

Stony Brook University

POL 103

INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Syllabus

Spring 2011

Class Location: Light Engineering Lab 102

Class Time: TuTh 3:50PM - 5:10PM

Instructor: Roland Kappe

Email: roland.kappe@stonybrook.edu

Web: blackboard.stonybrook.edu

Office: SBS S-723

Office Hours: Tu 5:30-6:30PM

Course Overview:

This class provides an introduction to comparative political science. The course starts with a brief introduction to scientific reasoning in the context of the social sciences and specifically comparative politics. We then move on to the big question of the 'origin of the state', covering contractual and predatory approaches. The second big topic is the question of why some countries are democratic, while others are not and how democratic transitions come about. Further topics then are collective decision-making, types of democratic regimes and institutions, consequences of electoral rules and party systems, as well as policy outcomes. At the same time, students will learn some basic concepts of game theory, a tool that helps us analyze political decision making, and will understand how political scientists test their theoretical ideas using data and statistics.

Required Readings:

"Principles of Comparative Politics" (1st Edition)

by William Roberts Clark, Matt Golder and Sona Nadenichek Golder,

Other readings relevant to class discussion may be posted on Blackboard prior to the pertinent lecture. Their contents will be fair game for the exams.

You should follow quality international news at least on a weekly basis:
(e.g. [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com), [economist.com](https://www.economist.com), [news.bbc.co.uk](https://www.news.bbc.co.uk))

Course Requirements:

Students are expected to attend all lectures and are responsible for the material if they miss class. Assigned readings have to be completed before the class they are posted for below.

There will be three multiple choice exams: a short exam covering the first part of the semester, a midterm exam covering the second part and a cumulative final exam.

All work will be graded on a 0-100 scale:

A	100-94	B+	89-87	C+	79-77	D+	69-67	F	60-0
A-	93-90	B	86-84	C	76-74	D	66-64		
	B-	83-80	C-	73-70	D-	63-60			

Grades will be based on the three exams:

First Exam:	30 %
Midterm Exam:	30 %
Final Exam:	40 %

In the past, students have found my exams to be quite hard. I strongly encourage everyone to seize extra credit opportunities. There will be several opportunities to earn **extra credit** by completing homework assignments. As an example, this may be a two-page response paper to a question I pose in class, or answers to a problem set.

Depending on the needs of the political science department, additional extra credit opportunities for participation in experimental research may be offered. Each extra credit opportunity would be worth one additional point of the grade. **I will announce all extra credit assignments in class and via email.**

Make-up exams will only be offered under extraordinary circumstances, i.e. a death in the family or medical emergency. Proper documentation is required. Note that simply visiting a doctor is not sufficient. There must be written documentation stating that the student was physically incapable of taking the exam. All make-up exams must be completed within one week (7 days) of the original exam date. Failure to schedule a make-up exam within the allotted time will result in a grade of zero for the exam.

There is a **24-hour moratorium** on the discussion of grades after an exam is returned. In addition to this waiting period, all concerns regarding grading must be presented in writing.

Americans with Disabilities Act:

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, room128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

Academic Integrity:

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Technology & Management, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at <http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/>

Critical Incident Management:

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures.

Course Schedule:

Changes to this schedule may become necessary, e.g. to accommodate discussion of recent events and will be announced by the instructor.

2/1	First Day of Class, Overview	
2/3	What is Political Science/Comparative Politics?	Required Reading: p. 40-51
2/8	Game Theory Basics and the Exit, Voice and Loyalty Game	Required Reading: Chapter 3
2/10	More on the EVL Game	
2/15	Politics and the Origins of the State I	Required Reading: Chapter 4
2/17	Politics and the Origins of the State II	
2/22	Politics and the Origins of the State III	
2/24	FIRST EXAM	

3/1	Conceptualizing Democracy	Required Reading: Chapter 5
3/3	Measurement - and Measuring Democracy	
3/8	Economic Determinants of Democracy I	Required Reading: Chapter 6
3/10	Economic Determinants of Democracy II	
3/15	Cultural Determinants of Democracy	Required Reading: Chapter 7
3/17	NO CLASS (ISA Conference)	
3/22	Democratic Transitions	Required Reading: Chapter 8
3/24	Public Goods and Collective Action	

3/29 MIDTERM

3/31	NO CLASS (MPSA Conference)	
4/5	Consequences of Democracy and	Required Reading: Chapter 9
4/7	Selectorate Theory	
4/12	Voting and Social Choice	Required Reading: Chapter 10
4/14	Median Voter Theorem	
4/19	SPRING BREAK	
4/21	SPRING BREAK	
4/26	Majoritarian and PR electoral systems	Required Reading: Chapter 12
4/28	Party Systems and Social Cleavages	Required Reading: Chapter 13
5/3	Presidential and Parliamentary systems I	Required Reading: Chapter 11
5/5	Presidential and Parliamentary systems II	
5/10	Veto Player Theory	Required Reading: Chapter 14
5/12	Federalism	

Friday, 20 May: FINAL EXAM (2:15 - 4:45 PM)

The final examination will be given in the room where the regular class is held.

It is the student's responsibility to plan a class schedule that avoids exam conflicts and too many exams in the same day.