

## POSC 1040 | INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Sections 3-4

Tue/Thu 3:30-4:45 pm, Humanities G66

**Instructor:** Alex Honeker

**Email:** [jhoneyke@clemson.edu](mailto:jhoneke@clemson.edu)

**Office:** 114A Poole Agricultural Center

**Office Hours:** Tue/Thu 2:00-3:00 pm, and by appointment

### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

The goal of this course is to introduce students to both the comparative method and the comparative field of study in political science. We will focus on both the institutional and behavioral foundations of comparative politics. The course will consist of four main sections: **1)** Introduction to Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method; **2)** Regime Types and Political Institutions; **3)** Parties, Elections, and Political Behavior; and **4)** Comparative Political Economy.

In **section 1**, we will study the difference between comparative politics as a method of study—that is, the comparative method—and as a subject of study—that is, the study of politics in different countries. In **section 2**, we will explore questions such as: Is democracy eroding around the world? What is the difference between illiberal democracies and autocracies? Do countries have different political cultures? What are the differences between presidential and parliamentary systems? In **section 3**, we will answer questions like: What type of societal divisions give rise to political parties? What are the implications of different electoral systems? How is ideology related to individuals' personality? Is liberalism a left-wing or right-wing ideology? What does it mean to be a "liberal" or a "conservative" in Europe and Latin America? What is the effect of social media on politics? How do group identities influence people's politics? At the end of the course, in **section 4**, we will cover a topic of increasing salience in world politics: comparative political economy. We will explore questions like: What is the effect of globalization on domestic politics? What determines people's attitudes towards trade, immigration, and international organizations? What is populism, its causes, and consequences? Do countries have different varieties of capitalism?

While the main purpose of the course is to introduce students to the **theoretical foundations** of comparative politics, the course will also provide **practical lessons** and

assignments to strengthen students' **quantitative skills**. Students will be introduced to the R statistical software—widely used in both academic and non-academic settings—and perform basic data analysis and visualization using popular political science datasets. Finally, students will also have an overview of the **scientific study of politics**, with lessons on how to read political science articles, how to read regression tables, and a basic understanding of the use of experimental methodology in social science.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the difference between comparative politics as a field and the comparative method of study.
- Compare and contrast regime types and other institutional aspects of political systems around the world.
- Explain how citizens' political attitudes are formed and how elites are affected by—and affect—them.
- Critically evaluate the interactions between different institutions, the role of political actors, and the processes shaping citizens' attitudes towards government and society.
- Summarize and assess the basic findings in a scientific article.
- Make use of basic data analysis and visualization functions in the R statistical software.

## COURSE PREREQUISITES

This course does not require any previous knowledge on the subject.

## REQUIRED MATERIALS

- We will use the following textbook:
  - McCormick, John, Hague, Rod, Harrop, Martin. (2022). **Comparative Government and Politics**. 12th Edition. Bloomsbury. [Denoted as Textbook].
- All other readings and materials will be posted by the instructor on **Canvas**, as specified in the class schedule below. Assigned readings should be done **before** the respective week.

## REQUIRED SOFTWARE

- Students will need to bring their laptops to class to use when we perform practical lessons in class.
- Students will need to download “**R**” and “**R Studio**” in their laptops. This software is freely available online. We will go over how to do this in class.

## GRADING SCALE

Letter grades will be determined in the following way:

A	= 90-100	B	= 80-89	C	= 70-79	D	= 60-69	F	<60
---	----------	---	---------	---	---------	---	---------	---	-----

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

Your grade will consist of the following components:

1. 6 Quizzes (5% each, drop lowest) **25%**
  2. Participation **10%**
  3. Data Analysis Paper **35%**
  4. Final Exam **30%**
1. **Quizzes.** There will be 6 quizzes during the semester over the assigned articles and material from lectures. Quizzes will be delivered on Canvas (worth 25% of your final grade or 5% each quiz, with the lowest grade being dropped).
  2. **Participation.** Your participation grade will be based on your engagement in class discussions and activities. Specifically, you are expected to read the assigned readings before each week so you can actively participate in class and participate in the surveys and other activities we do in class or as homework. I may ask you to complete some surveys before class to use for specific activities. Failure to complete these surveys and quizzes will affect your participation grade. Participation will contribute 10% towards your final grade.
  3. **Data Analysis Paper.** You will use one or more of the datasets used in the practical lessons in class and compare two countries. Specifically, you will generate 3 graphs or figures comparing 3 aspects of your choice (e.g., level of democracy, electoral system, parties' ideological positions, etc.) between the two countries using what we have learned in class in R. Datasets will be provided to you on Canvas and you will also have access to the R code used in our class lessons. You will need to turn

in a short paper (3-4 pages) including the 3 figures and a description of what they show (along with a paragraph introduction and a paragraph conclusion) and the R script that you used to generate the figures. I should be able to replicate the graphs you made with the R script you turn in. A more detailed description of this assignment will be provided on Canvas. For this paper, you can choose to work in groups of up to 4 students or individually.

**Note on plagiarism:** Canvas uses software to identify plagiarism or the use of AI for writing. Please be aware that plagiarizing your report or using AI to write it will result in a **0 grade.**"

4. **Final Exam.** There will be a final exam covering the content from the semester. The exam will consist of multiple-choice, short-response, and/or fill-in-the-blank questions. The final exam will contribute 30% towards your final grade. The date and time of the final exam will be announced during the semester.

## **GRADING POLICIES**

I do not round up grades. Regrade requests must be made within three days after your graded assignment has been returned and must be submitted with a written statement of at least 150 words via email. This statement should explain why you think the grade should be changed. Remember that, after re-evaluating your work, your grade may remain unchanged or be adjusted in either direction. There will be no grade changes after the final exam.

## **LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

Late assignments will be penalized with a 5% reduction in the grade per day unless you provide a documented medical excuse.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Students are expected to attend class and complete all assignments.

## **CLASSROOM CONDUCT**

Students are expected to attend class on time and to actively engage in class discussions and activities. Additionally, students are expected not to engage on any behavior that may disrupt the learning process. Students are encouraged to actively participate in class discussions in an environment of free and open intellectual exchange and mutual respect. Any kind of disrespect towards another individual will not be tolerated.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

As members of the Clemson University community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson's vision of this institution as a "high seminary of learning." Fundamental to this vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of others. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form.

All infractions of academic dishonesty by undergraduates must be reported to Undergraduate Learning for resolution through that office. In cases of plagiarism instructors may use the Plagiarism Resolution Form.

Plagiarism, which includes the intentional or unintentional copying of language, structure, or ideas of another and attributing the work to one's own efforts. Graded works generated by artificial intelligence or ghostwritten (either paid or free) are expressly forbidden.

See the Undergraduate Academic Integrity Policy website for additional information and the current catalog ("Academic Regulations" section) for the policy. Send questions to [UGSintegrity@clemson.edu](mailto:UGSintegrity@clemson.edu).

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

Clemson University values the diversity of our student body as a strength and a critical component of our dynamic community. Students with disabilities or temporary injuries/conditions may require accommodations due to barriers in the structure of facilities. Students who experience a barrier to full access to this class should let the instructor know and are encouraged to request accommodations through SAS (Student Accessibility Services) as soon as possible. To request accommodations through SAS, please see this [link](#). You can also reach out to SAS with questions by calling 864-656-6848, email [CUSAS@clemson.edu](mailto:CUSAS@clemson.edu) or visiting SAS at the ASC Suite 239. Contact the office for the most updated drop-in schedule if you would prefer not to schedule an appointment.

## **THE CLEMSON UNIVERSITY TITLE IX STATEMENT REGARDING NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Clemson University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy or related conditions (including pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, lactation, recovery from the foregoing, or medical conditions related to the foregoing), national origin, age, disability, veteran's status, genetic information or protected activity in employment, educational programs and activities, admissions and financial aid. This includes a prohibition against sex discrimination (including sex-based

harassment and sexual violence) as mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. This Title IX policy is located on the Access Compliance and Education website. Ms. Alesia Smith is the Clemson University Title IX Coordinator, and the Assistant Vice President of Equity Compliance. Her office is located at 223 Brackett Hall, 864-656-3181 and her email address is [alesias@clemson.edu](mailto:alesias@clemson.edu). Remember, email is not a fully secured method of communication and should not be used to discuss Title IX issues.

*Clemson University aspires to create a diverse community that welcomes people of different races, cultures, ages, genders, sexual orientation, religions, socioeconomic levels, political perspectives, abilities, opinions, values and experiences.*

## **EMERGENCY PREPARATION**

Emergency procedures have been posted in all buildings and on all elevators. Students should be reminded to review these procedures for their own safety. All students and employees should be familiar with guidelines from [Clemson University Public Safety](#).

Clemson University is committed to providing a safe campus environment for students, faculty, staff, and visitors. As members of the community, we encourage you to take the following actions to be better prepared in case of an emergency:

1. Familiarize yourself with all possible exits, safer locations, and other key information on the emergency evacuation maps in this building, and those that you visit regularly.
2. Make a plan for how you would Run, Hide, and Fight in case of an active threat in this building, and those that you visit regularly. For example:
  - (a) Run – what are all the possible exits in this building, and the routes to them?
  - (b) Hide – what are the potential hiding locations in this room and building that are out of sight of doors and windows, how do you lock the door(s), how would you barricade the door(s) and windows, where do you turn off the lights?
  - (c) Fight – What tools are available in this room and building, should you have to fight?
3. Ensure you are signed up for emergency alerts. Alerts are only sent when there is a potential threat to safety, a major disruption to campus services, and once-monthly tests.
4. Download the [Rave Guardian](#) app to your phone.
5. Learn what you can do to prepare yourself for the hazards that affect our locations (<http://www.clemson.edu/cusafety/EmergencyManagement/>).

## COURSE SCHEDULE

---

### SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS AND THE COMPARATIVE METHOD

---

#### Week 1 | Aug 22

- **Topics:** Class introduction.
  - **Mandatory reading:** Course syllabus.
- 

#### Week 2 | Aug 27-29

- **Topics:** Comparative politics and the comparative method.
  - **Mandatory Readings:**
    1. Lijphart, Arend. (1971). "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method." *American Political Science Review*, 65:3, 682–693.
  - **Textbook:** Chapters 1, 2
- 

### SECTION 2: REGIME TYPES AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

---

#### Week 3 | Sep 3-5

- **Topics:** States and nations; political culture.
  - **Mandatory Readings:**
    1. Huntington, Samuel P. (1993). "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*, 72:3, 22-49.
  - **Textbook:** Chapters 3, 4
- 

#### Week 4 | Sep 10-12

- **Topics:** Liberal democracy, illiberal democracy, and democratic backsliding.
- **Mandatory Readings:**
  1. Zakaria, Fareed. (1997). "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy." *Foreign Affairs*, 76:6, 22-43.

2. Bermeo, Nancy. (2016). "On Democratic Backsliding." *Journal of Democracy*, 27:1, 5-19.

- **Textbook:** Chapter 5

- **Quiz 1 due Sep 10**

---

### Week 5 | Sep 17-19

- **Topics:** Autocracies, authoritarian, and totalitarian regimes.

- **Mandatory Readings:**

1. *The Economist*. (2019). "How Viktor Orbán hollowed out Hungary's democracy."
2. *The Economist*. (2024). "Can Nicolás Maduro be stopped from stealing Venezuela's election?"
3. *The Economist*. (2016). "China invents the digital totalitarian state."

- **Textbook:** Chapters 6, 7

---

### Week 6 | Sep 24-26

- **Topics:** Presidential, parliamentary, and semi-presidential systems.

- **Mandatory Readings:**

1. Linz, Juan. (1990). "The Perils of Presidentialism." *Journal of Democracy*. 1:1, 51-69.

- **Textbook:** Chapter 8

---

### Week 7 | Oct 1-3

- **Topics:** Bicameral vs. unicameral legislatures.

- **Mandatory Readings:**

1. Russell, Meg. (2001). "What are Second Chambers for?" *Parliamentary Affairs*, 54, 442-458.

- **Textbook:** Chapter 9

- **Quiz 2 due Oct 1**

---

## SECTION 3: PARTIES, ELECTIONS, AND POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

---

### Week 8 | Oct 8-10

- **Topics:** Ideology and public opinion.
  - **Mandatory Readings:**
    1. Malka, A. et al. (2019). "Are Cultural and Economic Conservatism Positively Correlated? A Large-Scale Cross-National Test." *British Journal of Political Science*, 49:3, 1045-1069.
    2. Osborne, D. et al. (2023). "The psychological causes and societal consequences of authoritarianism." *Nature Reviews Psychology*, 2, 220-232.
- 

### Week 9 | Oct 17 (Oct 14-15 - Fall Break)

- **Topics:** Political parties, party families, and party systems.
  - **Mandatory Readings:**
    1. Marks, G. et al. (2006). "Party Competition and European Integration in the East and West." *Comparative Political Studies*, 39:2, 155-175.
    2. Honeker, A. (2024). "Do Parties Matter? Party Positions and European Voters' Attitudes toward Economic and Political Globalization." *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 20:2.
  - **Textbook:** Chapter 15
- 

### Week 10 | Oct 22-24

- **Topics:** Party systems II; elections and electoral systems.
- **Mandatory Readings:**
  1. *The Economist*. (2015). "With different rules, some big elections in 2015 would have had very different outcomes."
- **Textbook:** Chapter 14
- **Quiz 3 due Oct 22**

---

**Week 11 | Oct 29-31**

- **Topics:** Non-electoral participation.
- **Mandatory Readings:**
  1. Bateson, Regina. (2012). "Crime Victimization and Political Participation." *American Political Science Review*, 106:3, 570-587.
- **Textbook:** Chapter 13

---

**Week 12 | Nov 7 (Nov 5 - Election Day - No class)**

- **Topics:** Non-electoral participation II.
- **Textbook:** Chapter 13
- **Quiz 4 due Nov 7**

---

**Week 13 | Nov 12-14**

- **Topics:** Social and group identities
- **Mandatory Readings:**
  1. West, Emily A. (2017). "Descriptive Representation and Political Efficacy: Evidence from Obama and Clinton." *Journal of Politics*, 79:1, 351-355.
  2. *Foreign Policy*. (2020). "Immigrants Are Big Fans of Germany's Anti-Immigrant Party."
- **Data Analysis Paper due Nov 12**

---

**SECTION 4: COMPARATIVE POLITICAL ECONOMY**

---

**Week 14 | Nov 19-21**

- **Topics:** Comparative political economy.
- **Mandatory Readings:**
  1. Hall, P. and Soskice, D. (2001). "An Introduction to Varieties of Capitalism", pp. 1-27.

- **Textbook:** Chapter 18
- 

**Week 15 | Nov 26** (Thanksgiving Holiday - Nov 28 - No class)

- **Topics:** Globalization and populism.
  - **Mandatory Readings:**
    1. Wu, Nicole. (2022). "Misattributed blame? Attitudes toward globalization in the age of automation." *Political Science Research and Methods*, 10, 470-487.
  - **Textbook:** Chapter 18
  - **Quiz 5 due Nov 26**
- 

**Week 16 | Dec 3-5**

- **Topics:** Course recap.
  - **Quiz 6 due Dec 3**
- 

**Week 17 | Friday, Dec 13, 11:30-2:00 pm**

- **Final Exam**