



CIEE Global Institute— Berlin

Course name:	Comparative Politics Theory, Methodology and Practice
Course number:	(GI) POLI 3005 BRGE
Programs offering course:	Berlin Open Campus, Berlin Global Architecture and Design
Open Campus Track:	International Relations and Political Science
Language of instruction:	English
U.S. semester credits:	3
Contact hours:	45
Term:	Spring 2020

Course Description

This course introduces students to the methodology and major concepts and theories in the Political Science field of comparative politics. Students learn how to analyze and assess similarities and differences among political systems. Students study and compare the domestic politics, political institutions and conflicts of various countries and through time within single countries. Students learn how to identify and explain political similarities and differences among countries, in the process gaining a critical perspective on politics in their home countries as well.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Examine and analyze the major concepts, reference texts and authors of an important sub-field of the discipline of Political Science.
- Compare and contrast the significant differences between the political systems of the countries analyzed and be able to explain how these differences translate into a specific landscape of political parties and characteristic patterns of governance.
- Compare German political institutions, values and practices with those of other countries.
- Apply constructs from the field of Comparative Politics to identify common criteria for evaluating political institutions and governance
- Apply critical thinking skills by creating concepts from Comparative Politics to identify the strengths and weaknesses of different political systems while analyzing their similarities and differences.



Course Prerequisites

Students should have completed at least one 2000-level course in Political Science or International Relations.

Methods of Instruction

This course is taught through short lectures supported by PowerPoint presentations, discussion of the assigned readings, and partner and group work. Active student participation is crucial for the success of the course, including careful preparation of the readings and other assigned homework. There will be three field trips or site visits during the course, adding new perspectives and opportunities for students to engage with the course topics in a non-theoretical context.

Assessment and Final Grade

The final grade will be made up of the following components:

1.	Participation:	20%
2.	Homework assignments:	20%
3.	Presentation:	10%
4.	Take-home exam:	10%
5.	Midterm paper:	20%
6.	Take-home final	20%
	TOTAL:	100%

Course Requirements

Homework Assignments



Students write two short papers based on readings and information from out of class activities. Between 500 and 750 words each assignment.

Take-home Exam

The midterm will be a take-home, open-book exam consisting of “prompts”, or questions that require synthesizing information and topics developed in the course. “Take home” means students will complete the exam outside of class, but *without the help of any other person* except the readings and notes (= “open book”). Most answers to prompts will vary between 75 and 250 words, depending on the complexity of the question and answer. There will be between 3 and 5 prompts.

Presentation

Students will choose a topic by the end of Week 3 for which they will prepare a short oral presentation of about 10 minutes.

Mid-term paper

Students will choose individually a topic from the material covered thus far and elaborate (1,500-2,000 words) a comparative politics research project.

Take-home final

Students will elaborate a short essay (500 to 700 words) on an individually chosen topic.

Participation

Participation is valued as meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared in advance of each class session and to have regular attendance. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged with the materials as directed, for example, through classroom discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

Attendance Policy

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and all unexcused absences will



result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for Open Campus and Short Term programs, unexcused absences that constitute more than 10% of the total course will result in a written warning.

Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.

For CIEE classes, excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students must be marked absent. Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as to Internship, Service Learning, or required field placement. Students who miss class for personal travel, including unforeseen delays that arise as a result of personal travel, will be marked as absent and unexcused. No make-up or re-sit opportunity will be provided.

Attendance policies also apply to any required class excursion, with the exception that some class excursions cannot accommodate any tardiness, and students risk being marked as absent if they fail to be present at the appointed time.

Unexcused absences will lead to the following penalties:

<i>Percentage of Total Course Hours Missed</i>	<i>Equivalent Number of Open Campus Semester classes</i>	<i>Minimum Penalty</i>
Up to 10%	1 content classes, or up to 2 language classes	Participation graded as per class requirements
10 – 20%	2 content classes, or 3-4 language classes	Participation graded as per class requirements; written warning



More than 20%	3 content classes, or 5 language classes	Automatic course failure , and possible expulsion
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Weekly Schedule

Please note this schedule is subject to change if opportunities arise to enhance the curriculum.

Week 1 Orientation Week

1.1 Why do we compare?

This opening lecture will present briefly the history of Comparative Politics around the world and introduce its macro dimensions that will be approached in this course: regimes, actors, institutions and policies. Students will discuss ad hoc some controversies in Comparative Politics, such as “Democracy with Adjectives” or “The End of the Transition Paradigm”.

Week 2 Methods

2.1 How to Build a Case

This class will outline the major differences between qualitative and quantitative methods, in particular their scope: (theory building, theory testing; small-N and large-N studies). Students will discuss how to build up a solid case based on profound operationalization. Beyond theoretic discussion, class will consist in a brainstorming about different approaches to the same subject: How to build a case? Although the actual topic can vary, electoral participation is recommended.

Reading:

1. George (2005). *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, Chapters 3-6 (67-124)

2.2 State-building and State-failure

This session discusses the importance of the state as the principal government unit in comparative politics, recaps some historical aspects of the emergence of the nation-state and introduces different theories about state-failure.

Reading:

1. Rotberg, Robert I. "The New Nature of Nation-state Failure." *Washington Quarterly*, v. 25, n. 3, p. 83-96, 2002.
2. Fukuyama, Francis (2004). "The Imperative of State-building." *Journal of Democracy*, v. 15, n. 2, p. 17-31. <http://econfaculty.gmu.edu/pboettke/workshop/fall04/fukuyama.pdf>

Due date for submission of first homework

2.3 Democracy

This first session about regimes discusses the major contributions to democratic theory from polyarchy to contemporary liberal democracy and its challenges.

Reading:

1. Linz, Juan J.; Stepan, Alfred C. "Toward Consolidated Democracies." *Journal of Democracy*, v. 7, n. 2, p. 14-33, 1996. <http://adpm.pbworks.com/f/Democratic+Consolidation-Linz+and+Stepan-1996.pdf>

Week 3 Regimes

3.1 Authoritarianism and Transition processes

This class outlines the different degrees of non-democratic regimes and introduces the grand theories of transition processes, in particular the third wave of democratization.

Reading:

1. Shin, Doh Chull. "On the third wave of democratization: A synthesis and evaluation of recent theory and research". *World Politics*, v. 47, n. 1, p. 135-170, 1994.
http://fbemoodle.emu.edu.tr/pluginfile.php/40457/mod_resource/content/1/Shin.pdf
2. Schedler (2009): "Electoral Authoritarianism," in: *The SAGE Handbook of Comparative Politics*, p. 381-393.

3.2 Measuring and sub-categorizing democracy

This class pays tribute to importance of democratic studies in CP and introduces and discusses the major approaches and tools to measuring or categorizing democracies.

Reading:

1. Collier, David; Levitsky, Steven. "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research." *World Politics*, v. 49, n. 3, p. 430-451, 1997.
<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/b845/51f3d5792eb01a8ca6ce6ce6ca42c0950cc.pdf>
2. Coppedge, Michael et al. "Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: A New Approach." *Perspectives on Politics*, v. 9, n. 2, p. 247-267, 2011.
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/David_Altman2/publication/232026394_Conceptualizing_and_Measuring_Democracy_A_New_Approach/links/0046351dc942b01fdb000000/Conceptualizing-and-Measuring-Democracy-A-New-Approach.pdf

Due date for submission of take-home exam

Week 4 Institutions

4.1 Executives

This class presents the principal characteristics of parliamentary and presidential systems. Students will be acquainted with the mechanisms

that elect and withdraw governments and discuss how the different institutional solutions meet democratic exigencies.

Reading:

1. Cheibub (2010). *Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, and Democracy*: Introduction and Chapter 2

Due date for submission of mid-term paper

4.2

Legislatures

This class covers the different institutional solutions for the legislative power, such as the number of chambers, the elections and status of the legislators. Additionally, students will learn how the different internal protocols are a main interest of CP.

Reading:

1. Olson (1994) *Democratic Legislative Institutions*: Chapters 1-3

Visit to German Parliament (*Bundestag*)

4.3

Electoral Systems

Electoral systems are the core fragment of political regimes. Students will learn how to assess an electoral system from a comparative perspective.

Reading:

1. Gallagher, "Introduction to Electoral Systems," in: Gallagher (2005). *The Politics of Electoral Systems*, 3-23.
2. Shugart, Matthew S. (2005): "Comparative Electoral Systems Research: The Maturation of a Field and New Challenges Ahead", in: Gallagher (2005): *The Politics of Electoral Systems*, p. 25-56.

Week 5

Actors

5.1

Parties and Party Systems

This class will discuss the main cleavages that have shaped party systems throughout the 20th century and question in how far those cleavages are still accurate or if they have been replaced.

Reading:

1. Mair (1997). *Party System Change*: Chapters 2 and 3

Due date for submission of second home-work

5.2 Citizenship and Political Engagement

This class covers the non-state actors sphere by acknowledging the role of political activism and political engagement by the organized civil society. Students will learn about the different historical phases of social movements and evaluate the alternative methods of political activism.

Reading:

1. Norris (2008) *Democratic Phoenix: Reinventing Political Activism*: Chapter 1
2. McAdam, Doug; Tarrow, Sidney; Tilly, Charles. "Dynamics of Contention". *Social Movement Studies*, v. 2, n. 1, p. 99-102, 2003.

Co-curricular excursion to visit a local NGO

Week 6 Policies

6.1 The Policy Cycle

In this session students will discuss the principal theories about the "policy cycle". They will apply it ad-hoc to a random policy case. Students will learn about the most popular policy fields covered by CP.

Reading:

1. Jann, Werner and Kai Wegrich, "Theories of the policy cycle" in Fischer (2006) *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theory, Politics and Methods*, pp. 43-62.

6.2 Closing Session / Wrap up

The closing session wraps up the topics covered throughout class and discusses some important topics of comparative politics that have been left out. Students will have the chance to evaluate their learning curve and clarify the most urgent doubts.

Class will take place in an open space as third out-of-class activity: Space to be chosen closer to the class session date to identify a location best suited for climate and relation to course material.

Due date for submission of take-home final

Readings

Cheibub, José. (2010). *Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, and Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fischer, Frank and Gerald Miller (2006) *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theory, Politics and Methods*. New York: Routledge.

Gallagher, Michael and Paul Mitchell. (2005). *The Politics of Electoral Systems*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

George, Alexander. (2005). *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Landman, Todd and Neil Robinson (2009): *The SAGE Handbook of Comparative Politics*. London: Sage Publications.

Olson, David (1994). *Democratic Legislative Institutions. A Comparative View*. New York: Routledge.

Mahoney, Jacob and Rueschemeyer, D. (eds.): *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



Mair, Peter (1997). *Party System Change: Approaches and Interpretations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Norris, Pippa (2008) *Democratic Phoenix: Reinventing Political Activism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Online Resources

<https://www.v-dem.net/en/>

<https://www.idea.int/>

<https://www.bti-project.org/en/home/>