

# Introduction to Comparative Politics

BFSU Summer School  
2018

*“He who knows one country, knows no country.”*

**Name of Instructor:** Prof. Gail McElroy  
**Email:** mcelroy@tcd.ie

**Proposed Session:** July 23<sup>rd</sup> to August 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Proposed Time Slot:** Tues-Friday, 8:30-12:00 (with 30 minute break 10:00-10:30)

## **Course Description:**

The course is an introduction to the study of comparative politics and provides an overview of some of the key theoretical frameworks, concepts, and analytical methods of this field of study. We study political systems around the world with a view to understanding and explaining their differences and similarities with respect to political institutions, the behaviour of key political actors, and their policymaking processes and performance. Among other things, comparative politics teaches us about the causes and effects of different ways of organizing the institutions of government: for instance what are the consequences of choosing a strong president versus a strong parliament or a highly proportional versus a majoritarian electoral system.

The over-arching goal of this course is to introduce students to the practice of comparison in a systematic and social scientific way. We will encounter a range of methods used in comparative politics from historical case studies to large N quantitative studies. No prior knowledge is required or assumed. By the end of this class, students should learn to become critical consumers of journalistic and academic writing. After taking this module, students should understand how to make intelligent and informed comparisons across states, regions and organizations for themselves.

## **Learning Outcomes**

On successful completion of this module students should be able to:

- Describe and assess the study of comparative politics in a systematic, social scientific way
- Examine key issues in comparative politics
- Identify interesting research questions in comparative politics
- Evaluate the usefulness of various theoretical approaches to address research questions
- Describe a variety of political systems around the world
- Explain how political regimes emerge and survive

## **Course Structure**

### 1) 15-25 Students registered:

The module is run as a seminar. That means that everyone is expected to attend having completed the required readings, ready to participate. A series of questions will be provided in advance of each session to assist students to actively engage with the material. A short presentation (15-20 minutes) at the beginning of each class will also be provided, to focus our discussions.

Or

2) 26-50 Students registered:

The class will proceed by a mixture of lecture and interaction.

Group work will also be included with groups providing feedback to the class.

**Grades and Evaluation (seminar based class).**

Grades will be assigned on the basis of the final exam, seminar participation and a short paper. The following weights are attached to each component.

Attendance and Participation:	10.0%
Two short reaction papers:	40.0%
Final Paper:	50.0%

**Seminar participation (10%)**

Class will proceed by discussion and student participation. It is, therefore, important that all students come prepared and ready to be involved. Students should have read the required readings for each class.

**Two short reaction papers** (worth 20 percent each):

Reaction papers should not be longer than two pages and can be as short as one (400-700 words, as a guideline). They can contain comments, questions, and thoughts about the day's readings. You may also write your reaction paper in the form of a short review of a book or article. You must complete one of these papers during the first week of class.

**Final Paper (50.0%):**

Write an essay on one of the following topics (sample questions):

- 1) Is the concept of political culture useful in explaining differences in levels of institutional performance? Your answer should include a discussion of the critiques of the concept of civic culture.
- 2) Can constitutional courts be characterised as policy makers? Include examples in your answer.
- 3) Is it irrational to vote?
- 4) "Presidentialism is inherently more unstable than parliamentarism". Discuss.

The essay should be a **maximum** of 1800 words in length (excluding the bibliography).

For the essay, you are required to (i) draw on academic literature (articles and/or books) and (ii) properly cite the academic literature you use to prepare your essay.

If you require information on proper citation style, please refer to one of the following books:

- The University of Chicago Press. 2010. The Chicago Manual of Style: The Essential Guide for Writers, Editors and Publishers. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 16th edition.
- APSA Committee on Publications. 2006. Style Manual for Political Science: <http://www.apsanet.org/media/PDFs/Publications/APSASStyleManual2006.pdf>

## Readings

Students are responsible for reading the articles and book chapters listed under **Required Readings**. The literature listed under **Recommended Readings** is meant to suggest some starting points for further study, e.g., if you happen to be particularly interested in a certain topic and want to pursue the topic further, or for the paper. Obviously, the list of recommended readings is not comprehensive and you are free, indeed encouraged, to read beyond the reading list for essays. The list points to a select few classic, seminal and/or particularly interesting studies in the field.

For the course, we will be using the following **textbook**:

Caramani, Daniele (Ed.). 2017. *Comparative Politics* (4th edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

### Week 1

**Tuesday July 23rd**

#### Session 1.1: Introduction

*The Comparative Method: Comparing Regimes.*

##### Required readings

- Rothstein, Bo. 2017. "The Relevance of Comparative Politics", in in Daniele Caramani (Ed.). *Comparative Politics* (4th edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1
- Keman, Hans and Paul Pennings (2017). "Comparative research Methods", in Daniele Caramani (Ed.). *Comparative Politics* (4th edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press: Chapter
- Peters, G. B. (2017). Approaches in comparative politics, in Daniele Caramani (Ed.). *Comparative Politics* (4th edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press: Chapter 2.

#### Session 1.2: Worked Example: Comparing Democracies

*Is consensus democracy "kinder, gentler democracy"?*

##### Required readings

- Aníbal Pérez-Liñán (2017). *Democracies*, in Daniele Caramani (Ed.). *Comparative Politics* (4th edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press: Chapter 5.
- Lijphart, Arend. 2012. *Patterns of Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapters 1-3. (also in 1999 edition).

##### Recommended readings

- Huber, John D., and G. Bingham Powell. 1994. 'Congruence between citizens and policymakers in two visions of liberal democracy.' *World Politics* 46(3): 291-326.
- Aarts K., Thomassen J. 2008. 'Satisfaction with democracy: Do institutions matter?' *Electoral Studies*, 27(1): 5-18.
- Bernauer, J., & Vatter, A. (2012). Can't get no satisfaction with the Westminster model? Winners, losers and the effects of consensual and direct democratic institutions on satisfaction with democracy. *European Journal of Political Research*, 51(4), 435-468.

## Session 2: Regime Choices: Presidentialism versus Parliamentarism

*Are presidential systems less stable than parliamentary ones?*

### Required readings

- Linz, Juan. 1990. 'The Perils of Presidentialism.' *Journal of Democracy* 1(1): 51-69.
- Stepan, Alfred, and Cindy Skach. 1993. 'Constitutional Frameworks and Democratic Consolidation.' *World Politics* 46(1): 1-22.
- Shugart, Matthew S., and John Carey. 1992. *Presidents and Assemblies: Constitutional Design and Electoral Dynamics*. New York: Cambridge University Press: Chapters 1-3.

### Recommended readings

- Cheibub, Jose Antonio, Zachary Elkins, and Tom Ginsburg. 2014. 'Beyond Presidentialism and Parliamentarism.' *British Journal of Political Science* 44(3): 515-544.
- Fukuyama, F., Bjorn Dressel, and Boo-Seung Chang. 2005. 'Facing the Perils of Presidentialism?' *Journal of Democracy* 16(2): 102-16.
- Gerring, John, Strom C. Thacker, and Carola Moreno. 2009. 'Are Parliamentary Systems Better?' *Comparative Political Studies*, 42(3): 327-359.
- Pereira, Carlos, and Marcus André Melo. 2012. 'The Surprising Success of Multiparty Presidentialism.' *Journal of Democracy* 23(3): 156-170.

## Session 3: Regime Choices: Federalism and Bicameralism

*Why do some federations excel whilst others fail?*

### Required readings

- Loughlin, J. 2017. 'Federal and local government institutions', in Daniele Caramani (Ed.). *Comparative Politics* (4th edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press: Chapter 11.
- Montinola, G., Qian, Y., & Weingast, B. R. (1995). Federalism, Chinese style: the political basis for economic success in China. *World politics*, 48(1), 50-81.

### Recommended readings

- Gallagher, Michael, Michael Laver, and Peter Mair. 2011. *Representative Government in Modern Europe* (5th edition). New York, N.Y.: McGraw-Hill: Chapter 6.
- Heller, W. B. (2007). Divided politics: Bicameralism, parties, and policy in democratic legislatures. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 10.
- Bednar, Jenna. 2009. *The Robust Federation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: Chapters 1-3.
- Brancati, Dawn. 2006. 'Decentralization: Fueling the Fire or Dampening the Flames of Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism?' *International Organization* 60(3): 651-85
- Ziblatt, Daniel. 2004. 'Rethinking the Origins of Federalism.' *World Politics* 57(1): 70-98.

## **Session 4: Constitutions and Judicial Politics**

*Is a 'government of judges' a real danger?*

### Required readings

- Stone Sweet, Alec. 2017. 'Constitutions and Judicial Power' in Daniele Caramani (Ed.). *Comparative Politics* (4th edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press: Chapter 9.
- Vanberg, Georg. 2015. 'Constitutional courts in comparative perspective: A theoretical assessment.' *Annual Review of Political Science* 18: 167-85.

### Recommended readings

- Ginsburg, T., & Simpser, A. (Eds.). (2013). *Constitutions in authoritarian regimes*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1,7.
- Segal, Jeffrey A., and Albert D. Cover. 1989. 'Ideological values and the votes of US Supreme Court justices.' *The American Political Science Review* 83(2): 557-65.
- Vanberg, Georg. 2005. *The Politics of Constitutional Review in Germany*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: Chapter 1 and Chapter 3.
- Gallagher, Michael, Michael Laver, and Peter Mair. 2011. *Representative Government in Modern Europe* (5th edition). New York, N.Y: McGraw Hill: Chapter 4.

## **WEEK 2:**

### **Session 5 : Electoral Systems**

*Are some electoral systems superior to others?*

### Required readings

- Gallagher, Michael, Michael Laver, and Peter Mair. 2011. *Representative Government in Modern Europe* (5th edition). Maidenhead: McGraw Hill. Chapter 11.
- Gallagher, Michael. 2017. 'Elections and Referendums', in Daniele Caramani (Ed.). *Comparative Politics* (4th edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press: Chapter 10.

### Recommended readings

- Gallagher, Michael, and Paul Mitchell (Eds.). 2005. *The Politics of Electoral Systems*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: Chapters 1-3 and one country chapter of your choice.
- Lijphart, Arend. 1994. *Electoral Systems and Party Systems*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: Chapter 1-3.
- Carey, J. M., & Hix, S. (2011). The Electoral Sweet Spot: Low-Magnitude Proportional Electoral Systems. *American Journal of Political Science*, 55(2), 383-397.

### **Session 6: Political Culture**

*Do political cultures exist and do they shape political outcomes?*

### Required readings

- Fish, M. Steven. 2002. 'Islam and Authoritarianism.' *World Politics* 55(1): 4-37.
- Inglehart, Ronald, and Christian Welzel 2017. 'Political Culture', in Daniele Caramani (Ed.). *Comparative Politics* (4th edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press: Chapter 17.

### Recommended readings

- Inglehart, Ronald and Marita Carballo. 1997. 'Does Latin America Exist? (And is There a Confucian Culture?): A Global Analysis of Cross-Cultural Differences.' *PS: Political Science and Politics* 30(1): 34-46.
- Putnam, Robert. 1993. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Tradition in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: Especially Chapters 1, 2
- Putnam, Robert. 1995. 'Bowling Alone.' *Journal of Democracy* 6(1): 65-78.

### **Session 7: Civil Wars and Ethnic Politics**

*Do ethnic differences foster conflict?*

#### Required readings

- Huntington, Samuel. 1993. 'The Clash of Civilizations.' *Foreign Affairs* 72(3): 22-49.
- Posner, Daniel. 2004. 'The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi.' *American Political Science Review*, 98(4): 529-45.
- Fearon, James, and David Laitin. 2003. 'Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War'" *American Political Science Review* 97(1): 75-90.

#### Recommended readings

- Fearon, J. D. (2006). Ethnic mobilization and ethnic violence. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Economy*, 852-868.
- Miguel, Edward. 2004. 'Tribe or Nation? Nation Building and Public Goods in Kenya versus Tanzania.' *World Politics*, 56(3): 328-62.
- Monroe, Kristen Renwick, James Hankin, and Rene Bukovchik Van Vechten. 2000. 'The Psychological Foundation of Identity Politics.' *Annual Review in Political Science* 3: 419-47

### **Session 8: Political Representation**

*Should elites be representative, what difference does it make and how do we achieve representativeness?*

- Bhavnani, Rikhil. 2009. 'Do Electoral Quotas Work after They are Withdrawn: Evidence from a Natural Experiment in India.' *American Political Science Review* 103(1): 23-35.
- Lawless, Jennifer. L. 2015. 'Female Candidates and Legislators.' *Annual Review of Political Science* 18: 349-66.
- Powell, G. Bingham. 2004. 'Political Representation in Comparative Politics.' *Annual Review of Political Science* 7: 273-96.

#### Recommended readings

- Urbinati, N., & Warren, M. E. (2008). The concept of representation in contemporary democratic theory. *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.*, 11, 387-412.