

Comparative Politics
PS 2371 Spring 2020
Dr. Gregory W. Saxton

Course Information:

Course Number PS 2371—003
Location: Holden Hall 111
Lecture: MWF 9-9:50 AM

Instructor Information:

Instructor: Gregory W. Saxton, PhD
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Office Hours: MW 11:30AM-1PM, OBA

Overview:

This course begins from the observation that people around the world experience different circumstances and overall quality of daily life. The goal of comparative politics is to understand the political diversity that exists in the world, and the ways that politics and policy shape people's opportunities to lead fulfilling lives. This course is designed to help students master one of the fundamental methods of scientific inquiry and inference: *comparison*. If you have ever wondered why the United States is rich and other countries are poor, or why European countries tend to have universal healthcare and we do not, you have already begun to think like a comparative political scientist. This class will help you harness some of your natural curiosity and to begin to think more systematically about political questions around the world. And if you've never been curious about politics beyond the borders of the United States, this class will push you to think like a *global citizen*, to realize how you can employ the comparative method to address some of the major social and economic issues confronting people in the world today.

Course Description and Learning Outcomes:

This course is an introduction to comparative politics. It is designed to expose you to many of the central questions in the study of comparative politics and the key theories that scholars have developed to best answer these questions. More specifically, the class will address questions regarding varieties of dictatorships, democracy, political institutions, political parties and elections, political identity and diversity, and political economy. This course will prepare you for more advanced courses in comparative politics, and it will make you a more informed citizen of the world. It has three fundamental goals:

1. To introduce students to the major questions in comparative politics
2. To acquaint them with the field's best answers to those questions, and
3. To give them the tools to think critically about the answers.

Learning Outcomes

This course is intended to introduce students to the study of political processes outside of the United States and to help them achieve the following *learning outcomes*:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of concepts, theories, and methods of political science in the comparative context
2. Compare different political, social, and economic features of countries and regions around the world
3. Apply the theories and comparative methods of inquiry to real-life issues in the world today and communicate this inquiry to a general audience

4. Critically evaluate the relative merits of particular policy decisions, given ethical implications, and indications of efficacy.

Course Materials

Required Text

Drogus, Carol & Stephen Orvis, *Introducing Comparative Politics: Concepts and Cases in Context (4th edition)*. Sage CQ Press. (D&O in course schedule)

The textbook is available in a number of cost-effective formats. Amazon has rentals for around \$25. You can also purchase a e-book version rather than a hard copy if you wish.

In addition to the required text, you will be responsible for a variety of additional short readings. These will be announced in class ahead of time and will be made available on Blackboard.

It is your responsibility to do all of the readings associated with each day in the course schedule *before coming to class*. Rather than using a traditional lecture-based format, this class will revolve heavily around critical discussions of the readings. If I get the sense that students are not completing the readings, I reserve the right to base the day's participation grade on a pop reading quiz.

If you have any sort of problem obtaining the required text – either financial or otherwise – please come see me as soon as possible. ***It is my goal for everyone to succeed in this class***, and I do not want issues accessing the books to hinder anyone's progress or success!

Electronic Resources

Blackboard (Bb in course schedule) will be used to post course announcements, course materials, assignments, and grades. Students should access this course on Blackboard as soon as possible, so that problems do not compromise course performance. Students should also make sure they have a current TTU email address on file so that they will receive any emails sent through Blackboard.

Students who have problems accessing Blackboard are encouraged to consult:

<https://www.depts.ttu.edu/lms/>

Students are also reminded that all email communication with the instructor must come from a TTU email address.

Packback: In addition to Blackboard, we will also be using an online platform called Packback for online discussion that will constitute 20 percent of your final grade (see the “Earning Your Grade” section below to see how this will work. **When you register for Packback, you will pay a \$25 registration fee.** Registration rates are discounted if you have more than one course using Packback.

Why are we using Packback for discussion instead of something else?

Packback Questions is an online discussion platform powered by artificial intelligence. This platform is specifically designed to encourage curiosity and increase critical thinking & writing skills. On Packback, you'll be encouraged & rewarded for asking complex questions about how what we're studying relates to the real world.

How to Register on Packback:

If you were on the original roster for this course, your account has already been created by Packback & added to the correct community!

1. **Search** your inbox for an email from holla@packback.co with the subject line “Finish registration for Instructor Saxton’s course” - This may be hiding in spam, so search thoroughly!
2. **Click “set account password”** to get started! (If you already have a Packback account, just log in)
3. Once you’re logged in, **click “join a community”**. When this course’s community appears, click “join community”
4. **Input payment information** & follow the prompts to complete checkout.
5. Enter the community & start asking questions!

If you did not receive a welcome email, head to packback.co, create an account (use your *school email!*), and find our community with the community look-up key: **62f6f5c1-9417-418d-b66f-16c60b0a1fff** (Note: this is not a payment or free access code!)

If you have ANY questions or concerns regarding Packback registration or throughout the semester, please contact the customer support team directly at holla@packback.co! I’ve also included a number of helpful links below.

[Packback FAQ](#) ♦ [Coaching & Question Tutorial Video](#) ♦ [Curiosity Score FAQ](#) ♦ [Terms of Use](#)

Earning Your Grade

The grading and assignments for this course have been designed to offer you *a variety of ways to succeed*. Below is a breakdown of how your grade for this course will be assessed.

Packback (20%): Throughout the course of the semester, you will have 11 opportunities to earn credit by participating in Packback discussions. At the end of the semester, I will drop your lowest grade (in other words, each of the 10 Packback grades will constitute 2% of your final grade). During weeks when you have a Packback assignment, you will be required to ask 1 question and post 2 responses by Tuesday at 11:59 PM. **Note:** On Packback you can’t post early or late, you must post within the designated posting interval. In order to get full credit each week, you must post at least 1 question, 2 answers, AND maintain a minimum curiosity score of 50.

Note: Packback utilizes Artificial Intelligence that will *moderate (remove) posts* if they don’t meet the [Community Guidelines](#). If your post is moderated, you will receive a coaching email, prompting you to edit & re-submit for credit. **However**, it can take up to 24 hours for the Packback team to moderate a post and send a coaching email. *This is why it is important that you complete your Packback questions and responses far before the deadline!*

Preparation and Participation (5%): In lieu of an official grade for attendance, we will have a variety of preparatory and in-class assignments and online discussions throughout the course of the semester. *Sometimes in-class activities will be announced in advance, and at other times they will not.* Examples of preparation/participation assignments include, but are not limited to: pop reading quizzes (we will

usually have one of these per week), short reading/writing assignments, discussion activities, sharing notes with another student, etc. There is no official attendance policy for this class, but students are strongly encouraged to attend lecture. There is no formal penalty for missing lecture, but students will not be able to participate in lectures they miss, or make up any in-class assignments, unless documentation of an excused absence is provided. *If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get lecture notes from one of your colleagues.*

Constitutional Design Project (25%): Students will be assigned to different groups and together will work on designing a constitution for a hypothetical country that recently transitioned to democracy. Details on the content of the assignment will be available on Blackboard in the “*Constitutional Design Project*” folder. Students will submit their papers electronically on Monday November 11 and will present their constitutions to the class that week. I have set aside class time in the course schedule for groups to work on this project. While I do not expect groups to meet outside of our regularly scheduled class time, students are encouraged to collaborate electronically *and come to class prepared* to work on this project. Part of your grade for this project will be based on your peers’ evaluation of your contribution to the group.

Midterm Exams (30%, 15% each): Students will take **two midterms** throughout the semester—listed as Exam I and Exam II in the course schedule. These exams are each worth 15% of the student’s final grade and ***will be administered in-person during our regularly scheduled class time.***

Final Exam (20%): The final exam is comprehensive, meaning it will cover content from lectures, readings, and activities throughout the semester. The final exam will be administered in-person during the university scheduled exam time. Here is a link to the fall exam schedule: https://www.depts.ttu.edu/officialpublications/class_schedule/spring_times.php

Calculating Your Grade

Each assignment will receive a percentage grade and both midterm and final grade formulas will result in a percentage, which will translate into a letter grade using the following scale:

Points	Letter Grade
97-100%	A+
93-96%	A
90-92%	A-
87-89%	B+
83-86%	B
80-82%	B-
...	
59% or below	F

Please do not contact me requesting an arbitrary grade increase (this includes requests for “rounding” at the end of the semester). If you have an appeal about an assignment grade besides a simple clerical error, you must type a formal appeal describing the problem. Your appeal should clearly explain why you believe that your original work correctly answered the question and make a cogent argument for improving your grade. Attach a copy of the original work to your appeal. This

appeal will not be accepted within two days of the return of the assignments or exam, as the intention of this rule is to allow you time to consider and formulate your appeal and let any emotions cool.

Policies

Attendance and Excused Absences

This course does not have a formal attendance policy. Recall that in lieu of a grade for attendance, students will earn 15% of their grade through preparation and participation activities throughout the course of the semester. Given that most of the concepts introduced in this class are foreign to many students, even students of American politics, there is usually a high correlation between good attendance and high final grades.

Make Up Opportunities

Students who anticipate missing class or an exam can make arrangements **in advance** for an alternate time/date. It is at the instructor's discretion to determine what constitutes a reasonable request for an alternate exam time/date (e.g., "The final exam is on December 8 and I want to leave campus by December 6" is **not** a reasonable request). Students who miss an exam on the day it is given will only be granted a make-up opportunity if they miss because of a documented medical emergency involving themselves or an immediate family member. More specifically:

- In case of an illness that will require an absence from class for more than one week, the student should notify her/his academic dean. The dean's office will inform the student's instructors through the departmental office. In case of class absences because of a brief illness, the student should inform the instructor directly. OP 34.04
- A student must submit any written documentation supporting an excused absence within **one week** after the absence, except when the absence is for the observation of a major religious holiday.
- The Texas state legislature has passed rules governing absences for **religious observances**. TTU OP 34.19 stipulates the following:
 - A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence.
 - A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence.
 - A student who is excused under section 2 may not be penalized for the absence; however, the instructor may respond appropriately if the student fails to complete the assignment satisfactorily.

Academic Accommodations

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary arrangements. Students should present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor's office hours. Please note, instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has

been provided. For additional information you may contact the Student Disability Services office in 335 West Hall or 806-742-2405.

LGBTQIA Support

I identify as an ally to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA) community, and I am available to listen and support you in an affirming manner. I can assist in connecting you with resources on campus to address problems you may face pertaining to sexual orientation and/or gender identity that could interfere with your success at Texas Tech. Please note that additional resources are available through the Office of LGBTQIA within the Center for Campus Life, Student Union Building Room 201, www.lgbtqia.ttu.edu, 806.742.5433.

Academic Integrity, Cheating and Plagiarism

Cheating and plagiarism are serious crimes and will be handled in accord with Texas Tech University policy. I have no tolerance for this type of behavior. Students caught cheating may receive a failing grade for the course, not simply for the assignment. Remember that copying from internet sources, closely paraphrasing sources, and quoting without citing sources are all forms of plagiarism. For more information on the definitions of and penalties for cheating and plagiarism, please consult the following website: <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/dos/handbook/>

Classroom Behavior, Decorum, and Civility

Please be respectful to others in this class and engage in civil discourse when we discuss topics with a diversity of perspectives. This means coming to class ON TIME and minimizing distractions by not carrying on conversations. Turn mobile phones off during class. Please help maintain the most courteous environment by using a little peer pressure if necessary. Students who violate the rules for civil behavior in class will be told to leave the class. If this is during an in-class activity the student will not receive any credit for the activity. Any personal or discriminatory remarks based on race, sex, religion, age, ethnicity, nationality, or sexual orientation made by students will also result in being asked to leave the classroom.

Laptop Policy: Research consistently shows that laptop usage in the classroom distracts *other* students. If you want to affect your own learning, that's your prerogative. However, you don't have the right to affect your peers' learning. I will not prohibit anyone from using a laptop for notetaking, but please use your best judgment. If I find that you're using your laptop for non-class purposes, I reserve the right to ask you to leave the classroom.

The instructor reserves the right to alter the syllabus. Any changes to the syllabus will be announced in class or via email, as well as posted on Blackboard.

*A Current version of the course schedule will always be available on Blackboard.

***We will be discussing the readings listed for each day in class. Therefore, I expect that everyone will have completed the readings *prior to class*. I also recommend that you bring a copy of the assigned readings to class so that you can easily reference them during lectures and discussions.**

Course Schedule

Week	Assignments
Intro Week January 15 & 17	<p>Wednesday – Welcome to Comparative Politics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reading assignment <p>Friday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read D&O Chapter 1 “Introduction” (on Bb) • Read “How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps” - Bb
Unit 1: Politics, The State, Collective Action, and Democratic Regimes	
Week 1: What is comparative politics and how do we study it? January 20-24	<p>Monday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NO CLASS – MLK Day – Have a safe and relaxing long weekend <p>Wednesday: Scientific method</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read “NGOs and Political Participation in Weak Democracies” (Boulding 2010) – Bb • Complete reading guide/discussion prep and bring to class - Bb <p>Friday: Approaches to studying comparative politics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read “Making Space for Women” by Barnes and Córdova – Bb • Complete reading guide/discussion prep and bring to class - Bb
Week 2: The Modern State January 27-31	<p>Monday: What is the modern state and what is it not?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read D&O 36-51 (Ch2) <p>Tuesday – Packback 1 due by 11:59PM</p> <p>Wednesday: State strength</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read D&O 51-97 (Ch 2) <p>Friday: Bring computers for in-class activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read “Is Ranking Failed or Fragile States a Futile Business?” - Bb.
Week 3: States, Regimes, and Citizens February 3-7	<p>Monday: Monday: Citizenship, rights, and responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read D&O 98-113 (Ch 3) <p>Tuesday – Packback 2 due by 11:59PM</p> <p>Wednesday: Regimes and Guiding Ideologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read D&O 113-145 (Ch 3) <p>Friday: Read Universal Declaration of Human Rights - Bb</p>

<p>Week 4: Democratic Regimes February 10-14</p>	<p>Monday: Concepts and Measurement in Political Science</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read “Concepts, Theories, and Measurement” by Goetz -Bb <p>Tuesday – Packback 3 due by 11:59PM</p> <p>Wednesday: Measuring democracy and dictatorship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read “Democracy and Dictatorship Revisited” by Cheibub, Ghandi, and Vreeland - Bb <p>Friday: In-class data activity. No reading assignment, but bring computers to class.</p>
<p>Week 5: Exam Week February 17-21</p>	<p>Monday: Exam Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reading assignment • Come to class having reviewed the study guide on Bb and be ready to ask questions about material that’s still confusing <p>Tuesday – No Packback assignment this week</p> <p>Wednesday: Exam I</p> <p>Friday: Corruption lecture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reading assignment
<p>Democratic and Authoritarian Political Institutions</p>	
<p>Week 6: Governing Institutions in Democracy February 24-28</p>	<p>Monday: What’s the difference between a parliamentary and a presidential system?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read D&O 214-247 (Ch 5) <p>Tuesday – Packback 4 due by 11:59PM</p> <p>Wednesday: Legislative-Executive Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read “Perils of Presidentialism” by Linz – Bb • Read “Impeachment Exists because the Founding Fathers Made a Mistake” - Bb <p>Friday: Unitary vs. Federal Constitutions Read D&O 247-281 (Ch 5)</p>
<p>Week 7: Democratic Representation March 2-6</p>	<p>Monday: Electoral Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read D&O 284-326 (Chapter 6) <p>Tuesday – Packback 5 due by 11:59PM</p> <p>Wednesday: Parties and Party Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read “Ethnic Parties and Democratic Stability” by Chandra – Bb • Complete reading guide (Bb) and bring to class <p>Friday: Gender Quotas and Women’s Representation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: “Gender Quotas and Women’s Substantive Representation: Lessons from Argentina” by Franceschet and Piscopo - Bb <p>Recommended Resource: IDEA Gender Quotas Database</p>
<p>Week 8: Non-democratic Regimes March 9-13</p>	<p>Monday: Authoritarian Institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read D&O 408-439 (Ch 8) <p>Tuesday – Packback 6 due by 11:59PM</p> <p>Wednesday: Finish Authoritarian Institutions and Introduce Constitution Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read D&O 439-466 <p>Friday: Group work day – Constitution Project (in class)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No reading assignment
SPRING BREAK – March 16-20 – No Class	
Week 9: Contentious Politics and Political Violence March 23-27	Monday: Political Identity and Conflict <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read D&O 146-212 (Ch 4) – Case studies are recommended but not required reading Tuesday – Packback 7 due by 11:59PM Wednesday: Types of Political Violence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read D&O 356-407 (Ch 7) – Case studies are recommended but not required reading Friday: Regime Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read D&O 468-497 (Ch 9)
Week 10: Exam Week March 30-April 3	Monday: Exam Review Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the study guide on Bb and come to class prepared to ask questions about material you find confusing Tuesday – No Packback assignment this week Wednesday: Exam II Friday: Exam II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constitution Project Group Work Session (in class)
Political Economy and Development	
Week 11: Constitution Project Presentations April 6-10	Monday: Democratization Lecture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No reading assignment Tuesday – Packback 8 due by 11:59PM Wednesday: Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constitution Project Papers and PowerPoints are due on Tuesday 4/7 by 11:59PM. One person from each group must email me a copy of their paper and presentation. Friday: Presentations
Week 12: Political Economy April 13-17	Monday: Core Debates in Political Economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read D&O 522-552 (Ch 10) Tuesday – Packback 9 due by 11:59PM Wednesday: Economic Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read D&O 582-604; 624-629 (Ch 11) Watch “Why Governments Should Prioritize Well-Being” (10 minutes) – Bb or here Friday: Personal/Mental Health Day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I will be at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting. Take the day off to rest and recharge.
Week 13: Class Representation and Inequality	Monday: Class Identity and Political Representation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read “The Rich are Running Latin America – and Why That Matters” by Lupu and Carnes (<i>WP Monkey Cage</i>) – Bb or here Tuesday – Packback 10 due by 11:59PM

April 20-24	<p>Wednesday: Inequality in Democracies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: “Do Economic and Political Inequality Go Together?” – Bb • Read: “Why Don’t Voters Demand More Redistribution?” - Bb <p>Friday: Inequality and Political Behavior</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reading assignment
<p>Week 14: Social Policies to Reduce Inequality April 27-May 1</p>	<p>Monday: Social welfare programs in advanced democracies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read D&O 634-673 (Ch 12) <p>Tuesday – Packback 11 due by 11:59PM</p> <p>Wednesday: Social welfare programs in the developing world</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: “Want to End Poverty? Brazil’s Answer: Give People Money” - Bb <p>Friday: Globalization and development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: “UN: 15-year Push Ends Poverty for a Billion People” – Bb • Read: “The Good, the Bad, and the Hideous” - Bb
<p>Week 15: Final Exam Review May 4 & 6</p>	<p>Monday – Exam Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reading assignment, but come to class prepared to ask content-related questions about the final exam <p>Tuesday – No Packback assignment this week</p> <p>Wednesday – No Class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University Individual Study Day
<p>Final Exam Week</p>	<p>Refer to the University’s fall exam schedule for exam dates and times https://www.depts.ttu.edu/officialpublications/class_schedule/spring_times.php</p>