

**INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS**  
**Political Science 0300**  
**University of Pittsburgh • Fall 2020**  
**MW 11:05-11:55pm [Zoom]**

**Professor:** Jae-Jae Spoon

**Office:** 4441 Posvar (Poli Sci); 4211 Posvar (UCIS)

**Email:** [spoonj@pitt.edu](mailto:spoonj@pitt.edu)

**Office Hours:** Weds. 2-4pm on Zoom and by appointment; in-person TBA

**Zoom Link for Office Hours:** <https://pitt.zoom.us/j/95009979395>

**TA:** Julie O'Hara

**Email:** [JMO76@pitt.edu](mailto:JMO76@pitt.edu)

**TA:** Louis Wilson

**Email:** [LJW53@pitt.edu](mailto:LJW53@pitt.edu)

**Course Description**

Why are some countries authoritarian regimes while others are democracies? Why do some democracies backslide? Is there a democratic political culture? What's the difference between a president and a prime minister? Why do voters in Europe have so many more options than voters in the US? In this course, you will be introduced to these and other key questions and themes in the study of comparative politics. We will explore regime types, political culture, institutions and political behavior and draw examples from authoritarian states, developing, and developed democracies. We will approach the study of comparative politics through the scientific method which focuses on generalizing across countries, identifying causes and effects, and using empirical evidence. One of the goals of this course is for you to become critical consumers of information about politics. This course will serve as a useful foundation for all future courses you take in comparative politics at Pitt. Introduction to Comparative Politics fulfills two General Education requirements: Social Science and International/Foreign Culture (COM).

**General Information**

Lecture is scheduled for MW from 11:05-11:55 am. It will be delivered 'live' through Zoom. Each session will have its own Zoom link, which are listed on Canvas. You will have opportunities to ask/answer questions during lecture through both 'live' participation and through Zoom's Chat feature. I will also use the Zoom Polling feature to engage with you. Lectures will be recorded and made available on Canvas within two hours following the end of class. It is your choice to attend the live lectures or listen to the recording. Please make sure you mute yourself during the lectures. Since lectures will be recorded, if you participate, this will also be recorded. If you'd rather not be recorded, please participate through the Chat feature on Zoom. If you are more comfortable asking questions after lecture via email or during office hours, that is fine as well.

As we do have a classroom assigned, you may chose to login to Zoom on your laptop/device for the lectures from 121 Lawrence Hall, once in-person classes are permitted.

You are also required to attend one recitation section, which are:

0300-1070	F 10-10:50 am (Julie)	0300-1040	F 10-10:50 am (Louis)
0300-1075	F 11:05-11:55 am (Julie)	0300-1035	F 11:05-11:55 am (Louis)
0300-1080	F 1:15-2:05 pm (Julie)	0300-1065	F 1:15-2:05 pm (Louis)
0300-1085	F 2:20-3:10 pm (Julie)	0300-1045	F 2:20-3:10 pm (Louis)

Recitation sections will also be held remotely and be 'live'. Your TA will provide the link for each week's recitation section. I strongly encourage you to attend the 'live' sessions as much as possible. As these will be largely discussed-based, they will not be recorded. For those who cannot join at the scheduled time, an asynchronous option will be available. You must attend the section that you are registered for.

### **Reading Materials**

1) There is one required book for this course, which is available at the Pitt Bookstore and on-line. If you choose to purchase the text on-line, be sure to buy/rent the 11<sup>th</sup> edition.

- Rod Hague, Martin Harrop, and John McCormick. 2019. *Comparative Government and Politics*. 11<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. [Denoted as HHM].

2) You will also be required to read articles (both academic and current event) and other book chapters throughout the semester, all of which will be available on the Canvas site, denoted [C] below, or through on-line links provided.

3) As part of learning about comparative politics, you are strongly encouraged to follow international current events throughout the course. We will be discussing relevant world events in lecture and section and they may appear on the quizzes/exams. There are many great on-line resources for international news, including: *New York Times*—[www.nyt.com](http://www.nyt.com), *Economist*—[www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com), BBC—[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk), *Der Spiegel*—[www.spiegel.de/international](http://www.spiegel.de/international); CNN—[www.CNN.com](http://www.CNN.com); Al Jazeera—[www.aljazeera.com](http://www.aljazeera.com). I'd also encourage you to follow these and other news sources on Twitter. Feel free to check out non-English language sources as well. I'd also suggest becoming a regular NPR listener. Our local station is WESA, 90.5 FM—[www.wesa.fm/www.npr.org](http://www.wesa.fm/www.npr.org).

### **Evaluation**

Your grade in this course will be comprised of the following. Grades will be calculated on a scale of A-F, broken down as follows:

97-100=A+	87-89=B+	77-79=C+	67-69=D+	59 and below=F
93-96=A	83-86=B	73-76=C	63-66=D	
90-92=A-	80-82=B-	70-72=C-	60-62=D-	

## Assessment

Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	25%
Covid Paper	30%
Weekly Quizzes (11)	15% (1.37% each)
Participation	10%

\*All work will be weighted according to the break-down above. Your final grade will thus be out of 100 possible points.

**1) Exams.** There will be two exams, which will both be remote. Details on how these will be conducted will be forthcoming. The exams will be a combination of multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and essay. The midterm will cover all of the material from the first half of the class. The final exam will be cumulative. The midterm will be Oct. 7<sup>th</sup> and the final will be during remote finals week, Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>-Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>. The date and time of the final will be announced by the Registrar.

**2) Covid Response Paper.** During the second-half of the class, you will be working on a project comparing the response to Covid-19 in two countries. This will be a 6-7 pg. paper (plus bibliography) and will be due on Nov. 20<sup>th</sup> in section. You will turn it in through TurnItIn via Canvas. Should you choose to turn in a draft, the last date to do so is Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>. Details TBA.

**3) Quizzes.** There will be a short 'check in' quiz each week that you need to login and take on Canvas by **Thurs. at midnight**. It will be available beginning at Weds. at noon. The first quiz will be the week of Aug. 24<sup>th</sup>. Grades and answers will be available once the quiz closes. We will drop the lowest one (only 11 will be counted). These quizzes will cover material from readings and lecture from the week's lectures, textbook and recitation readings, and current events. They are a way for us to check in and see if you are doing the readings, coming to class, understanding things, and keeping up with the news.

**4) Participation.** Your participation grade will be 10% of your total grade and will reflect your participation and completion of activities in recitation sections. Participation will take many different forms, but all will involve actively engaging with the material, your TA, and fellow students. Make sure you come to section prepared to participate, ask questions, and discuss the readings and relevant current events. Should you choose the asynchronous option for section, your participation will be evaluated based on asynchronous activities which will be determined by your TA. All asynchronous work will be due at the time the section you registered for is scheduled to end.

**5) Country Expertise.** For your research paper, you will be exploring how two countries have responded to the coronavirus pandemic. These will also be the two countries on which you will focus for the semester. Pay attention to what is happening in these countries in the media,

especially how they relate to the topic of the week. You can use this expertise in discussions, as examples on exams, etc.

### **Class Policies**

***Class Expectations.*** Given the unusual nature of the semester, you are expected to attend the lecture either synchronously or asynchronously by the time of your recitation section on Friday. You are expected to be engaged and participate in section either synchronously or asynchronously. Please read the textbook and any other assigned lecture readings before lecture and do the recitation readings before your weekly section. Make sure to have the recitation readings accessible during section. To do well in this course, you need to attend/listen to lecture, participate in sections, and do the readings.

***Attendance.*** Attendance will not be taken during the live lectures as synchronous/asynchronous choice for lecture delivery is yours. You are required to attend your virtual weekly recitation section or complete the asynchronous assignment. Attendance will be taken in the synchronous section. Completion of the asynchronous assignments by the end of your scheduled section will count as your attendance should you choose this option. You are allowed **1 absence** from your recitation during the semester. In the asynchronous modality, the absence equates to not turning in the assignment. You do not need to tell the TA why you will be absent or present any sort of documentation to justify your absence. As the circumstances of this semester are unusual for all us, please make sure to keep your TA apprised of anything that may prohibit you from attending section. We will determine if any documentation is needed to excuse additional absences.

***Email.*** Please make sure you check your **Pitt email** regularly. If you do not use your Pitt account, make sure you link your Pitt account to whichever email address you do use. We will send email messages to the class periodically and will use your official Pitt email address. If you want to contact me or your TA, please use our Pitt addresses above.

***Canvas.*** All class materials, including recorded lectures will be posted here. We will also post announcements, provide links and other useful information. Given the nature of the semester, we will use Canvas extensively. If you have any questions about using Canvas, check out this resource-- <https://canvas.pitt.edu/courses/643/pages/student-resources-for-using-canvas>.

***Extensions and Alternate Dates.*** In general, I will not allow extensions on assignments or alternate exam dates. However, should you find yourself in a situation where you will not be able to turn an assignment in on-time or be present for an exam, please discuss this with your TA as soon as you can, and not the day the assignment is due or the day of the exam or afterwards.

***Late Policy.*** A late assignment will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each day it is late. After 1 week, it will no longer be accepted.

**Grade Appeals.** Should you want to appeal a grade you've received, it must be in writing. You will need to explain why you believe you deserve a grade that is different than the one you received. The written appeal should be turned in to your TA, who will then schedule a time to meet with you to discuss your appeal. All final decisions will be made in consultation with me.

**Academic Integrity.** Students in this course are expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, or other acts of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated by the instructor, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. More information and the complete policy can be found at <http://www.provost.pitt.edu/info/ai1.html>.

**Accommodations.** If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both me and the Office of Disability Resources and Services (DRS), 140 William Pitt Union, (412-648-7890, 412-228-5347 for P3 ASL users), [drsrecp@pitt.edu](mailto:drsrecp@pitt.edu), as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. For more information, please see <https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/drs/>

**Health and Safety.** In the midst of this pandemic, it is extremely important that you abide by public health regulations and University of Pittsburgh health standards and guidelines. While in class, at a minimum, this means you must wear a face covering and comply with physical distancing requirements; other requirements may be added by the University during the semester. These rules have been developed to protect the health and safety of all community members. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in you not being permitted to attend class in person and could result in a Student Conduct violation. For the most up-to-date information and guidance, please visit [coronavirus.pitt.edu](http://coronavirus.pitt.edu) and check your Pitt email for updates before each class.

## **Syllabus**

<b>Part 1: Introduction to Comparative Politics</b>
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*Note on Lectures:* Each lecture has a unique Zoom Link. Go to the Zoom folder on the Canvas page Navigation Bar and click on the link for the day's lecture. Once the recording is available, it will be added to the Cloud Recording tab as well as the Panopto Video folder. You will receive an email when the recording is available.

### **Aug. 19. Introduction and Preliminaries**

No readings.

*Recitations (8/21): Introductions, Logistics, and Discussing Comparative Politics*

HHM, ch. 1 [C]

Esther King. "Europe Seeks Own Response to Black Lives Matter." *Politico*. June 11, 2020. <https://www.politico.eu/article/us-style-civil-rights-protests-come-to-europe-george-floyd-black-lives-matter/>

**Aug. 24 & 26. What is Comparative Politics? How do We Study Comparative Politics?**

HHM, ch. 2-3

*Recitations (8/28): Does Money Make You Happy?*

"Where Money Seems to Talk." *The Economist*. July 14, 2007. Pgs. 63-4. [C]

<b>Part 2: Regimes, Political Culture, and Participation</b>
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**Aug. 31. Film: *A Whisper to a Roar***

Background information on film and featured individuals—'About the Film' on <https://awhispertoar.com> [C]

**Sept. 2 & 7. Democracies**

HHM, ch. 5 (skip pgs. 79-87)

Robert Dahl. 2005. "What Institutions Does Large-Scale Democracy Require?" *Political Science Quarterly*. 120.2: 187-97. [C]

*Recitations (9/4): What is a Democracy?*

Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl. 1991. "What Democracy Is...and Is Not." *Journal of Democracy*. 2.3: 75-88 [C]

"The March of Democracy Slows." *The Economist*. Aug. 20, 2016. [C]

**Sept. 9. Transitions to Democracy and Backsliding**

HHM, pgs. 79-87

Guillermo O'Donnell. 1994. "Delegative Democracy." *Journal of Democracy*. 5.1: 55-69. [C]

*Recitations (9/11): How Democracies Die*

Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt. 2018. *How Democracies Die*. New York: Crown. Ch. 1, 4, 6. [C]

### **Sept. 14 & 16. Authoritarian Regimes**

HHM, ch. 6, pgs. 266-268, 298-304, 337-340, 352-357

\*Evening showing of *Persepolis*. TBD. Or watch on your own.

As background, please read/watch the following:

Joel Krieger, ed. 2001. "Iran." *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Pgs. 431-34. [C]

"Iranian Revolution." <https://youtu.be/kY0ixG94cHE> [C]

Marjane Satrapi—*Persepolis*. "Historical Context." <https://satrapi1.wordpress.com/about/> [C]

*Recitations (9/18): Life in an Authoritarian Regime*

### **Sept. 21 & 23. Political Culture**

HHM, ch. 12

Robert Putnam, Robert Leonardi, and Raffaella Nanetti. 1994. *Making Democracy Work*. Chapters 1 & 4 (pp. 3-14 and 83-120). [C]

*Recitations (9/25): Clash of Cultures?*

Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris. 2003. "The True Clash of Civilizations." *Foreign Policy*. March/April. Pgs. 63-70. [C]

World Values Survey On-Line Analysis. <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSONline.jsp>

\**Country Selection for Paper Due*

## **Sept. 28 & 30. Civil Society and Participation**

*Note. Sept 28<sup>th</sup> lecture will not be live. Recording will be available Sunday by midnight.*

HHM, ch. 13 & 18

Alan Taylor. "Images from a Worldwide Protest Movement." *The Atlantic*. June 8, 2020.  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2020/06/images-worldwide-protest-movement/612811/>

*Recitations (10/2): Civil Society: Too Much of a Good Thing?*

Sheri Berman. 1997. "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic." *World Politics*. 49 (April). Pgs. 401-29. [C]

## **Oct. 5. Midterm Review**

## **Oct. 7. Midterm**

*Recitations (10/9): Assign Paper, Research and Writing in Political Science*

Henry Farrell. 2010. "Good Writing in Political Science: An Undergraduate Student's Short Illustrated Primer." [C]

Agustina Giraudy, Sara Niedzwiecki, and Jennifer Pribble. "How Political Science Explains Countries' Reactions to Covid-19." *Americas Quarterly*. April 30, 2020.  
<https://americasquarterly.org/article/how-political-science-explains-countries-reactions-to-covid-19/>

<b>Part 3: Institutions and Actors</b>
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**Read the following as an Introduction to Part 3 of the course:**

Arend Lijphart. 2012. *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in 36 Countries*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Ch. 1. Pgs. 1-8. [C]

## **Oct. 12 & 14. Multi-Level Governance**

HHM, ch. 11



*Recitations (10/16): What's Up with Catalonia?*

Omar G. Encarnación. 2004. "Democracy and Federalism in Spain." *Mediterranean Quarterly*. 15.1: 58-74. [C]

"Spain and Catalonia: The Trials of Keeping a Country Together." *The Economist*. Nov. 24, 2012. [C]

Miguel Otero-Iglesias. "What Spain's Election Says about Catalan Independence." *The Monkey Cage*. Nov. 21, 2019. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/11/21/what-spains-elections-says-about-catalan-independence/>

### **Oct. 19. Legislatures (One House or Two?)**

HHM, ch. 9

Meg Russell. 2001. "What are Second Chambers for?" *Parliamentary Affairs*. 54: 442-458. [C]

### **Oct. 21. Executive I: Presidential, Parliamentary and Semi-Presidential Systems**

HHM, ch. 8 (skip pgs. 129-134)

*Recitations (10/23): Presidents and Prime Ministers: The Good and the Bad*

Juan Linz. 1990. "The Perils of Presidentialism." *Journal of Democracy*. 1.1: 51-69. [C]

Adam Nossiter and Aurelien Breeden. 2020. "Macron Replaces France's Prime Minister in Bid to Reinvigorate His Government." *New York Times*. July 3.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/03/world/europe/france-prime-minister-resign.html>

### **Oct. 26 & 28. Executive II: Parliamentary Systems and Government Formation**

Review HHM, ch. 9 (focus on pgs. 129-134)

WATCH IN CLASS: British Prime Minister's Question Time  
(<https://www.c-span.org/series/?PrimeMinisterQue>)

*Recitations (10/30): Forming a Government in Germany/Sweden*

Read on-line materials on parties and election results. TBA.  
**Nov. 2 & 4. Elections and Electoral Systems**

HHM, ch. 15 (skip pgs. 266-268)

*Recitations (11/6): Why Change the Rules?*

David Denemark. 2001. "Choosing MMP in New Zealand: Explaining the 1993 Electoral Reform." In *Mixed-Member Electoral Systems: The Best of Both Worlds?* M.S. Shugart and M.P. Wattenberg, eds. New York: Oxford UP. Pgs. 70-95. [C]

"With Different Rules, Some Big Elections in 2015 Would Have Had Very Different Outcomes." *The Economist*. Dec. 28, 2015. [C]

**Nov. 9 & 11. Political Parties and Party Systems**

HHM, ch. 15 & pgs. 286-294

"Empty Vessels?" *The Economist*. July 24, 1999. Pgs. 51-2. [C]

*Recitations (11/13): Are Party Systems Changing?*

BBC Radio 4 Podcast. "It's Not Easy Being Green."  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000fpnz>

"From Protest to Power: The Stars have Aligned for Germany's Greens." *The Economist*. Jan. 2, 2020. <https://www.economist.com/europe/2020/01/02/the-stars-have-aligned-for-germanys-greens>

**Nov. 16 & 18. Voting and Voter Turnout**

HHM, ch. 17 (skip 298-304)

*Recitations (11/20): Should Voting be Mandatory?*

<https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/voter-turnout/compulsory-voting>

[https://www.fairvote.org/the\\_pros\\_and\\_cons\\_of\\_requiring\\_citizens\\_to\\_vote](https://www.fairvote.org/the_pros_and_cons_of_requiring_citizens_to_vote)

**\*\*Covid Paper Due at 10am on Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>\*\***

**FINAL EXAM – TBA**