

Department of Political Science, University of California, Berkeley
Spring 2021
Political Science 2
Prof. Steven Fish
TuTh 2-3:30, plus discussion section

INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

This course aims to furnish students with the tools necessary to study politics and society in comparative perspective. It is divided into five parts. The first introduces basic concepts and methods of comparative analysis and examines core assumptions about human nature that underpin social scientists' thinking. The second surveys the variety of political regimes under which people live. The third examines the factors that influence which type of political regime prevails in particular national settings. The fourth section focuses on economic development, and in particular on why some countries have overcome barriers to development while others have not. The fifth and final section ponders some of the big issues we have covered with an eye to the future.

Requirements consist of three exams and attendance at and participation in discussion sections. Students are expected to do the readings for the week in their entirety by Thursday's class meeting. Your GSI may have alternative expectations regarding the completion of readings for discussion sections and will inform you of these expectations during your first meeting.

Grades will be determined on the basis of a 100-point scale. Each of the preliminary exams counts for 20 points; the final exam for 30 points; and 30 points will be determined by attendance and participation in discussion sections, our weekly in-class discussions, and participation in the online discussions on bCourses. The third and final exam will be cumulative in coverage of course material but will emphasize the last portion of the course.

The lecture for the week will be posted on Mondays. Students are expected to have viewed the lecture by our Thursday meeting. During our Tuesday meeting times, Professor Fish will hold open office hours. On Thursdays, we will meet for Q&A on the lectures and general discussion of world events as they relate to our course material for the week. Please come to Thursday's meetings armed with questions and/or comments for discussion. Our discussions will be relaxed and freewheeling and will not be recorded.

Some of the weeks, beginning with Week 3, include a documentary film. The links will be posted on bCourses. Viewing the films is mandatory and the material in the films, along with the lectures and readings, will be fair game on the exams.

In addition to the mandatory films, a selection of other documentaries will be made available on bCourses and can be viewed to earn extra credit. After viewing one of these additional documentaries, students can earn credit by writing a one-page essay tying the film to one of the class themes. Each of these essays will be worth up to two points of extra credit, and students may receive up to ten points in total.

Course readings are in the assigned books and the course reader, which is posted on bCourses in pdf format. The pieces that appear in the reader are marked with an asterisk (*); all other readings are in the books.

Our books for the course are:

Bruce J. Dickson, *The Dictator's Dilemma: The Chinese Communist Party's Strategy for Survival* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Robert Guest, *Borderless Economics: Chinese Sea Turtles, Indian Fridges and the New Fruits of Global Capitalism* (New York: St. Martin's Griffith, 2013).

Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die* (New York: Crown, 2019).

Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1st reprint ed., 2010).

Syllabus

PART I: THE COMPARATIVE ENTERPRISE

Week 1 (Jan. 19 & 21): Introduction to Comparative Politics

David J. Samuels, *Comparative Politics*, 2nd ed. (New York: Pearson, 2018).*

Jeffrey Kopstein, Mark Lichbach, and Stephen E. Hanson, "What is Comparative Politics?" in Jeffrey Kopstein, Mark Lichbach, and Stephen E. Hanson, eds., *Comparative Politics: Interests, Identities, and Institutions in a Changing Global Order*, 4th ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 1-7, 12-13.*

Daniel L. Posner, "The Political Salience of Cultural Differences: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi," *American Political Science Review* 98, 4 (November 2004), pp. 529-545.*

What is comparative politics all about? What is the role of comparison in our thinking in comparative politics—or for that matter in any attempt to make sense of the world around us? How does Posner make use of comparison to understand when cultural cleavages between Chewas and Tumbukas become politically salient and when they do not? What is a "natural experiment," and how does Posner use one to investigate relations between Chewas and Tumbukas?

Week 2 (Jan. 26 & 28): Who Are We and What Do We Want? Human Nature and the Ends of Political Life

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, published in Walter Kaufmann, ed., *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (New York: The Modern Library, 1992 [originally published 1885]) pp. 391-405.*

Bertrand Russell, "The Impulse to Power"; "Leaders and Followers"; and "The Ethics of Power," in *Power: A New Social Analysis*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004 [originally published 1938]), pp. 1-22, 215-223.*

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, excerpts from *The German Ideology*, in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: Norton, 1978 [originally published 1845-46]), pp. 155-162, 172-175.*

Max Weber, "Political Communities: The Distribution of Power within the Political Community," in *Economy and Society* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978 [originally published 1922]), pp. 926-939.*

Benjamin Constant, "The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with That of the Moderns," in Benjamin Constant, *Political Writings* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988 [originally published 1819]), pp. 309-328.*

Emile Durkheim, *Suicide* (Free Press, 1951 [originally published 1897]), pp. 208-216, 246-258.*

Each of the theorists we are reading this week presents a distinctive view of who we are and what makes us tick. How would you characterize each theorist's view? Can you think of contemporary writers or political leaders whose assumptions about human nature and how the world works resemble those of one or more of the writers we are reading this week?

PART II: POLITICAL REGIMES

Week 3 (Feb. 2 & 4): Democracy

Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, "What Democracy Is...and Is Not," *Journal of Democracy* 2, 3 (Summer 1991), pp. 75-88.*

Larry Diamond, "The March and Retreat of Democracy," and "The Authoritarian Temptation," chs. 3 & 4 from *Ill Winds: Saving Democracy from Russian Rage, Chinese Ambition, and American Complacency* (New York: Penguin, 2019), pp. 41-80.*

Dickson, *The Dictator's Dilemma*, pp. 262-300.

Omar G. Encarnación, "Gay Rights: Why Democracy Matters," *Journal of Democracy* 25, 3 (July 2014), pp. 90-104.*

Documentary film: Orbán in Hungary: The Rise of Populism (2018)

Consider how the readings inform our conception of what democracy is, how it emerges, whether it can take root anywhere in the world, and how it may be sustained. In the West, we long took democracy for granted, assuming that it would never again face serious challenge. The recent rise of political forces whose commitment to democracy is dubious has suddenly upended that assumption. How can we comprehend the challenge to democratic institutions in the West? What brought it on? With Encarnación's article in mind, consider also how democracy can affect the quality of people's lives.

Week 4: (Feb. 9 & 11): Democracy under Siege

Sarah Repucci, "The Leaderless Struggle for Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 30, 2 (April 2020), pp. 137-151.*

Milan Svobik, "Polarization versus Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 30, 3 (July 2019), pp. 20-32.*

Sumit Ganguly, "An Illiberal India?," *Journal of Democracy* 31, 1 (January 2020), pp. 193-202.*

Documentary film: Is Philippines' Democracy in Danger? (2018)

What is the state of democracy in the world today? How has the nature of the threat to democracy changed over time? Do you regard the setbacks democracy has suffered as irreversible, or do you see the potential for a democratic renaissance?

Week 5 (Feb. 16 & 18): Authoritarianism

Dickson, *The Dictator's Dilemma*, pp. 1-95.

Austin Ramzy and Chris Buckley, "Absolutely No Mercy': Leaked File Exposes How China Organized Mass Detention of Muslims," *New York Times*, November 16, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/11/16/world/asia/china-xinjiang-documents.html> (optional)

Susan L. Shirk, "China in Xi's 'New Era': The Return to Personalistic Rule," *Journal of Democracy* 29, 2 (April 2018), pp. 22-36.*

Levitsky and Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die*, introduction and ch. 1.

Documentary film: The Dictator's Playbook: Benito Mussolini (2018)

How does the lack of electoral legitimacy affect the behavior of authoritarian rulers? What methods do governments in countries with authoritarian regimes use to control the people and survive in power? How do these methods differ from the approaches used by leaders in democracies?

Friday, Feb. 19: First preliminary exam (covers material weeks 1-5)

PART III: WHAT SHAPES POLITICAL REGIME?

Week 6 (Feb. 23 & 25): Socioeconomic Development and Structure

Seymour Martin Lipset, "Economic Development and Democracy," excerpts from ch. 2 of *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1963), pp. 287-295 (excerpts reprinted).*

Andrew J. Nathan, "The Puzzle of the Chinese Middle Class," *Journal of Democracy* 27, 2 (April 2016), pp. 5-19.*

Dickson, *The Dictator's Dilemma*, pp. 222-232.

Steven Radelet, "The Rise of the World's Poorest Countries," *Journal of Democracy* 26, 4 (October 2015), pp. 5-19.*

Lipset's article is old and dated, but it's become a classic since it was one of the first works to spell out the correlation between socioeconomic development and democracy. How is level of economic development causally linked to political regimes? How do Nathan and Dickson explain the endurance of the Communist Party regime in China even in the face of rapid socioeconomic modernization? Do you think that socioeconomic modernization will eventually lead to political opening in China? What does Radelet have to tell us about recent trends in world development?

Week 7 (March 2 & 4): Political Culture: Values, Attitudes, Beliefs

Francis Fukuyama, "Confucianism and Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 6, 2 (April 1995), pp. 20-33.*

Marlene Laruelle, "Making Sense of Russian Illiberalism," *Journal of Democracy* 31, 3 (July 2020), pp. 115-129.*

Dickson, *The Dictator's Dilemma*, pp. 237-244.

Documentary Film: *A Revolution in Four Seasons* (2016)

How can people's values, attitudes, and beliefs affect the forms of political regime they are likely to live under? Do some cultures foster attitudes that are more conducive to democracy than others?

Week 8 (March 9 & 11): Political Participation, Civil Society, Political Parties, and Leadership

Dickson, *The Dictator's Dilemma*, pp. 123-163.

Levitsky and Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die*, chs. 2, 3, 4, 7, 8.

What is the role of civil society organizations in challenging or sustaining political regimes? What forms of action do they engage in, and to what ends? What do Levitsky and Ziblatt teach us about how the behavior of American political elites has compromised democracy in the United States? What can be done to counteract such behavior?

Week 9 (March 16 & 18): Formal and Informal Institutions

Patrick H. O'Neil, *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, 6th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2018), pp. 146-165.*

M. Steven Fish, "Stronger Legislatures, Stronger Democracies," *Journal of Democracy* 17, 1 (January 2006), pp. 5-20.*

Louise Tillin, "India's Democracy at 70: The Federalist Compromise," *Journal of Democracy* 28, 3 (July 2017), pp. 64-75.*

Levitsky and Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die*, chs. 5 & 6.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of different electoral systems and of different ways of apportioning power between the central state and subnational units? Consider informal as well as formal institutions. According to Levitsky and Ziblatt, what are informal institutions and what role have they played in sustaining democracy in the United States?

Friday, March 19: Second preliminary exam (covers weeks 6-9)

Week 10 (March 30 & April 1): Ethnicity, Religion, and Nationalism

Christophe Jaffrelot, "India's Democracy at 70: Toward a Hindu State?," *Journal of Democracy* 28, 3 (July 2017), pp. 52-63.*

M. Steven Fish, Francesca R. Jensenius, and Katherine E. Michel, "Islam and Large-Scale Political Violence: Is There a Connection?" *Comparative Political Studies* 43, 11 (2010), pp. 1327-1361.*

Guest, *Borderless Economics*, ch. 6.

Francis Fukuyama, "Why National Identity Matters," *Journal of Democracy* 29, 4 (October 2018), pp. 5-15.*

Documentary film: *In Search of India's Soul: From Mughals to Modi* (2020)

How can we understand religious and ethnic intolerance? Are bigotry and ethnonational conflict inevitable in diverse societies, or can they be avoided? How does religion affect the danger of conflict and the prospects for democracy? How can strong national identity bolster democracy's prospects?

Week 11 (April 6 & 8): International Forces

Guest, *Borderless Economics*, ch. 3.

M. Steven Fish, "Encountering Culture," in Zoltan Barany and Robert G. Moser, eds., *Is Democracy Exportable?* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 57-84.*

Thomas Carothers, "Rejuvenating Democracy Promotion," *Journal of Democracy* 31, 1, (January 2020), pp. 114-123.*

Timothy Snyder, "Equality or Oligarchy," excerpt from ch. 6, *The Road to Unfreedom* (New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2018), pp. 217-259.*

Documentary film: *Gems, Warlords, and Mercenaries: Russia's Sharp Power Playbook in Africa* (2019)

Do you see the international environment as a potentially decisive determinant of political regime? In your opinion, is democracy promotion by foreign actors a legitimate enterprise? Consider also international efforts to damage democracy. What motivates governments in countries with authoritarian regimes to undertake efforts to undermine democracy abroad?

PART IV: POVERTY AND PROSPERITY: THE POLITICS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Week 12 (April 13 & 15): Confronting Underdevelopment, Seeking Solutions

Moyo, *Dead Aid*, chs. 1-4.

Guest, *Borderless Economics*, chs. 1 & 4.

Documentary film: *Africa Rising (Foreign Aid Documentary)* by Real Stories (2018)

Do you find Moyo's case against aid compelling? Consider also how globalization affects development. Which aspects of globalization do you regard as favorable for or inimical to development?

Week 13 (April 20 & 22): Drawing Lessons from Practical Experience

Moyo, *Dead Aid*, "The Republic of Dongo" and chs. 5-10.

Dickson, *The Dictator's Dilemma*, pp. 164-187, 246-254.

What are the main causes of poverty's persistence? Why do you think so many countries have followed failed development strategies? Are the interests of rulers, commitments to particular ideologies, lack of state capacity, simple inertia, or some other factor(s) to blame? What sets the successful developers apart from the rest?

PART V: CONCLUSION

Week 14 (April 27 & 29): Taking Stock and Pondering the Future

Dickson, *The Dictator's Dilemma*, pp. 301-321.

Guest, *Borderless Economics*, ch. 8 & conclusion.

Levitsky and Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die*, ch. 9.

Friday, April 30: Final exam (covers entire course, with emphasis on weeks 10-14)

How can we use the tools and knowledge we have acquired in our course to grasp future scenarios for self-government and prosperity in the world? Do you see the next decade as one of rising global well-being? What forces favor and disfavor such progress? What about the future of democracy? Do you

think that the current crisis of democracy in the world will produce renewal and innovation in how we govern ourselves? Or do you see government by autocrats and “illiberal democrats” as the wave of the future?