

# PS 2700: Comparative Political Systems

University of Missouri, Spring 2019  
Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: 12:00-12:50pm, Middlebush Hall 211  
Class number: 57790; Section: 02

Instructor: Edward Goldring  
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Office hours: Monday/Wednesday, 10:30am-12:00pm, and by appointment

## Course Description

The course is designed to introduce students to some of the basic concepts and issues encountered in the comparative study of politics. Comparative politics is more than the act of comparing countries, but of using different countries to attempt to understand broader political phenomena. As such it is an analytic, and not merely descriptive, enterprise. Students will learn about key concepts related to political development, regime type, institutional structure, and policymaking by studying a variety of countries that serve as illustrative cases.

The countries we will discuss are representative of developed countries and developing nations. Thus, many of the lessons we will draw from these cases can be directly applied to other cases not covered in class. As you will note from the syllabus, however, the course is not organized around a country-by-country study. Instead, the organization is intended to develop conceptual tools to compare these countries and generalize to other cases. *Comparative politics is not simply the description of other countries. Comparative politics is the study of multiple countries to understand why particular political outcomes occur.*

## Course Requirements & Grading

There are three components of your grade. The first component (60%) is based on exams. There will be four exams: three midterms and a final exam that are each worth 15%. The exams will contain multiple choice questions about topics from the preceding lectures (meaning the exams are not cumulative). Exams will cover information from the lectures, discussion sections and reading materials. **I do not scale or curve exams. The grade you earn is the grade that you will receive. At this point, I do not envision extra credit opportunities.**

The second component (20%) will be based on a group presentation. You will each be placed in a group of 4 or 5 students. Each group will give a presentation on a specific

week's topic, ideally lasting between 20-30 minutes before taking questions from the Instructor and your classmates. I will give each a group a prompt that their presentation should answer; the prompt will be provided to each group a week before their presentation. Presentations will be expected to: include a set of slides prepared by the group; directly answer the prompt to provide a clear and compelling argument; and use at least two case studies to illustrate the argument, meaning at least one case study is not the United States. Further details about the presentation will be discussed in class.

The third component (20%) will be based on class attendance and participation. Attendance at lectures are necessary, but not sufficient conditions for a passing grade.

The following scale will be used to assign grades in the course:

Letter Grade	Percentages
A+	97-100
A	94-96
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	67-69
D	64-66
D-	60-63
F	Below 60

## Course Materials

**Canvas:** We will use Canvas ([canvas.missouri.edu](https://canvas.missouri.edu)) to display grades, post additional readings, and for announcements.

**Readings:** There will not always be perfect unity between the course lectures and assigned readings. Thus it will be necessary to attend all lectures and to read the assigned materials in order to be exposed to all of the material that you are responsible for in this course.

The following required text is available at the Mizzou bookstore and online.

- William Roberts Clark, Matt Golder, and Sona Nadenichek Golder, *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Second edition.

## Other Considerations

- Out of respect for fellow students, each person will refrain from talking, whispering, eating, making offensive remarks, newspaper reading, and other disruptive behavior during lecture. Cell phones must be turned off and may not be used during class. Inappropriate classroom behavior may result in the student being requested to leave the classroom. More information about my electronics policy will be given in class.
- Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. In this course, you are expected to submit original work and behave in a respectful manner toward both the professor and other students in the class. Breaches of the academic integrity rules are extremely serious matters. Sanctions for such a breach range from instructor-imposed academic sanctions, such as a failing grade for the course, to University-imposed disciplinary sanctions, such as probation or expulsion. If you have questions, please consult the University's academic integrity website, <https://oai.missouri.edu/students/guidelines/>. **Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any student plagiarizing (or cheating on tests) will receive an automatic "F" for that assignment, no exceptions!**
- Final Examination: Each student must take the final examination at the time assigned in the University's schedule of classes. You **MUST NOT** make any travel arrangements for holidays, family occasions, or the like that would require you to miss this examination. There will be no early final exam offered nor will exemptions from the final exam be permitted.
- If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible.
- If disability-related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please register with the Disability Center (<http://disabilitycenter.missouri.edu>), S5 Memorial Union, 573-882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For other MU resources for persons with disabilities, click on "Disability Resources" on the MU homepage.

## Make-up Exams/Excused Absences

Make-up exams will only be given for university-excused absences. For any of these absences to be "excused," you must provide me with written documentation. To be excused

the student must notify me in writing (acknowledged email is acceptable) prior to the date of absence if such notification is feasible (in particular in times of university-excused absences). In cases where advance notification is not feasible (e.g. unanticipated illness, accident, or emergency) the student must provide notification by the end of the second working day after the absence by 5:00 PM. This notification should include an explanation of why notice could not be sent prior to the class.

The student must also provide documentation substantiating the reason for the absence that is satisfactory to the instructor prior to taking the make-up exam. Failing to take a make-up exam at a previously agreed-to time will result in a zero. The make-up exam must be taken within one week of the original test date listed in the syllabus, except under extreme circumstances approved by the instructor. For illness, documentation should include an official note from a doctor or clinic.

Also, keep in mind that an exam proctored outside of the normal exam time may be of a different format than the original exam. If you do not have an excused absence you will receive a zero for the exam. No exceptions.

## **Contacting the Instructor: email, office hours**

You do not require an appointment if you wish to speak to me during office hours.

If you absolutely cannot make office hours you are welcome to email me to try and arrange an alternative time to meet. However, it is preferable that you attend office hours.

I aim to be responsive to emails from students. However, please do not expect an answer to your question sooner than 24 hours after it is sent. If you email me, keep your email professional and succinct. This is good practice for whatever profession you enter after university. Emails should be used for short administrative or logistical clarification questions. Substantive questions about course material are best addressed during class or in office hours. Finally, try to plan ahead and avoid sending emails in the day(s) before an exam. Not only does this signal that you are not giving the class sufficient attention but I may not be able to respond in time.

## **Course Schedule & Readings**

We will spend as much time as necessary on each topic for this course. Because I am unable to predict in advance how long each topic will take, the schedule below is only a rough guideline. *I expect that you will have read the assigned readings **before** the class period for which they are assigned. I will announce additional required readings during class meetings.*

## **Part 1: What Is Comparative Politics?**

### **Week 1: January 21-25**

- Monday: no class (Martin Luther King holiday)
- Wednesday: Course introduction
- Friday: Chapter 1

### **Week 2: January 28-February 1**

- Monday: Chapter 2
- Wednesday: Chapter 2 (continued)
- Friday: Chapter 3

### **Week 3: February 4-8**

- Monday: Chapter 3 (continued)
- Wednesday: Group 1 presentation
- Friday: Chapter 4

### **Week 4: February 11-15**

- Monday: Chapter 4 (continued)
- Wednesday: Group 2 presentation
- Friday: Exam I

## **Part 2: What Is Democracy?**

### **Week 5: February 18-22**

- Monday: Chapter 5
- Wednesday: Chapter 5 (continued); Reynolds (2016); Gelman (2017); and Norris (2017)
- Friday: Group 3 presentation

### **Week 6: February 25-March 1**

- Monday: Chapter 6
- Wednesday: Chapter 6 (continued); Lipset (1959)
- Friday: Group 4 presentation

### **Week 7: March 4-8**

- Monday: Chapter 7
- Wednesday: Chapter 7 (continued)
- Friday: Group 5 presentation

### **Week 8: March 11-15**

- Monday: Chapter 8
- Wednesday: Chapter 8 (continued); Sarotte (2014)
- Friday: Exam II

## **Part 3: Democratic Institutions**

### **Week 9: March 18-22**

- Monday: Chapter 9
- Wednesday: Chapter 9 (continued)
- Friday: Group 6 presentation

### **Week 10: March 25-29**

- No classes (Spring Break)

### **Week 11: April 1-5**

- Monday: Chapter 10
- Wednesday: Chapter 10 (continued); Bueno de Mesquita and Smith (2011) Introduction and Chapter 1
- Friday: no class

**Week 12: April 8-12**

- Monday: 'Under the Sun'
- Wednesday: Chapter 11
- Friday: Chapter 11 (continued)

**Week 13: April 15-19**

- Monday: Chapter 12
- Wednesday: Chapter 12 (continued)
- Friday: Exam III

**Part 4: Consequences of Democracy**

**Week 14: April 22-26**

- Monday: Chapter 13
- Wednesday: Chapter 13 (continued)
- Friday: 'Five Days That Changed Britain'

**Week 15: April 29-May 3**

- Monday: Chapter 14
- Wednesday: Chapter 14 (continued)
- Friday: Group 7 presentation

**Week 16: May 6-10**

- Monday: Chapter 15
- Wednesday: Chapter 16
- Friday: no class (Reading Day)

**Final Examination: Friday, May 17, 7:30-9:30am**