

Course Syllabus
«Comparative Politics»

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Credits	5
Auditory work (hours)	72
Independent Work (hours)	118
Year	2
Format of studying	without online-courses

I. Learning Objectives, Students' Competencies

Comparative politics is the study of comparing different countries and units in a systematic manner. It encompasses broad and diverse issues such as political regimes, institutions, degrees of democracy and democratization, political economy, social movements, and political violence. Besides providing useful comparisons across seemingly different political units, this sub-field can also inform debates about designing new political orders. As such, it is a rich and varied field that cannot be accurately characterized on the basis of just one dimension or topic. That is why this course should be seen as a sampling of the field rather than an exhaustive review.

This course is intended to introduce students to the basic concepts, ideas, and issues in modern comparative politics. It also aims to give students the training to read academic texts critically and understand the basic arguments. Assigned readings are intended to provide students with the broadest possible coverage of both classical and contemporary research in the sub-field. The list of mandatory literature for the course is given in the section 4, and the lists of mandatory literature for the seminars are given consistently for each class. The list of recommended readings on each topic points students toward other pertinent literature.

The working language of the course is English.

By the end of the course students are expected to be able to critically assess readings, evaluate ideas and their contribution to the field, construct their own comparative research design, differentiate between different schools of thought and methodological approaches inside the political science domain.

II. Course Contents

THEME 1. STATES AND NATIONS

- States and state formation
- State capacity and effectiveness
- Ethnic identity, national identity, and nationalism

THEME 2. EXPLAINING DEMOCRACY

- Defining democracy
- Determinants of democracy

THEME 3. EXPLAINING AUTOCRACY

- Origins and sources of autocratic rule
- Authoritarian regimes and political control
- Types of authoritarianism
- Hybrid regimes: definitions and debates in the discipline

THEME 3. POLITICAL ECONOMY

- The components of political economy
- Comparing economic outcomes

THEME 5. POLITICAL VIOLENCE

- Explanations of political violence
- Types of political violence: revolutions
- Types of political violence: civil war and ethnic conflict

THEME 6. PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

- Colonialism and the institutions of imperialism
- The challenges of post-imperialism
- Puzzles and prospects for democracy and development

THEME 7. PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

- Immigration and refugee crisis
- New identities, old ideologies: the rise of the extreme right
- Maintaining the welfare state

THEME 8. SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

- Social changes and social movements
- Contemporary social movements after the global economic crisis
- Social movements and democratization

THEME 9. GENDER STUDIES IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS

- Feminist theory in political science and international relations
- “Gendering” politics
- Women in politics

III. Grade Criteria

The final grade is made up of one written assignment, mini-tests, participation, debates and final exam.

Late work will NOT be accepted.

The formula for calculating the final grade is the following:

$$G_{final} = 0,65 * G_{cumulative} + 0,35 * G_{exam}$$

$$G_{cumulative} = 0,3 * G_{assignment} + 0,2 * G_{mini-tests} + 0,2 * G_{debates\ and\ presentation} + 0,3 * G_{seminars}$$

There are no blocking grades.

IV. Forms of Control

Written assignment.

Example of written assignment' theme:

“You are offered to name and explain the factor that was crucial for transformation of the country’s political regime to the current condition. The analysis is held on three countries: South Korea, Turkey or Tunisia. The analysis should be conducted on the basis of the specified parameters related to the political regimes.

Written assignment must include the following components:

1. Statement of the research problem in terms of the suggested factor and its importance
2. Presentation of the relevance of the factor in the case of the country
3. A brief analysis of the existing literature on the problem
4. Analysis of the transformation of political regime in the country under the factor’s influence (using the Freedom House index, Polity IV and Bertelsmann Transformation Index).

5. Comparative analysis of political institutions that make up the type of political regime at present (analysis linking the nature of the political regime' change with the activity of specific actors and also factors)

The factors you are to explain should be based on the methodological ways of analysis in political science. For instance:

- theory of rational choice – elites and actors' relationship and possible gains;
- historical institutionalism – “path dependence” and the prolonged analysis;
- new institutionalism as a whole – certain and the most important institutions and their connections with each other.

If you suggest your own factor, you should argue that the factor is influential in the case.

Thus, after analyzing the factor, you need to answer the “final” question: why in the presence of current political institutions formal (for example, implementation of the constitutional rights and freedoms, political pluralism, etc.) and informal real practices are carried out in certain ways?”

Mini-tests. There are 5 tests aimed to examine the degree of understanding and ability to use the content from lectures and seminars. . If a student has missed a test for a valid reason, there is an opportunity to complete the test at the last seminar of the course. Confirmation of the validity of the absence must be provided to the study office.

Example of mini-test question:

“Please, write how elite cooptation works in order to maintain authoritarian control. Name at least two means through which it can be achieved”.

Class attendance and participation. Students' participation in class discussions is assessed according to the “intensity” of their participation, ability to understand and analyze basic concepts and show relevance of their ideas in presentations. If a student has missed a seminar for a valid reason, there is an opportunity to complete the task to get the assessment of the seminar participation. Confirmation of the validity of the absence must be provided to the study office, and the task is given only with the prior arrangement with the instructor.

Class debates: Students' presentations that are to be performed for debates. Every presentation is prepared by two students and represents one of the approaches to the problem of the seminar; students are to not only comment the presentation but also to give arguments for the certain point of view.

Example of debates theme:

“What is more effective: welfare state or minimal state?”

Final exam will be cumulative and evaluated according to the completeness and correctness of the answers provided.

Example of exam question:

“Please, name the main problem of comparative method according to Arendt Lijphart and at least 2 ways to solve it (Arend Lijphart «Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method»)”.

V. Resources

5.1 Required Reading

1. The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics. Edited by Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes. Oxford University Press, 2009. URL: <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199566020.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199566020> (Date of access: 08.07.2016)
2. The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions. Edited by R. A. W. Rhodes, Sarah A. Binder and Bert A. Rockman. Oxford University Press, 2008. URL: <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199548460.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199548460> (Date of access: 08.07.2016)

5.2 Additional reading

1. Comparative Policy Studies: Conceptual and Methodological Challenges, edited by Isabelle Engeli, et al., Palgrave Macmillan Limited, 2014. URL: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/hselibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1699386>. (Date of access: 08.07.2016)
2. The Oxford Handbook of Political Economy. Edited by D. Wittman and B. Weingast. Oxford University Press, 2008. URL: <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199548477.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199548477>. (Date of access: 08.07.2016)

5.3 Software

№ п/п	Name	Availability
1.	Microsoft Windows 7 Professional RUS	From home university network
2.	Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2010	From home university network

5.4 Professional Databases, Informational Reference Systems, Internet-resources (electronic educational resources)

№ п/п	Name	Availability
	5.4	<i>Professional Databases, Informational Reference Systems</i>

1.	Electronic Library System Pro-Quest	URL: https://ebookcentral.proquest.com
2.	Electronic Library System Oxford Handbooks Online	URL: http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com
Internet-resources (electronic educational resources)		
1.	Единое окно к образовательным ресурсам [Электронный ресурс].	URL: http://window.edu.ru

5.5 Technical Resources for the Course

Lecture rooms provide the usage and demonstration of thematic illustrations, responding to the syllabus of the course consisting of:

- PC with access to the Internet (operational system, office programs and anti-virus software);
- remote controlled multimedia projector.