ideology and action, the articulation of political interests, group decision-making, formal and informal institutions, and regime types. Next, we will use our knowledge of these concepts to help us understand current developments in a variety of geographical settings.

#### **LEARNING GOALS**

The focus throughout the course will be on understanding the core ideas in political science and applying those ideas to particular cases. You should come away from the course with both an

understanding of the diversity of the world's political systems, as well as an appreciation of the questions and concepts that inform the work of professional political scientists.

This course stresses the importance of comparison. Thinking comparatively within political science means continually asking yourself two questions:

- How do “big ideas” relate to particular cases? That is, how can we use the various theoretical tools available to us to explain political behavior in particular countries and regions?
- How do individual cases relate to the goal of creating broad theories of political life? In other words, how can we compare a number of different cases and extract their common elements in order to create general theories?

Throughout the lectures and in your own reading and writing, you should keep both these questions in mind.

The aim of this course is clearly not to turn every student into a professional academic political scientist. But by thinking comparatively and using the many intellectual tools that political scientists have developed over the last several decades, we can better understand the determinants of political behavior, the driving forces behind the political process, and the dynamics of policymaking.

It is important to remember that the course consists of several components:

- Lectures
- Discussion sections
- Your own reading and note-taking

You will have the best potential for doing well in this class if you devote serious time to each of these components: attending class and engaging with the lectures; attending and actively participating in discussion sections; and doing (and taking notes on) the readings. Note-taking is still the most efficient way of getting ideas and information from a page (or screen) into your head.

## **TOOLS OF ASSESSMENT**

**Attendance, participation, and quizzes during lectures** (roughly 10% total). I will use iClickers (see below) to record a variety of student responses to questions that I ask in my lectures. Some of these will be drawn from the readings and will require a correct response—which means it is vitally important that you do the reading before class and come to class prepared. Others will be in a “What do you think?” format, in which I solicit your ideas or opinions. There is no opportunity to make up this portion of your grade if you are absent from class.

**Attendance and participation in discussion sections** (roughly 10%). The discussion sections will be directed by experienced Ph.D. or M.A. students from the Government Department or

other Georgetown units. Attendance and active participation are required. The discussion section leaders may require additional assignments beyond those given as part of the lecture portion of the course and will report your attendance and participation to me on that basis.

**Two examinations** (roughly 25% each). The first examination (midterm) will cover the first half of the course and the second (final) the second half. Exams will be administered during regular class hours and at the time designated for the final examination by the registrar's office. The final exam for this course will take place on the day assigned by the registrar's office. No provision will be made for changing that date except in cases of medical emergency, family bereavement, or a compelling university-related activity.

**Two short writing assignments** (roughly 15% each). The writing assignments are short exercises designed to encourage integration of the lectures, readings, and political events in the world. There are only two deadlines: you must complete one assignment before the midterm and another between the midterm and the last day of classes, with 5pm as the hard deadline on each of those days. The essays should respond to one of several prompts available later in the semester. Each essay should be between three and five pages double-spaced.

For more information on letter grades and standards, [click here](#).

## DISCUSSION SECTIONS

Attending discussion sections is required. If you cannot attend because of illness, a university-related activity or similar legitimate reasons, tell your TA ahead of time. Discussion sections will meet for the first time on Thursday and Friday, Jan. 12 and 13. Thereafter, there WILL NOT be discussion sections before a Monday holiday, with the exception of the week before spring break. There will be no discussion sections the week of the Presidential Inauguration (Thursday and Friday, Jan. 19 and 20). The final discussion sections of the semester will take place on Thursday and Friday, Apr. 27 and 28. In addition to discussing the readings and lectures, TA's may make separate assignments that will figure into your participation grade.

## 2. *What's the Fine Print?*

### TEXTS AND iCLICKERS

The following books have been ordered for the course and may be purchased at the Georgetown University Bookstore in the Leavey Center. The texts are easily available from online distributors as well, and you are always free to combine forces and share books with classmates. Only require that you read the assigned books, not that you buy them.

- Mayer, Lawrence, Dennis Patterson, and Frank Thames, eds. *Contending Perspectives in Comparative Politics: A Reader*. CQ Press, 2009. REQUIRED
- O'Neil, Patrick, and Ronald Rogowski. *Essential Readings in Comparative Politics*. 4th ed. W. W. Norton, 2013. REQUIRED

- Lewis, Sinclair. *It Can't Happen Here*. Signet Classics, 2014 (any edition of this work is acceptable, but reading this edition will keep the pagination the same across all readers). **REQUIRED**
- MacLean, Iain, ed. *The Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics*. 3rd ed. Oxford University Press, 2010. **RECOMMENDED**. This is a useful text to keep on your reference shelf, especially if you are in SFS or considering a Government major.

The basic texts will be supplemented by required readings from other sources. All other required readings will be available in electronic form.

All students are required to have an iClicker. Students will need to register their iClickers on-line at [www.iclicker.com](http://www.iclicker.com). Note that you must use your Georgetown netID, not any other e-mail or identification number, as your student ID.

## **BLACKBOARD**

A Blackboard site has been established for this course.

## **POLICY ON OTHER TECHNOLOGY**

The use of laptops, cell phones, or other personal mobile/electronic devices is prohibited during lectures and discussion sections, unless otherwise directed by your TA. For the short time we are together each week, I want you to engage with the lecture and the classroom discussion, rather than multitasking or attempting to create a written transcript of the class. I will of course accommodate diagnosed conditions that require use of electronic devices and have been registered with the [Academic Resource Center](#).

## **POLICY ON MAKE-UPS, EXTENSIONS, INCOMPLETES, AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

In principle, deadlines cannot be changed. However, allowance will be made for cases in which genuine emergencies prevent students from completing work on time. Such emergencies might include medical treatment or bereavement. Having a heavy work load, impending deadlines for other courses, job interviews, extra-curricular commitments, or family holidays cannot normally be considered emergencies. Each instance will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Students should let the instructor know as far in advance as possible about any potential problems.

Each of you took an honor oath when you joined Georgetown University. Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be handled according to the [university's Honor System](#). Please note that inappropriate use of iClicker technology is a reportable violation of the Honor Code. This includes, but is not limited to, using multiple iClickers, using someone else's iClicker, or copying someone else's iClicker response in a quiz/exam environment.

## **POLICY ON GRADE COMPLAINTS**

If you feel your work was graded unfairly, you should first speak with your TA. If you and the TA are unable to resolve the matter, write a memo to me in which you give a detailed argument for why your grade is unfair. (Hint: The claim that your assessment of your own work is superior to my assessment of your work is not in itself an argument for a grade change, nor is the claim that your grade does not reflect the amount of work that you put into the assignment.) Note that if you request that your TA or I review your work for re-grading, we may either raise or lower your grade, depending on our reassessment of your work. That grade will be final.

### ***3. What Will We Be Doing in This Course?***

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the readings during the course of the semester. Readings with hyperlinks are accessible with a simple click. Links should work automatically on computers attached to the Georgetown University network, but access from other computers may require going through the Lauinger Library remote-access protocol. PowerPoint slides used in lectures will be posted to Blackboard after each lecture.

Abbreviations below refer to the following texts:

LEWIS—Lewis, *It Can't Happen Here*

ORR—O'Neil and Rogowski reader

CPR—*Contending Perspectives* reader

BLACKBOARD—reading available on the course Blackboard site

“Classic readings” below are required and will form the basis for the discussion sections, but they will not be part of the required readings for quizzes. They are “classic” in the sense that they have been widely read, cited, and discussed; they are things that any good student of political science should encounter during his or her studies. As with all readings, they should be approached with an open but critical mind.

#### **Thursday, Jan. 12                      Introduction to the Course**

1. [Daniel Drezner, “Why Political Science Is Not an Election Casualty,” Washington Post, Nov. 15, 2016.](#)
2. [Hans Noel, “Ten Things Political Scientists Know that You Don't,” Political Science and Practical Politics 8, no. 3, article 12.](#)

*Discussion sections:*

- Course overview and introductions

#### **Tuesday, Jan. 17                      The History and Substance of Political Science**

1. This syllabus. Please read it carefully.
2. Charles King, [“The Six Evil Geniuses of Essay Writing”](#)
3. Charles King, [“Writing a Political Science Essay”](#)

4. Aristotle, *Politics*, [Book I, Parts 1-2](#); [Book III, Parts 1-7](#)
5. Lichbach and Zuckerman, “Research Traditions and Theory in Comparative Politics” in ORR
6. Weber, “Politics as a Vocation” in ORR

**Thursday, Jan. 19**                      **Thinking Theoretically and Comparatively**

1. Charles King, [“How to Think”](#)
2. Tocqueville, “Author’s Introduction to *Democracy in America*” in ORR
3. Mayer, “The Epistemology of Social Science and the Comparative Method” in CPR
4. King, Keohane, and Verba, “The Science in Social Science” in ORR
5. Explore the website of the [American Political Science Association](#). The APSA is the largest professional association of political scientists in the world.

*Recommended:* Levitt and Dubner, *Freakonomics* (and successor volumes). *This book is an excellent introduction to thinking like a social scientist and to designing research projects, using bizarre but often enlightening examples.*

*Recommended:* Elinor Ostrom, “A Long Polycentric Journey,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 13 (2010): 1-23. *An intellectual autobiography by the only political scientist to win a Nobel Prize.*

*No discussion sections this week.*

**Tuesday, Jan. 24**                      **Ideology and Culture I: Marx and Weber**

1. Marx and Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party” in ORR
2. [Max Weber, \*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism\* \(chaps 1-2: “Religious Stratification and Social Stratification” and “The Spirit of Capitalism”\)](#). Alternative link [here](#).

**Thursday, Jan. 26**                      **Ideology and Culture II: Civil Society and Social Capital**

1. Inglehart, “Post-Materialism in an Environment of Insecurity” in CPR
2. Putnam, “Tuning in, Tuning Out” in ORR
3. Thomas H. Sander and Robert D. Putnam, “Still Bowling Alone? The Post-9/11 Split,” *Journal of Democracy* 21, no. 1 (January 2010): 9-16. BLACKBOARD

*Discussion sections:*

- Classic reading: Fukuyama, “The End of History?” in CPR.

**Tuesday, Jan. 31**                      **Interests I: Interest Groups and Social Mobilization**

1. Gurr, “A Causal Model of Civil Strife” in CPR
2. Skocpol, “Social Revolutions and Mass Military Mobilization” in CPR

**Thursday, Feb. 2                      Interests II: Rationality and Decision-Making**

1. [Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," \*Science\* \(1968\).](#)
2. Tsebelis, "In Defense of the Rational Choice Approach" in CPR

*Discussion sections:*

- Classic reading: [George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson, "Broken Windows," \*Atlantic\* \(March 1982\).](#)

**Tuesday, Feb. 7                      Institutions I: The Power of Institutions**

1. North, "Institutions" in ORR
2. Linz, "The Perils of Presidentialism" in CPR
3. Cheibub, "What Makes Presidential Democracies Fragile" in CPR
4. Mainwaring and Shugart, "Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy" in CPR
5. Lijphart, "Constitutional Choices for New Democracies" in ORR

**Thursday, Feb. 9                      Institutions II: Political Parties and Electoral Systems**

1. [Charles King, "Electoral Systems"](#)
2. Taagepera and Shugart, "Why Study Electoral Systems" in CPR
3. Duverger, "The Number of Parties" in ORR
4. [Pippa Norris, "Choosing Electoral Systems: Proportional, Majoritarian, and Mixed Systems," \*International Political Science Review\*, Vol. 18 \(1997\): 297-312.](#)
5. [Richard W. Soudriette and Andrew Ellis, "Electoral Systems Today: A Global Snapshot," \*Journal of Democracy\*, Vol. 17, No. 2 \(2006\): 78-88.](#)

*Discussion sections:*

- Classic reading: Elinor Ostrom, "Collective Action and the Evolution of Social Norms," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 14, no. 3 (2000): 137-158.  
BLACKBOARD

**Tuesday, Feb. 14                      Regime Types I: Pluralist Systems**

1. Schmitter and Karl, "What Democracy Is . . . and Is Not" in ORR
2. Lijphart, "The Westminster Model of Democracy" in CPR
3. Lijphart, "The Consensus Model of Democracy" in CPR
4. Acemoglu, et al., "Income and Democracy" in ORR
5. Jorgen Moller and Svend-Erik Skaaning, "The Third Wave: Inside the Numbers," *Journal of Democracy* 24, no. 4 (Oct. 2013): 97-109. BLACKBOARD

**Thursday, Feb. 16                      Regime Types II: Authoritarian Systems**

1. Linz and Stepan, "Modern Nondemocratic Regimes" in ORR

2. Levitsky and Way, "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism" in ORR

*Discussion sections:*

- Classic reading: Come prepared to discuss all of LEWIS.

**Tuesday, Feb. 21                      Regime Change**

1. Kitschelt, "Political Regime Change" in CPR
2. Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy" in CPR
3. Linz and Stepan, "Toward Consolidated Democracies" in CPR
4. [Thomas Carothers, "The End of the Transition Paradigm," \*Journal of Democracy\*, 13:1 \(2002\): 5-21.](#)
5. Goldstone, "Understanding the Revolutions of 2011" in ORR

**Thursday, Feb. 23                      \*\*MID-TERM EXAM\*\***

*No discussion sections this week.*

**Tuesday, Feb. 28                      The United Kingdom I: Prime Minister's Question Time**

No reading assignment for today

**Thursday, Mar. 2                      The United Kingdom II: Institutions and Governance**

1. Walter Bagehot, "The House of Commons" and "Its Supposed Checks and Balances" from his [The English Constitution](#).
2. Charles King, "The Scottish Play," *Foreign Affairs* (Sept./Oct. 2012). BLACKBOARD
3. Explore [Gov.UK](#), the website designed to be a one-stop-shop for UK citizens seeking to connect with their government
4. Explore the websites of the [UK Parliament](#) and the [Scottish Parliament](#)

*Discussion sections:*

- Classic reading: Bernard Crick, "A Defence of Politics Against Democracy," chap. 3 of his *In Defence of Politics* (1962). BLACKBOARD

**Tuesday, Mar. 14                      The European Union**

1. Explore the website of the [European Union](#)
2. Malcolm, "The Case Against Europe" in CPR
3. Sbragia, "The EU and Its 'Constitution'" in CPR
4. Aarts and van der Kolk, "Understanding the Dutch 'No'" in CPR
5. [Kathleen McNamara, "Brexit's False Democracy," \*Foreign Affairs\* \(June 28, 2016\).](#)

**Thursday, Mar. 16                      The Postcommunist World**

1. Bunce and Wolchik, "Conclusions" in ORR
2. Krastev, "Paradoxes of the New Authoritarianism" in ORR

*Discussion sections:*

- Classic reading: Hedley Bull, "The Concept of Order in World Politics," chap. 1 of his *The Anarchical Society* (1977). BLACKBOARD

**Tuesday, Mar. 21**                      **Russia I: The Soviet Legacy**

1. Gat, "The Return of Authoritarian Great Powers" in ORR
2. [Marc Morje Howard, "The Weakness of Postcommunist Civil Society," \*Journal of Democracy\*, Vol. 13, No. 1 \(2002\): 157-169.](#)

**Thursday, Mar. 23**                      **Russia II: Domestic and Regional Politics**

1. [Lilia Shevtsova, "What's the Matter with Russia?" \*Journal of Democracy\* 21, no. 1 \(January 2010\): 152-159.](#)
2. Miriam Lansky and Elspeth Suthers, "Outlawing the Opposition," *Journal of Democracy* 24, no. 3 (Jul. 2013): 75-87. BLACKBOARD

*Discussion sections:*

- Classic reading: Rogers Brubaker, "Citizenship as Social Closure," chap. 1 of his *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (1992). BLACKBOARD

**Tuesday, Mar. 28**                      **China I: Mao and After**

1. Elizabeth C. Economy, "The Great Leap Backward?" *Foreign Affairs* (Sept./Oct. 2007). BLACKBOARD
2. David M. Lampton, "How China Is Ruled," *Foreign Affairs* (Jan./Feb. 2014). BLACKBOARD
3. Min Jiang, "Authoritarian Informationalism" in ORR
4. Baogang He and Warren, "Authoritarian Deliberation" in ORR

**Thursday, Mar. 30**                      **China II: Institutions and Governance**

1. Meg Rithmire, "China's 'New Regionalism': Subnational Analysis in Chinese Political Economy," *World Politics* 66, no. 1 (2013): 165-194. BLACKBOARD
2. Christopher A. McNally, "Sino-Capitalism: China's Reemergence and the International Political Economy," *World Politics* 64, no. 4 (2012): 741-776. BLACKBOARD

*Discussion sections:*

- Classic reading: Robert A. Dahl, "The Theory: Summary and Qualifications" and "Postscript," chaps. 10 and 11 of his *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (1971). BLACKBOARD

**Tuesday, Apr. 4                      Theories of Political and Economic Development**

1. Collier and Gunning, “Why Has Africa Grown Slowly?” in ORR
2. Acemoglu and Johnson, “Disease and Development” in ORR

**Thursday, Apr. 6                      *We Are All Neighbors* film**

No reading assignments for today

*Discussion sections:*

- Classic reading: Amartya Sen, “Introduction: Development as Freedom,” the introduction to his *Development as Freedom* (1999) (Available on [Google Books](#)).

**Tuesday, Apr. 11                      Understanding Ethnicity and Nationalism**

1. King, “Introduction” and “National Origins of Nationalism Studies” in KING
2. Hobsbawm, “Nationalism” in ORR

*No discussion sections this week because of Easter Holiday*

**Tuesday, Apr. 18                      Civil Wars and State Breakdown**

1. Fearon and Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War” in ORR
2. [Rogers Brubaker and David Laitin, “Ethnic and Nationalist Violence,” \*Annual Review of Sociology\*, Vol. 24 \(1998\).](#)

**Thursday, Apr. 20                      Swing day—Topic and Readings TBA**

*Discussion sections:*

- Classic reading: Barbara Walter, “The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement,” *International Organization* 51, no. 3 (1997): 335-364. BLACKBOARD.

**Tuesday, Apr. 25                      Swing day—Topic and Readings TBA**

**Thursday, Apr. 27                      Final Lecture: Barefoot Social Science**

Readings TBA

*Discussion sections:*

- Wrap-up and final exam review

**Friday, May 5                              \*\*FINAL EXAM\*\***

Time: 4:00pm-6:00pm

Location: TBA