

POLI 212: Government and Politics of the Developed World

POLI 212
Fall 2023

MWF 3:30-4:30

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Course description

This course is an introduction to fundamental comparative politics concepts and research that focuses on Europe and North America. Comparative politics is a subfield of political science that focuses on the domestic politics of individual countries, not on the interaction among countries in the international arena. Topics covered include: state and state institutions, regimes, form of government, parties and party systems, elections, protest, rule of law, corruption, and regime transitions—democratization and autocratization. You can expect to come away from this course with a solid background in the main concepts and themes in the literature on the politics of Europe and North America. The course will prepare you for advanced courses in European and North American politics, as well as for advanced courses on the substantive themes covered in this course, but focusing on different regions.

Required Readings

This course requires a significant amount of reading, so be prepared. If you fall behind it will be difficult to catch up. The articles are accessible online through McGill Library. I have included links in the reading schedule below. If the link doesn't work for you, make sure you're on VPN and signed into your McGill account. If it still doesn't work, call the IT help desk for assistance or ask your classmates. In such a big class, the TAs and I will not be able to troubleshoot such issues. The only readings that you will have to buy are the chapters from the "Political Science Experiment" textbook. You can buy each chapter individually and they cost 1USD. You can find all the information about how to buy these chapters here: <https://politicsexperiment.com/>

Course Obligations

Students will be evaluated on the basis of four measures:

- 1) Conference participation (10%)
- 2) Midterm 1 (25%)
- 3) Midterm 2 (25%)
- 4) Final exam (40%)

Conference Participation

You should register for a conference time on Minerva as soon as possible. Conferences will begin during the week of **September 18th** and attendance is mandatory. You can have one unexcused absence during the term. Conferences are an opportunity to discuss the material

covered in lecture, as well as parts of the assigned readings, which were not explicitly covered in lecture. Come to conference having done the readings and ready to participate in discussion. To facilitate discussion and enhance your own learning, you can prepare questions based on the readings and pose them to the group. Also, use the session to clarify your understanding of the main concepts. Don't be shy to pose questions such as "I don't quite understand concept X" or "What does the author mean when they say "XYZ" on p.1234". Your conference grade will be based on the quality of your participation in group discussions and activities. This component is worth 10% of your grade.

In-class Midterms

Both midterms will be given in class. The first midterm will be on **October 4th**. The second midterm will be on **November 30th**. The second midterm will cover only the material from Oct 4 to Nov 30th. The goal of the midterms is to give you an incentive to stay on top of the work throughout the semester. This way, you will be better prepared for the cumulative final exam, which will be held on a university-selected date.

The midterms will consist of multiple-choice questions and term identifications. The exams will be closed book and hand-written (unless you have accommodations and take the midterm at the OSD office). To prepare for the term identification portion, you should make a list of the important terms from the readings and lecture and write a paragraph, which defines the term, mentions the reading that discusses the term, gives an illustrative example, or, when relevant, compares/contrasts the term to other similar terms. Writing these paragraphs will help you distill the most important points. For the midterm exam, you can reproduce the paragraph from memory. The midterms are each worth 25% of your grade (50% total).

Final Examination

The cumulative final examination, worth 40% of your grade, will be given on the university-selected date during the fall exam period. It will consist of multiple choice questions and exercises that aim to test your understanding of the main concepts covered over the course of the semester. There will be a review session for the final on **December 4th**.

On note taking in class

I will use slides during class, which will be uploaded to myCourses after class. Do not waste your time writing down what you see on the slides. Instead, take notes during lecture on the explanations and clarifications I provide. Note taking is a very useful skill, which will serve you well during your entire undergraduate education, so work on it during this class. This is a useful starter resource on note taking: <https://learningcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/effective-note-taking-in-class/>. I recommend taking notes by hand because you will be less distracted.

On missed exams

If you are absent for the midterm for documented emergency medical or family reasons, an alternative exam date will be arranged. The alternative arrangement is only open to those who

can provide a valid medical/family reason for missing the midterm or final exams. If you cannot provide a valid reason for your absence, you will receive an F for the missed exam.

On integrity

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

On special needs and accommodation

The TAs and I will do our best to provide an inclusive learning environment. If you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me, either in office hours or by email, and the Office for Students with Disabilities, 514-398-6009.

On mental health

There may be times when personal stressors or emotional difficulties interfere with your academic performance or well-being. If you are experiencing mental health difficulties which prevent you from attending class or meeting deadlines in this course, please notify the TA and me by email or come by office hours. Use McGill's mental health services resources too: <https://www.mcgill.ca/wellness-hub/>.

On language

You have the right to submit work in English or in French.

On classroom etiquette

Please, respect these basic ground rules to help me maintain a good learning environment in class for everyone:

- 1- Do your best to arrive in class on time.
- 2- If you're using your laptop/tablet to take notes, please refrain from checking email, texting, social media, etc. These activities are likely to distract and disrupt your peers sitting next to you, but they often distract me as well. As I lecture, I look around the room to see if everyone is following my explanations and if you're chuckling/gasping/frowning at a meme or an email you just read, your expression might throw me off as I might perceive it as a reaction to something I've said. I will stop lecture and call you out at the source of the disruption.
- 3- Please remember to silence your cell phones.
- 4- Please do not talk.

Note: In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change. **The privilege of additional work will not be granted.**

Lecture and reading schedule

Aug 30 Introduction to the course

Sep 1 The State

- “The State/Comparative Political Institutions” chapter from the “A Political Science Experiment” textbook: <https://politicsexperiment.com/product/the-state/>
- Amy, Douglas J. “A Day in Your Life.” <https://governmentisgood.com/articles.php@aid=1>

Sep 6 (NO LECTURE)

Instead of this lecture, plan to attend one or both of the two Jean Monnet Centre Montreal talks on Russia: Dr Marlene Laruelle, Oct 5, 10-11:30am (Universite de Montreal, exact location TBA) and Dr. Ian Garner, Oct 20, 4-6pm (McGill, exact location TBA).

- Francis Fukuyama, “The Imperatives of State Building,” *Journal of Democracy* v.15, no. 2 (April 2004), pp. 17-31

Sep 8 Case study: Ukrainian state building

- Wolczuk, Kataryna. "State building and European integration in Ukraine." *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 60, no. 6 (2019): 736-754.

Sep 11 Form of government: presidentialism vs parliamentarism

- Juan Linz, “The Perils of Presidentialism,” in Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner, eds., *The Global Resurgence of Democracy* (Johns Hopkins UP 1996), pp. 108-126.
- Scott Mainwaring and Matthew Shugart, “Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy: a Critical Appraisal,” *Comparative Politics* v. 29, no. 4 (July 1997), pp. 449-471.

Sep 13 Electoral rules

- “Electoral rules” chapter from the “A Political Science Experiment” textbook: <https://politicsexperiment.com/product/electoral-rules/>

Sep 15 Electoral systems and government formation

- Ellis, Andrew (2018). *Electoral System Design in the Context of Constitution-Building*. International IDEA Discussion Paper 4/2018. Available at <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/electoral-system-design-in-the-context-of-constitution-building.pdf>

CONFERENCES START THIS WEEK

Sep 18 Parties and party systems

- “Political Parties and Party Systems” chapter from the “A Political Science Experiment” textbook: <https://politicsexperiment.com/product/health-and-illness-a-sociology-experiment/>

Sep 20 Populism and the far right

- C Mudde, C Rovira Kaltwasser, Populism. Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies, pp. 493-512
- Vachudova, Milada Anna. "Populism, democracy, and party system change in Europe." *Annual Review of Political Science* 24 (2021): 471-498.

Sep 25 Constitutionalism

- “Courts and Constitutions” chapter from the “A Political Science Experiment” textbook: <https://politicsexperiment.com/product/courts-and-constitutions/>
- Vallinder, Torbjörn. "The judicialization of politics—A world-wide phenomenon: Introduction." *International Political Science Review* 15, no. 2 (1994): 91-99.

Sep 27 The rule of law

- Carothers, Thomas. "The rule of law revival." *Foreign Affairs*. 77 (1998): 95

Oct 2 Regimes

- Alvarez, Mike, José Antonio Cheibub, Fernando Limongi, and Adam Przeworski. "Classifying political regimes," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 31, no. 2 (1996): 3-36
- “Regimes and Transitions” chapter from the “A Political Science Experiment” textbook: <https://politicsexperiment.com/product/regimes-and-transitions/> pp. 5-17

Oct 4 Midterm 1

Oct 5: Students are encouraged to attend the Jean Monnet Centre Montreal talk by Dr Marlene Laruelle, “Is Russia Fascist?,” 10am-11:30am; The location will be announced on myCourses, but it will be at Université de Montréal’s campus.

Oct 9 and Oct 11: Fall break (no lectures)

Oct 16 Political participation

- “Political Participation: Elections and Protest” chapter from the “A Political Science Experiment” textbook: <https://politicsexperiment.com/product/political-participation/>
- Munsey, Christopher. “Why We Vote: Why Do We Vote?” Monitor on Psychology. American Psychological Association, June 2008

Oct 18 Protest

- Aytaç, Selim Erdem, and Susan Stokes. “Why Protest?” wilsonquarterly.com, January 17, 2020.
- Abel, Heather. “What Comes after Idealism?” The Paris Review, June 29, 2018.

Oct 20: Students are encouraged to attend the Jean Monnet Centre Montreal talk by Dr Ian Garner, author of Z Generation: Into the heart of Russia’s Fascist Youth (<https://www.hurstpublishers.com/book/z-generation/>). 4-6pm; Location TBA on myCourses

Oct 23 Civil society

- Robert Putnam, Making Democracy Work (Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 1-16, pp.163-185.
- Sheri Berman, “Civil Society and the Collapse of Weimar Germany,” World Politics, v. 49, no.3 (April 1997), pp. 401-429 (excerpts).

Oct 25 Gender and politics

- “Gender and Politics” chapter from the “A Political Science Experiment” textbook: <https://politicsexperiment.com/product/gender-and-politics/>
- Mona Lena Krook. 2020. “AOC spoke out against a global problem — violence against women in politics,” The Monkey Cage, Washington Post, July 28, 2020

Oct 30 Corruption, anticorruption, and good governance

- Ang, Yuen Yuen. "Unbundling corruption: Revisiting six questions on corruption." *Global Perspectives* 1, no. 1 (2020): 12036.
- Maria Popova, “Judicialization of Corruption” (forthcoming chapter to be uploaded on myCourses)

Nov 1 Case studies: Italy’s Mani Pulite and Romania’s DNA campaign

- Donatella Della Porta and Alberto Vannucci, “Corruption and Anti-Corruption: The Political Defeat of ‘Clean Hands’ in Italy,” *West European Politics*, Vol. 30, Iss. 4 (September 2007), pp. 830-853, available online [here](#)
- Chrun, Elizabeth. "Help me help you: how the EU made Romania’s anticorruption reforms a (temporary) success." *East European Politics* (2022): 1-21.

Nov 6 Democracy

- Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, "What Democracy Is... And Is Not," in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (eds.), *The Global Resurgence of Democracy* (1996), pp. 49-62
- Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy* (Yale UP 1971), pp. 1-9, 14-16, 33-40, 48-61

Nov 8 Democratic transitions

- Geddes, Barbara. "What do we know about democratization after twenty years?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 2, no. 1 (1999): 115-144
- Sheri Berman, "How Democracies Emerge: Lessons from Europe." *Journal of Democracy* v. 18, no. 1 (January 2007), pp. 28-41

Nov 13 The collapse of Communism and transitional justice

- "Regimes and Transitions" chapter from the "A Political Science Experiment" textbook: <https://politicsexperiment.com/product/regimes-and-transitions/>, pp. 28-22
- Monika Nalepa, *Skeletons in the Closet: Transitional Justice in Post-Communist Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 1-29
- Stephen Holmes, "The End of Decommunization," *East European Constitutional Review* 31 (Summer/Fall 1994), pp. 33-36.

Nov 15 Case study: EU and East-Central European democratization

- Milada Vachudova, "The Leverage of International Institutions on Democratizing States: Eastern Europe and the European Union", *EUI Working Paper*, 2001, available at: <http://cadmus.iue.it/dspace/handle/1814/1742>

Nov 20 Hybrid regimes

- Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan A. Way. "The rise of competitive authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy* 13 (2002): 51.

Nov 22 Autocracy

- Przeworski, Adam. "A conceptual history of political regimes: Democracy, dictatorship, and authoritarianism." *New Authoritarianism: Challenges to Democracy in the 21st century* (2019): 17-36.
- Boix, Carles, and Milan W. Svobik. "The foundations of limited authoritarian government: Institutions, commitment, and power-sharing in dictatorships." *The Journal of Politics* 75, no. 2 (2013): 300-316.

Nov 27 Democratic backsliding and autocratization

- Milan Svobik, "Polarization versus Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 30, No. 3 (July 2019), pp. 20-32.
- Waldner, David, and Ellen Lust. "Unwelcome change: Coming to terms with democratic backsliding." *Annual Review of Political Science* 21 (2018): 93-113

Nov 29 Case study: Poland and Hungary

- Kovács, Kriszta, and Kim Lane Scheppele. "The fragility of an independent judiciary: Lessons from Hungary and Poland—and the European Union." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 51, no. 3 (2018): 189-200. Available online [here](#)

Nov 30 Midterm 2

Dec 4 Review