

Political Science 1400-03: Comparative Politics

Loyola Marymount University
Fall, 2021

Course Information

Instructor: Dr. Marika Csapo [CHOP-oh]
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Pronouns: *she/her/hers*

Class Meetings: MWF, 9:30 - 10:30 am, Hannon Library 324
Office Hours: F, 12:30 - 2:00 pm, University Hall 4127B¹
Credit Hours: 4
EXP: Understanding Human Behavior (EHBV)

Course Description

Comparative politics is the study and practice of comparing political units and systems, in whole and in part. This course introduces you to many of the central puzzles, themes, and approaches of comparative politics with the goal of helping you understand and analyze domestic and international political events. The material is organized by topic not by country though we will illustrate each topic or theme using country examples.

The course begins with a broad overview of comparative methodology and the major theories and concepts of comparative politics. We then explore broad political phenomena including statehood and state failure; political economy and economic development; variation in types of governance; democratic transition, consolidation, and breakdown; participation and activism. For each country's case, we will look at key historical events, current political

¹A sign up sheet for 15 minute slots will be available on Brightspace. Appointments outside of office hours are welcome and recommended for those who need more time or cannot make the scheduled hours. Please email the instructor to schedule individual appointments. Individual appointments can be in-person or via Zoom (please specify).

institutions, the country's unique political culture, and "hot button" issues of today.

This course is divided into four sections:

1. Capacity, Development and State Formation
2. Political Regimes and Transitions
3. Political Institutions
4. Contentious Politics and Political Behavior

The first section, "Capacity, Development and State Formation," addresses questions of state capacity. We examine conventional and sometimes competing explanations for how states develop and why some states are better able to achieve their objectives (such as establishing the rule of law) than others. In the "Political Regimes and Transitions" section, we examine themes of democratic governance. What countries can be considered democratic, how did they get that way, and under what conditions can they be sustained? We cannot distinguish democracies without contrasting them with autocracies, which govern a large part of the global population. Our agenda thus includes the study of authoritarian rule. We then investigate how "Political Institutions"—the rules that determine who governs and how—affect outcomes like minority group representation in government and the adaptability of a country faced with changing circumstances. In the final section, "Contentious Politics and Political Behavior," we look at how individuals in a society engage with governments and with each other. We consider the circumstances that increase the likelihood of civil conflict, nationalism and protest.

Learning Objectives

This course teaches analytical skills that are applicable beyond this classroom. By the end of the quarter, students should be able to:

- clearly articulate arguments and evaluate the strength of claims using real world observations.
- identify the central debates in the field of comparative politics and the main arguments and theories underpinning them.
- demonstrate specific case knowledge of one or more countries in their chosen region of study.
- collaborate with peers to make use of complementary expertise.
- apply theoretical tools from this course to current events and domestic and international policy debates.

Assignments and Grades

Course grades will be comprised of the following components: four assignments, a midterm exam, a group project, a project response, and a final exam. See Table 1 for a breakdown of the weight each component contributes to your final course grade, and details about graded components below.

Table 1: Grade Component Breakdown

Component	Weight
Assignments—4 x 9% each	36%
Midterm Exam	20%
Group Project	12%
Project Response	7%
Final Exam	25%
Total	100%

Grade Scale

Each component will receive an individual grade. At the end of the semester the weighted-average will be computed over the components according to the weighting scheme in Table 1. This score determines the final letter grade for the course according to the scale below.

Table 2: Grade Scale

Letter Grade	Range
A+	97 → 100
A	93 → 97
A-	90 → 93
B+	87 → 90
B	83 → 87
B-	80 → 83
C+	77 → 80
C	73 → 77
C-	70 → 73
D	60 → 70
F	0 → 60

Assignments: These short assignments are designed to help students

1. process the reading material and integrate it with overall course concepts and themes.
2. distill specific hypotheses and arguments in key debates in comparative politics.

3. apply abstract concepts to concrete and personal examples.
4. gain familiarity with existing datasets used to evaluate arguments.
5. build case expertise to be applied to the group project.
6. prepare for exams.

Assignments also decrease the weight put on exams while creating opportunities for reflection, repetition and synthesis that will help students utilize course material long after the course ends. Assignment prompts will be posted on Brightspace around one week before they are due. Assignments are due 1-hour before class starts (with a 1-hour grace period). Extensions will be granted when warranted IF the student makes the request BEFORE the due date. Late assignments submitted after the deadline without an extension can receive no more than 80% of the total points if they are submitted within one week after the deadline. Assignments submitted more than one week late will receive no credit. Submissions should be uploaded to Brightspace.

Midterm Exam: The midterm exam will be held in-class on Monday, 10/18 and will be made up of a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions. It will cover material from the readings, lectures, activities, and assignments from Weeks 1-7. The exam is closed-note and non-collaborative. The exam will be taken on paper and no open laptops will be allowed.

Group Project: Students will sign up for their project groups during Week 2 of the semester. Each student will be responsible for developing case study expertise that will complement the expertise of other group members. The project will require you to collaborate to share your expertise for a regional analysis. The “deliverables” for the project include: 1) a short group write-up evaluating regional evidence for several key debates in comparative politics, 2) a PowerPoint presentation submission, 3) a 10-15 minute class presentation during Week 15, and 4) an explanation of each group member’s contribution to the project. Items 1, 2, and 4 are due an hour before class starts on the day of the group presentation (with a 1-hour grace period). No late projects will be accepted. Specific guidance will be provided throughout the semester on developing these projects. Submissions should be uploaded to Brightspace.

Project Response: During group presentations, students who are in the audience must take notes on the other groups’ presentations and submit a synthesis. A specific prompt will be provided before the presentations to help guide the note-taking. The response will be due by 11:00 pm on Sunday, 12/12 (following Week 15), with a 1-hour grace period. No late submissions will be accepted. Submissions should be uploaded to Brightspace.

Final Exam: The 2-hour final exam will be taken in our classroom at 8:00 am, on Wednesday, 12/15, in accordance with the University’s final exam schedule. It will be made up of a combination of multiple choice and short essay questions. It will be cumulative, but will put emphasis on the readings, lectures, activities, and assignments from Weeks 8-14. The exam

is closed-note and non-collaborative. The exam will be taken on paper and no open laptops will be allowed.

Course Resources

Reading Materials: There is one required textbook for this course:

Dickovick, J. and J. Eastwood. 2019. *Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases*. NY: Oxford University Press.

A physical copy may be purchased from the LMU Bookstore or you may rent a digital copy from VitalSource. All other course reading materials can be accessed on Brightspace through my.lmu.edu. Please do not circulate these materials outside of campus due to copyright issues.

Lectures: Students are expected to attend lecture, though I do not take attendance. Lectures will be **in-person** unless the instructor becomes ill, in which case they will temporarily re-locate to Zoom (and you would receive explicit instructions on Brightspace). Students who feel ill (sniffles, fever, cough, etc) should NOT come to class. If this is the case please contact me before class starts and I will record class and make the recording digitally available to you for a limited time. Lecture slides will generally be posted to Brightspace by the day after the class for which they were used. The slides are outlines and are not meant to replace lecture. Students will be responsible for material included in lectures regardless of whether it appears in the slides. Some classes will include interactive activities that are relevant to assignments.

Office Hours and Appointments: My weekly office hours are for questions regarding lectures, readings, assignments and projects. You may sign up in advance for a 15-minute slot through Brightspace. For one-on-one appointments for questions related to research or academic development, or for course-related questions for those who cannot make drop-in hours, please email me to set up an appointment. If so, please specify if you prefer the appointment to be in-person or via Zoom.

Response Time: I will make every effort to respond quickly to inquiries, but if you have not heard from me by two business days from your first inquiry, feel free to follow-up with a gentle reminder. When requesting extensions provide ample time for response, especially on weekends.

Credit Hours: As a 4-credit hour course, LMU requires that students spend an average of 12-hours a week engaging in course content, including class time, office hours and appointments, reading, group meetings, and any at-home assignments or other related work. This course therefore involves a reading and assignment structure appropriate to LMU standards of rigor.

Course Policies

Late Work: Please see “Assignments and Grades” for details and specifics on each graded component. Generally, late assignments will be penalized by 20% during the first week after the deadline and will not be accepted after that for a grade. Exception requests must be made in advance of the due date. If you have technical difficulties uploading any of your work to Brightspace, email the work to me as an attachment before the deadline to time stamp it—you must still also upload it to Brightspace once your technological issue is resolved in order to receive a grade. No group project work may be submitted late. The midterm and final must be taken in-person in the time provided unless arrangements for special accommodations are made beforehand through DSS.

Grade Disputes: Grade disputes must be made in writing, should be made only after requesting feedback, and must make clear which question or portion of the assignment you believe deserved a better grade and, most importantly, why. Regrade requests will be granted under these circumstances, but assignments will be re-graded in their entirety. This could lead to an increase or decrease in total points allocated so please evaluate whether a regrade is likely to produce an improvement before requesting it. Requests will not be granted simply because the student needs a better grade to pass the class or get into law school. Rather, I will correct errors in grading due to my misreading of responses, clerical error, and/or if I deem it warranted based on the merit of the work.

Syllabus Changes: This syllabus is tentative and is **subject to change** according to the unique demands of the semester. Students will be promptly notified of any changes by email and an updated syllabus will be made available through Brightspace should changes be made.

Inclusion Statement: One of the tremendous benefits of a university education is the diversity of experiences, identities, and perspectives represented in our classrooms. Diversity fosters the type of rich, critical discourse that is fundamental to both high-quality education and research. This type of discourse is only possible when the campus community is not only diverse, but when all feel they can safely and respectfully be heard. My job is to do all that I can to create this type of safety for all students. Hate speech or other forms of identity-hostility will not be tolerated in the classroom, discussion boards, or between students outside of class.

Academic Honesty: Loyola Marymount University is a community dedicated to academic excellence. Academic honesty in scholarship and creative work stands at the center of LMU’s academic life, and is essential for true learning and creation of knowledge to take place. As a university in the Jesuit and Marymount traditions, this community expects its members to act in accordance with the highest standards of honesty and ethics at all times. Violations of academic honesty undermine the fundamental educational mission of the University and cannot be tolerated. Students are responsible for understanding the standards of academic honesty and determining how they apply to their academic work and behavior. Students are responsible for contacting their Instructor before assignments are due to proactively resolve any questions they may have.

Students are welcome and encouraged to discuss lectures, readings, assignments, and case studies with each other outside of class or to study for exams jointly. This does not constitute academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty **does** include, but is not limited to:

- verbal, written or other form of collaboration during exams.
- using the language of someone other than yourself without attribution of credit.
- using the same language as another student on assignment submission or using the same language you have used on an assignment from a previous class.

You can get more information on LMU's Academic Honesty Policy [here](#).

Masks and Illness: In accordance with campus and County policy, students, faculty, staff and visitors must wear masks at all times when indoors on campus. This includes in the classroom. Students should NOT come to class if they feel ill or suspect they have been exposed to COVID-19. See the "Lectures" section under "Course Information" for details on how to stay up-to-date in this course if you become ill and must isolate. More information about self-isolating requirements is available [here](#).

Student Resources

This is an unusual semester as we transition back to campus in the middle of an ever-changing public health environment. There are various resources on campus to support you during this time.

COVID-19 Resources: If you suspect you have come into contact with someone who has COVID-19 or you feel ill, you may visit LMU's COVID Support Team website for resources including information on free campus testing. More information about LMU's COVID response is available [here](#) and you can find data on campus infection rates [here](#).

Health and Wellness: LMU provides this centralized resource for Lion Wellness. This includes information about student health services, student psychological services, wellness groups, the community of care advocacy program, recovery groups, the campus ministry, and the campus food pantry among other great resources.

Disability Support Services: If you have a documented disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and California law you may apply for appropriate learning accommodations through LMU's Disability Support Services.

ARC Writing and Course Tutoring: The Academic Resource Center provides writing support and peer tutoring in a variety of subjects. Be sure to make tutoring a part of your academic experience when you want feedback on a writing project or help understanding course concepts and preparing for exams. To make an appointment with a tutor, follow the "Writing & Course Tutoring" link in myLMU. Get more information [here](#).

Course Schedule

I. Capacity, Development and State Formation

Week 1

- M 8/30** Introduction and Overview
- W 9/1** Counterfactuals and Comparative Methodology
- D & E. “The Comparative Approach: An Introduction.” (Chapter 1)
- F 9/3** Motivating and Building the State
- D & E. “The State.” (Chapter 3)
 - D & E. “The Mexican State and the Rule of Law.” (p. 507 - 508)
 - D & E. “What is a Weak State, and Can It Be Changed? The Case of Nigeria.” (p. 521 - 522)

Week 2

- M 9/6** **NO CLASS—Labor Day!**
- Due: Sign-up for case study BEFORE Wednesday class**
- W 9/8** The Welfare State
- D & E. “Why Do Welfare States Emerge?” (p 87-95)
 - *The Economist*. “Covid-19 Has Transformed the Welfare State.”
- F 9/10** Colonial Legacies and Development
- D & E. “India: Historical Development.” (p. 459 - 462)
 - Banerjee and Iyer. “History, Institutions, and Economic Performance: The Legacy of Colonial Land Tenure Systems in India.” (read p. 1190 - 1199 ONLY)

Week 3

- M 9/13** Factor Endowments, Geography and Human Development
- NBER. “Why Tropical Countries Are Underdeveloped.”
- W 9/15** Governments and Markets
- D & E. “How Did China Become an Economic Power?” (p. 421-422)
 - D & E. “State-Led Development in Japan.” (p. 493)
 - D & E. “Did Free Markets Help the U.S. get Rich?” (p. 566 - 567)
- F 9/17** Social Policy Interventions
- World Bank. “In Fighting Poverty, Cash Transfer Programs Should be Wary of Negative Spillover Effects.”

II. Political Regimes and Transitions

Week 4

Due: Assignment 1—submit BEFORE Monday class

- M 9/20** Democracy and Accountability
- D & E. “Democracy and Democratization.” (Chapter 6)
 - D & E. “Democracy’s Success in India: What Can We Learn from a ‘Deviant Case’?” (p. 466)
- W 9/22** Democratization and Democratic Consolidation
- D & E. “Is China Destined for Democracy?” (p. 422)
 - Geddes. 2011. “What Causes Democratization?”
The Oxford Handbook of Political Science.
- F 9/24** Distributive Politics, Ideology and Program
- Wantchekon. 2003. “Clientelism and Voting Behavior: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Benin.” *World Politics.* (read p. 399 - 411 & 421 - 422 only)

Week 5

- M 9/27** Democratic Decay and Breakdown
- Foa and Mounk. 2017 “The Signs of Deconsolidation.”
Journal of Democracy.
 - Berg and Seminario. 2021. “Did Ortega Just Kill Nicaragua’s Democracy?” *Foreign Policy.*
- W 9/29** Authoritarian Regimes
- D & E. “Authoritarian Regimes and Democratic Breakdown.” (Chapter 7)
 - D & E. “Who Governs China?” (p. 424 - 425)
 - D & E. “Democratic Features of Authoritarian Systems? The Case of Iran.” (p. 478 - 479)
- F 10/1** **NO CLASS—Instructor at Conference**

Week 6

- M 10/4** The Resource Curse
- Beauchamp. 2014. “The Oil Curse: How Black Gold Makes Countries More Authoritarian, Corrupt and Violent.” *Vox.*
 - D & E. “Why Are Natural Resources Sometimes a Curse? The Nigerian Case.” (p. 522)

- W 10/6** Authoritarian Stability and Breakdown
- D & E. “Mexico’s ‘Perfect Dictatorship’ and Its End.” (p. 508 - 509)
 - D & E. “The PRI and Corporatism in Mexico.” (p. 509 - 510)
 - Magaloni. 2006. “Structural Determinants of Mass Support for the PRI.”
In *Voting for Autocracy*.
- F 10/8** Hybrid Regimes and Electoral Autocracies
- Levitsky and Way. 2002. “Elections without Democracy: The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism.” *Journal of Democracy*.

Week 7

Due: Assignment 2—submit BEFORE Monday class

- M 10/11** Research Design Activity
- W 10/13** Review for Midterm
- F 10/15** **NO CLASS—Autumn Day!**

III. Political Institutions

Week 8

- M 10/18** **In-class Midterm**
- W 10/20** Constitutional Design and Federalism
- D & E. “Constitutions and Constitutional Design.” (Chapter 8)
 - D & E. “Federalism and Differences in Development in India.” (p. 466)
 - D & E. “Federalism and the States in Nigeria: Holding Together or Tearing Apart?” (p. 523)
- F 10/22** Legislatures and Electoral Systems
- D & E. “Legislatures and Legislative Elections.” (Chapter 9)
 - D & E. “Institutional Design: Germany’s Bundestag and Bundesrat.” (p. 453 - 454)

Week 9

- M 10/25** Party Systems
- D & E. “Political Parties, Party Systems, and Interest Groups.” (Chapter 11)
 - Troiano. 2021. “Party Primaries Must Go.” *The Atlantic*.
- W 10/27** Bargaining Game

- F 10/29** Political Representation of the Socially Marginalized
- D & E. “Race, Ethnicity, and Gender.” (Chapter 14)
 - D & E. “Gender and Political Representation in Brazil: Where has Progress Come From?” (p. 411 - 412)
 - D & E. “Ethnicity and Political Parties in India.” (p. 467 - 468)

Week 10

- M 11/1** Can Institutions Shape Identity?
- Posner. 2005. “Accounting for Ethnic Coalition-Building Choices.” In *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*. (read p. 104 - 129 only)
- W 11/3** Presidents, Prime Ministers and Executive Power
- D & E. “Executives.” (Chapter 10)
 - *The Economist*. March, 2021. “The Complicated Dance to Unseat Binyamin Netanyahu.”
- F 11/5** Institutional Design Activity

IV. Contentious Politics and Political Behavior

Week 11

Due: Assignment 3—submit BEFORE Monday class

- M 11/8** Group Meetings - Operationalization
- W 11/10** Civil Conflict Onset and Duration
- Trei. 2002. “Causes of World’s Civil Wars Misunderstood, Researchers Say.” Stanford News Release.
- F 11/12** Conflict Resolution, Stable Peace and Transitional Justice
- Rizkallah. 2017. “The Paradox of Power-Sharing: Stability and Fragility in Postwar Lebanon.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*.

Week 12

- M 11/15** Nationalism and Populism
- D & E. “Nationalism and National Identity.” (Chapter 13)
- W 11/17** Political Organization: Interest Groups, Social Movements and Protest
- Heller. 2017. “Is There Any Point to Protesting?” *The New Yorker*.
- F 11/19** The Politics of Information
- Tufekci. 2018. “How Social Media Took Us from Tahrir Square to Donald Trump.” *MIT Technology Review*.

Week 13

- M 11/22 Holding Governments Accountable - Day I
- Peisakhan. 2012. "Transparency and Corruption: Evidence from India." *Journal of Law and Economics*.
- W 11/24 NO CLASS—Thanksgiving Break!
- F 11/26 NO CLASS—Thanksgiving Break!

Week 14

- Due: Assignment 4—submit BEFORE Monday class**
- M 11/29 Group Consultations
- W 12/1 Graphics Workshop
- F 12/3 Holding Governments Accountable - Day 2
- No assigned reading (work on presentation)

Week 15

- M 12/6 Group Presentations
- W 12/8 Group Presentations
- F 12/10 Final Review
- Due: Project Response—submit BY 11:00 pm on Sunday, 10/12**

Final

- W 10/15 In-class at 8:00 - 10:00 am