

GOVERNMENT AND COMPARATIVE POLITICS

**Bachelor in Philosophy, Politics, Law and Economics PPLE
SEP-2023 GCPn-PP.1.S.A**

Area Comparative Politics

Number of sessions: 30

Academic year: 23-24

Degree course: FIRST

Number of credits: 6.0

Semester: 2^o

Category: BASIC

Language: English

Professor: **EMMY LINDSTAM**

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Emmy Lindstam is an Assistant Professor at IE University. She received her Ph.D. from the Center for Doctoral Studies in Social and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Mannheim in 2022. During her studies, she was a visiting PhD student at UC Berkeley and a pre-doctoral fellow at CESS-Nuffield Flame University in Pune. She holds a master's degree in Political Science from the University of Mannheim and a bachelor's degree in Political Science and Public Administration from the University of Barcelona. Emmy carries out research in the areas of comparative politics and political psychology, with a focus on identity politics and a regional interest in Europe and India. More information can be found at emmylindstam.com.

Office Hours

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SUBJECT DESCRIPTION

?This course allows students to explore and scrutinize some of the key contemporary debates in comparative political science – or comparative politics. Comparative politics involves describing, comparing, and explaining political phenomena around the world. In today’s climate of increased political volatility and heightened political risk, a course in comparative politics forms an essential part of the education of any aspiring professional (both in the public and the private sectors) with an international outlook and a keen interest in cross-border affairs. It asks questions such as how do different countries’ political systems compare to one another and why are they similar or different? What effect does having a presidential form of government rather than a parliamentary one? Why do some countries have a multiparty political system while others have a two-party system? How do rules for elections differ across countries and what effects do they have on politics and representation? Students will get acquainted with studying human behavior embedded in institutions and what that entails for the larger system of representative democracy.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Knowledge and understanding of a number of key contemporary debates and theories
- Ability to critically evaluate theories and concepts through original, independent and critical thinking
- Practice in the use, interpretation, and presentation of quantitative measures and indicators of concepts in comparative politics
- Ability to digest and use academic readings
- Oral and written communication skills
- Library and information retrieval skills
- Practice of independent research

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

IE University teaching method is defined by its collaborative, active, and applied nature. Students actively participate in the whole process to build their knowledge and sharpen their skills. Professor’s main role is to lead and guide students to achieve the learning objectives of the course. This is done by engaging in a diverse range of teaching techniques and different types of learning activities such as the following:

??This course will help you answer the questions posed above and will provide you with the tools to tackle more complex questions in comparative politics. The course will take a scientific approach to studying comparative politics and emphasize important concepts, theories, empirical questions and research findings. To this end, sessions will combine the explanation of theoretical concepts with practical activities such as doing exercises and class activities where appropriate. Students will prepare the readings before class.

Learning Activity	Weighting	Estimated time a student should dedicate to prepare for and participate in
Lectures	30.0 %	45.0 hours

Discussions	4.0 %	6.0 hours
Exercises in class, Asynchronous sessions, Field Work	20.0 %	30.0 hours
Group work	20.0 %	30.0 hours
Individual studying	26.0 %	39.0 hours
TOTAL	100.0 %	150.0 hours

PROGRAM

SESSIONS 1 - 2 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Sustainability Topics:

- Governance
- Social Challenge

WHAT IS COMPARATIVE POLITICS? CENTRAL CONCEPTS AND APPROACHES

What is comparative politics? In this session, we will discuss central concepts in comparative politics such as "institutions" and "democracy". We will also spend some time discussing what we mean by the "scientific method" and whether and how politics can be studied scientifically.

*Book Chapters: Comparative Politics; The relevance of comparative politics (Chapter 1, pp. 21-32)
(See Bibliography)*

Book Chapters: Foundations of comparative politics (Chapter 2) (See Bibliography)

SESSIONS 3 - 4 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Sustainability Topics:

- Governance
- Social Challenge

REGIME TYPES

In this session, we will discuss what we mean by concepts such as "democracy" and "autocracy" and we will illustrate different ways to quantify democracy across countries. We will spend some time discussing different types of "authoritarian regimes" and how these differences might matter. Finally, we will talk about democratic backsliding and discuss theories of "how democracies die".

Group activity: Measuring democracy across countries

Book Chapters: Comparative Politics (Chapters 5 & 6) (See Bibliography)

SESSIONS 5 - 6 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Sustainability Topics:

- Governance
- Social Challenge

ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

In this session, we will focus on one type of institution that varies across countries: their electoral system. We will classify different electoral systems and discuss the political consequences of each. We will talk about the role of "proportionality" and what elements affect to what extent the amount of political influence in parliament a party receives corresponds to their share of the vote.

Group Activity: Pick an ideal electoral system

Book Chapters: Foundations of Comparative Politics (Chapter 11, pp. 261-281) (See Bibliography)

SESSIONS 7 - 8 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Sustainability Topics:

- Governance
- Social Challenge

REFRESH & QUIZ 1

We will refresh the material as well as complete Quiz 1.

SESSIONS 9 - 10 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Sustainability Topics:

- Governance
- Social Challenge

PARLIAMENTARY, PRESIDENTIAL AND SEMI-PRESIDENTIAL REGIMES

In this session, we will focus on different sets of institutions that vary across countries. Will will talk about different "forms of government" and distinguish between parliamentary, presidential and semi-presidential democracies. We will talk about how these institutions matter and how they affect processes of government formation across countries.

Group Activity: Exploring the Quality of Government dataset

Book Chapters: Foundations of Comparative Politics (Chapter 10) (See Bibliography)

SESSIONS 11 - 12 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Sustainability Topics:

- Governance
- Social Challenge

INSTITUTIONAL VETO PLAYERS

Political scientists sometimes distinguish between democracies in terms of the type of government they have or the type of electoral system they employ. In this session, we will focus on other institutional dimensions of democracy, namely federalism, bicameralism and constitutionalism. All these institutions can be thought of as checks and balances on the political system.

Group Activity: TBD

Book Chapters: Foundations of Comparative Politics (Chapter 13) (See Bibliography)

SESSIONS 13 - 14 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Sustainability Topics:

- Governance
- Social Challenge

PARTY SYSTEMS AND SOCIAL CLEAVAGES

Why do certain countries have some political parties and not others? When do new political parties emerge? In this session, we introduce the notion of "social cleavages" and discuss why certain cleavages become salient in certain contexts and not others, and what implications this has for party systems. We also discuss the emergence of new social cleavages in the age of globalization and link this to the rise of far-right parties. We also discuss how we might measure and quantify different "party systems".

Group Activity: Testing Claims Using the Comparative Manifesto Project

Book Chapters: Comparative Politics (Chapter 13) (See Bibliography)

SESSIONS 15 - 16 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Sustainability Topics:

- Governance
- Social Challenge

REFRESH & QUIZ 2

We will refresh the material as well as complete Quiz 2.

SESSIONS 17 - 18 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Sustainability Topics:

- Governance
- Social Challenge

REPRESENTATION

Why are certain groups, such as women and ethnic minorities, underrepresented in political assemblies? Can institutional designs -- such as quotas -- improve the representation of women and minorities in parliament? In this session we define what we mean by the concept of "representation", we will cover different theories discussing why underrepresentation persists and how it can be remedied.

Group Activity: In-Class Debate on Parliamentary Quotas

Article: Self-Confidence and Gender Gaps in Political Interest, Attention and Efficacy (Journal of Politics (ced))

SESSIONS 19 - 20 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Sustainability Topics:

- Governance
- Social Challenge

COMPARATIVE POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

Why do people participate more in politics in some contexts than in others, and what explains the prevailing gender gap in political engagement? In this session, we will discuss the determinants of political participation and how context matters in shaping political behavior.

Group Activity: Exploring Causes of Turnout Using WVS data

Book Chapters: Comparative Politics (Chapter 18) (See Bibliography)

SESSIONS 21 - 22 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Sustainability Topics:

- Governance
- Social Challenge

WORKSHOP: PREPARING A SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH NOTE

In this session we will refresh our knowledge on how to pose a research question and formulate a causal theory. We will then have time in class to workshop your research projects together in smaller groups.

Book Chapters: The Fundamentals of Political Science Research (Chapters 1 & 2) (ced)

SESSION 23 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Sustainability Topics:

- Governance
- Social Challenge

WORKSHOP

You will be given time to prepare your academic poster and submit a draft for the poster session.

SESSIONS 24 - 25 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Sustainability Topics:

- Governance
- Social Challenge

POSTER SESSION

During this session, we will hold a poster session in class. You will be asked to present your poster as well as partake and learn about the research of your peers.

SESSIONS 26 - 27 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Sustainability Topics:

- Governance
- Social Challenge

NATIONAL IDENTITY & POLITICAL CULTURE

Where do values and attitudes come from and why do they vary across countries? We learn about the concept of "political culture" and explore the social roots of democracy across contexts. We will also talk about the concept of "nation" and how people feel differently about their national identity across contexts.

Group Activity: Testing Claims Using the European Values Survey

Book Chapters: Comparative Politics (Chapter 17) (See Bibliography)

SESSION 28 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Sustainability Topics:

- Governance
- Social Challenge

REVIEW AND REFRESH

We will prepare for the final exam and carry out a mock exam together.

SESSIONS 29 - 30 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Sustainability Topics:

- Governance
- Social Challenge

FINAL EXAM

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Detailed Requirements:

1. Class Participation & Discussion Questions: You are required to submit a discussion question before each session. The discussion question (alongside a short motivation of a sentence or two) should be inspired by the reading(s) and posted in the corresponding discussion forum on the virtual campus by **21:00 the night before class**. These questions are thought to encourage you to critically read and evaluate the readings and "kick off" the in-class discussions.

2. Quizzes: There are going to be **two** short quizzes (approx 10 questions) on the readings and class material. The quizzes will consist of multiple choice questions. The quizzes cover the material of the previous sessions and are intended to provide me with better feedback as to whether you understand and follow the course content. If you have done the readings and attended class, you shouldn't encounter any problems answering the questions.

3. Research Project: You will be asked to prepare an academic poster (10%) and a short research note (20%) on a theme of your choosing. The details of this assignment will be covered in class but the main goal is to explore the role of institutions in shaping political outcomes using empirical data, building on examples we will have covered in class. We will organize a poster session where you can learn about each other's topics and receive valuable feedback so that you can improve your research before submitting the final version. You should work in groups of 2-3, and you must confirm the topic with me in advance.

4. Final Exam: The final assessment will be a comprehensive exam, covering all the topics we have discussed in class.

criteria	percentage	Learning Objectives	Comments
Final Exam	40 %		
Intermediate Tests	10 %		
Intermediate Tests	10 %		
Class Participation	10 %		
Group Work	30 %		

RE-SIT / RE-TAKE POLICY

Any student whose weighted final grade is below 5 will be required to sit for the retake exam to pass the course (except those not complying with the attendance rules, whom are banned from this possibility). Grading for retakes will be subject to the following rules:

- The retakes will consist of a comprehensive exam. The grade will depend only on the performance on this exam; continuous evaluation over the semester will not be taken into account.
- The exam will be designed bearing in mind that the passing grade is 5 and the maximum grade that can be attained is 8 out of 10.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Compulsory

- Caramani, Daniele. (2020). *Comparative Politics*. Oxford University Press. ISBN 0198820607 (Digital)

- Clark, William Roberts; Golder, Matt; and Golder, Sona Nadenicheck. (2018). *Foundations of Comparative Politics*. CQ Press. ISBN 1544326866 (Digital)

BEHAVIOR RULES

Please, check the University's Code of Conduct [here](#). The Program Director may provide further indications.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Please, check the University's Attendance Policy [here](#). The Program Director may provide further indications.

ETHICAL POLICY

Please, check the University's Ethics Code [here](#). The Program Director may provide further indications.

