

## POL 201: Introduction to Comparative Government

### Course Overview:

How can we understand political current events? How do politics in the US differ from politics in other countries? Why are some countries democratic and others not? Does it matter? In this course, we will look at politics from a comparative perspective, considering both the variation in political structures around the world and what might explain those differences. You will learn to identify and evaluate political choices and structures through a deep introduction to the methods and core theories of comparative politics. These will give you the tools to scientifically evaluate politics in the world around you.

### Student Learning Objectives and Course Goals:

At the end of this course, students will:

- Analyze, evaluate, explain, and apply core theories, models, evidence, and debates in comparative politics.
- Understand, apply, and interpret basic methods of comparative politics and comparative political inquiry.
- Identify and analyze political events across and within countries, and their potential causes, and implications.
- Identify and analyze political institutions and organizations across and within countries, and their implications.
- Critically evaluate media discussions about politics across and within countries, and avoid basic pitfalls in drawing conclusions about politics.

The associated learning goals of the political science discipline can be found at {<http://www.casl.umd.umich.edu/politicalsciences/>}

### Student Responsibilities:

In order to achieve the course objectives, you will need to read, watch, and digest the course texts, think through and complete the assignments, and participate fully in course activities and discussions. These are all necessary for the completion of the various assignments (incl. papers, exams) which will give you the opportunity to apply the knowledge, understanding, and skills you will gain in the course. Any changes to the syllabus (incl. exam/due dates or required readings) will be posted to the Canvas page for this course, which you should check regularly.

### Professor Contact Information

Professor Emily Matthews Luxon can be reached at {[eoluxon@umich.edu](mailto:eoluxon@umich.edu)}. Her office is SSB 2194, and her office hours this semester are Tuesdays 4:15-5:15pm, and Fridays 1-2pm. She is also available to meet with you by appointment. She is happy to respond to e-mail, but if you have very complex and lengthy questions, she may suggest that an in-person meeting would work better!

**Required Texts:**

Some of the course materials are available on course reserves at Mardigian Library. You can access these materials at: {[http://library.umd.umich.edu/Services/course\\_reserves.php](http://library.umd.umich.edu/Services/course_reserves.php)}. Other course materials are available on the course Canvas page, and will be posted throughout the semester. The main course text is available for purchase in the bookstore. The course text is: Clark, William Roberts, Matt Golder, and Sona Nadnichek Golder. 2013. *Principles of Comparative Politics*, 2nd Edition. CQ Press and Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, California.

**Student Assessment:**

To earn a grade in this course, you must complete:

1. Quizzes: 15%
2. In-class assignments: 10%
3. Two in-class midterms: 15% and 20% (35% total)
4. Paper: 20%
5. Final exam: 20%

Exams will consist of both key-term questions and essay questions; exams will be based on lectures, presentations, readings, and films. Quizzes will be multiple choice and/or short-answer questions, based on the readings. The paper will require you to apply what you learn in the course to a contemporary political event; the paper assignment and writing guidelines will be passed out in class during Week 10 (unless otherwise noted). You must be in class to receive any credit for in-class group assignments. All assignments and exams will be evaluated as percentages (out of 100%); information on how to calculate the weight for each assignment/exam in your overall grade will be provided on the course Canvas page. Late papers and take-home assignments will be penalized. Extensions, incompletes, or make-up exams will be given only in pressing and properly documented cases and in accordance with UM-D policy; petitions for these must be timely.

**Students with Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities who may need accommodations are encouraged to notify, as soon as possible, Disability Resource Services {[http://www.umd.umich.edu/cs\\_disability/](http://www.umd.umich.edu/cs_disability/)} in order to work out the particulars. The University will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students need to register with Disability Resource Services (DRS) every semester they are enrolled for classes. DRS is located in Counseling & Support Services, 2157 UC. To be assured of having services available when they are needed, students should register no later than the end of the add/drop deadline of each term. Note: DRS should be notified *in advance* of any course deadlines or due dates to ensure appropriate support.

**Academic Integrity:**

Your instructor takes academic dishonesty very seriously. Any student violating UM-D's Student Conduct policies will earn an 'E' or 'F' in the course and will be reported to the University for investigation. The University of Michigan-Dearborn values academic honesty and integrity. Each student has a responsibility to understand, accept, and comply with the University's standards of academic conduct as set forth by the Code of Academic Conduct, as well as policies established by the schools and colleges. Cheating, collusion, misconduct, fabrication, and plagiarism are considered serious offenses. Violations will not be tolerated and may result in penalties up to and including expulsion from the University. For more information, please see: the Tutorial on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism {<http://webapps.umd.umich.edu/aim/>}.

**Improving Your Writing:**

The Writing Center provides support for all UM-Dearborn students wishing to improve their writing. Students needing regular one-on-one help in developing basic writing skills, as well as more advanced students wishing to improve their writing, will find the center useful. The center is located in 3035 CB with smaller satellites on the first floor of Mardigian Library and Fairlane Center North 138 (check website for hours). The center tries to accommodate walk-ins but prefers students make appointments online at {[http://casl.umd.umich.edu/writ\\_center/](http://casl.umd.umich.edu/writ_center/)}.

**\*Tentative\* Course Calendar:**

Note: CGG refers to the course text by Clark, Golder, and Golder, *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Additional material may also be required reading; these will be posted, with advance notice, to Canvas. If adjustments need to be made to the calendar and assignments, notice will be given in class and on Canvas.

***Part I: The Basics of Comparative Politics*****Week 1:**

Edwards 2008: How to Read a Book

CGG: Preface - "The Approach of this Book" & "Methodology" [pp xxix-xxxii]

CGG: Ch. 1 - "Introduction" [pp 1-18]

CGG: Ch. 2 - "What is Science?" [pp 19-44]

**Week 2:**

CGG: Ch. 3 - "What is Politics?" [pp 49-79]

**Week 3:**

CGG: Ch. 4 - "Origins of the Modern State" [pp 87-124]

**\*\*Tuesday, January 21st: In-class assignment.**

***Part 2: Democracy vs. Dictatorships and Transitions Between Them*****Week 4:**

CGG: Ch. 5 - "Democracy and Dictatorship" [pp. 143-168]

**Week 5:**

CGG: Ch. 6 - "The Economic Determinants of Democracy and Dictatorship" [pp. 171-209]

**\*\*Thursday, February 6: First in-class midterm exam**

**Week 6:**

CGG: Ch. 7 - "The Cultural Determinants of Democracy and Dictatorship" [pp. 213-259]

**Week 7:**

CGG: Ch. 8 - "Democratic Transitions" [pp 266-307]

**\*\*Thursday, February 20: In-class assignment.**

***Part 3: Types of Dictatorships and Why They Matter***

**Week 8:**

CCG: Ch. 9 - "Democracy or Dictatorship: Does It Make a Difference?" [pp 325-326; 342-346]

CCG: Ch. 10 - "Varieties of Dictatorship" [pp -349- 403]

***Part 4: Types of Democracies and Why They Matter***

**Week 9:**

CCG: Ch. 11 - "Problems with Group Decision Making" [pp. 439-446]

CCG: Ch. 16 - "Consequences of Democratic Institutions" [pp 741-825]

**Week 10:**

CCG: Ch. 14 - "Social Cleavages and Party Systems" [pp. 603-641]

**\*\*Thursday, March 20: Second in-class exam.**

**Week 11:**

CCG: Ch. 13 - "Elections and Electoral Systems" [pp 535-546; 554-560; 564-578; 587-597]

**\*\*Thursday, March 27: In-class assignment.**

**Week 12:**

CCG: Ch. 14 - "Social Cleavages and Party Systems" [pp 641-668]

CCG: Ch. 13 - "Elections and Electoral Systems" [pp 546-553; 560-564; 578-587]

**\*\*Thursday, April 3: No class - paper writing day.**

**Week 13:**

CCG: Ch. 12 - "Parliamentary, Presidential, and Semi-Presidential Democracies" [pp 457-525]

**\*\*Thursday, April 10: Paper due.**

**Week 14:**

Revisit Ch. 16 - "Consequences of Democratic Institutions" [pp 741-825]

**\*\*Final exam: Date and time TBA.**