

PSCI 2012-100: INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Andy Baker

Spring 2023

University of Colorado at Boulder

Lecture: MW 10:10AM – 11:00AM in Math 100  
Baker's office hours: M 11:15-12:15 and W 11:15-12:15 or by appt. in Ketchum 224

Andy.Baker@Colorado.edu

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**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** Comparative politics is the study of domestic politics in multiple, and typically foreign, countries. In this course, students will learn about many of the fundamental questions and themes examined in the field of comparative politics. After taking this course, students will (1) understand the logic and value of comparing nations and their politics, (2) be more familiar with how politics works in a few major foreign countries, (3) be able to provide informed answers to important questions about why countries vary so much on important political, economic, and social dimensions, and (4) better understand what is unique about the US political system

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**TEXTBOOKS:** Two books are required reading for this course. They are as follows:

- x Inclusive Access: Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics, 2e eBook w/ InQuizitive (2020), by Patrick H. O’Neil, Karl J. Fields, and Don Share (978-0-393-53667-6).
- x Spin Dictators: The Changing Face of Tyranny in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (2022), by Sergei Guriev and Daniel Treisman (978-0691211411).

To keep students’ textbook costs down and to provide convenience, these two books will be automatically delivered to you through a program called “Day 1 Digital Access.” You will receive access to them as eBooks through Canvas. You will then see a charge from “Day 1 Digital Access” on your tuition and fee bill for \$63.32. This is a highly discounted price that is not available outside this course. If you wish to opt out of getting the books in this way, you can do so by using the opt-out link in Canvas or in an email you’ll receive with the subject heading “Day 1 Digital Access,” although you must do this by February 1.

If you wish to also have a hard copy of the textbook, you can make the optional purchase of the following at the CU Book Store: Cases and Concepts in Comparative Politics, 2e PA Print Upgrade

o other article-length readings that are required; those are available in .pdf format on the Canvas site



COURSE SCHEDULE:

Week 1: January 18  
Course Guidelines and Themes

Suggested discussion topics: Icebreakers. Getting to know one another.

UNIT 1: POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND REGIMES

Week 2: January 23 and 25  
The State

Read by January 23:  
" & K D S W Introduction" in Cases and Concepts  
" & K D S W H U " in Cases and Concepts

Suggested discussion topics: Can the study of politics be a science? What is the state? What is a regime? Why did modern states originate? Why are some states weak and others strong?

Week 3: January 30 and Feb 1  
Democracies

Read by January 30:  
" & K D S W H U " 3 ' H P R F U D Cases and Concepts / ' L Q

Suggested discussion topics: What is democracy? Why are some countries democracies and others non-democracies?

Week 4: February 6 and 8  
Presidential/Parliamentary Systems

Read by February 6:  
" & K D S W H U " 3 8 Q L W Cases and Concepts / ' L Q  
" & K D S W H U " 3 8 Q L W Cases and Concepts / L Q

Suggested discussion topics: What are different ways to organize a democracy? What are the consequences of presidential and parliamentary systems?

Week 5: February 13 and 15  
Electoral Systems

Read by February 13:  
" \$ U W L F O H " 3 7 K H & Party U.S. Parliament by Allen in Canvas  
" Start reading Spin Dictators (Chapters 1 and 2)

Suggested discussion topics: What are the consequences of different electoral rules? What are the consequences of the number of parties? Meet with your simulation parties!

Week 6: February 20 and 22  
Nondemocracies

Read by February 20:  
" Continue reading Spin Dictators (Chapters 3 through 5)

SHORT PAPER DUE TO CANVAS ON FEBRUARY 20 AT 8:00AM

Suggested discussion topics: Simulation of a parliamentary system!

Week 7: February 27 and March 1  
Regime Change

Read by February 27:  
" & K D S W H U " 3 5 Cases and Concepts  
" ) L Q L V K " Spin Dictators (Chapters 6 and 7; Chapter 8 not required)

Suggested discussion topics: How does Russia exemplify a nondemocratic political regime? How have dictatorships changed since the 20<sup>th</sup> century? Discuss Spin Dictators. Midterm review

Week 8a: March 6

MIDTERM 1 IS MONDAY, MARCH 6 IN CLASS

UNIT 2: POLITICAL ECONOMY

Week 8b: March 8  
Types of Political-Economic Systems

Read by March 8:  
" Chapter 4 "Political Economy" in

Suggested discussion topics:	What are different ways in which states intervene in markets? Why do some countries tax and redistribute more than others?
Week 9: March 13 and 15 Global Development and Underdevelopment	<u>Read by March 13:</u> " & K D S W H U 3 ' H Y H O R S C a s e s a n d C o n c e p t s L H V ' L Q " \$ U W L F O H 3 5 H Q W V D Q G ( F R Q R P L F ' H Y H O R S P H Q W ' ) Robinson in Canvas
Suggested discussion topics:	Why are some countries rich and others poor?
Week 10: March 20 and 22 Global Development and Underdevelopment Example	<u>Read by March 20:</u> " & K D S W H U 3 C a s e s a n d C o n c e p t s
Suggested discussion topics:	How does Mexico exemplify development and underdevelopment? How does it exemplify different explanations for underdevelopment?
Week 11: March 27 and 29	NO CLASS
Week 12: April 3 and 5 Economic Globalization	" & K D S W H U 3 * O R E D O L J D W C o m p a r a t i v e P o w e r ( H ) X W X U H Cases and Concepts
Suggested discussion topics:	How does globalization influence domestic politics around the world? Midterm review
	MIDTERM 2 IS WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5 IN CLASS
	<u>UNIT 3: IDENTITY AND POLITICS</u>
Week 13b: April 10 and 12 Ethnicity, Race, and Politics	<u>Read by April 10:</u> " Chapter 3 "Nations and Society" in Cases and Concepts
Suggested discussion topics:	What are different forms of group identity? How are they relevant to politics?
Week 14: April 17 and 19 Ethnicity, Race, and Politics Example	<u>Read by April 17:</u> " & K D S W H U 3 6 R X O C a s e s a n d C o n c e p t s L Q
Suggested discussion topics:	What is the history and nature of race relations in South Africa?
Week 15: April 24 and 26 Religion and Politics	<u>Read by April 24:</u> " & K D S W H U C a s e s a n d C o n c e p t s
Suggested discussion topics:	Are some religions more amenable to democracy than others? How does religion shape politics in India?
	RESEARCH PAPER DUE TO CANVAS ON FRIDAY, <b>APRIL 28</b> AT 11:59PM
Week 16: May 1 and 3 Gender and Politics	<u>Read by May 1:</u> " 1 R Q H
Suggested discussion topics:	



staff and students. Students, faculty and staff must upload proof of vaccination and boosters or file for an exemption based on medical, ethical or moral grounds through the MyCUHealth portal. The CU Boulder campus is currently mask-