POLI 673 (Comparative Politics: Theories and Methods)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor: Dr. Pablo Policzer</th>
<th>Lecture Location: SS 729</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phone: 403-220-5923</td>
<td>Lecture Days/Time: Thursdays 12:00 – 14:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:policzer@ucalgary.ca">policzer@ucalgary.ca</a></td>
<td>Office: SS 710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Hours: By appointment only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COURSE DESCRIPTION
An examination of the main theories, methods, and debates in the field of Comparative Politics.

COURSE OBJECTIVES & LEARNING OUTCOMES
It’s a heady time to study comparative politics. The field has recently undergone a vast transformation, and the boundaries between comparative politics and other sub-fields (such as international relations) are much fuzzier than in the past, opening up new avenues for inquiry. Many assumptions have also been overturned, and a flurry of debates about the core principles of the field has yielded a broad new spectrum of sophisticated research, along with a sober assessment of the sub-discipline’s limits and possibilities.

Comparative politics is a large and amorphous subfield, and this course makes no attempt to cover all of it. Instead, we will focus on some key works, concepts, and debates, including classic and exemplary recent controversies. The aim is neither a survey nor an “intellectual history,” but rather an advanced introduction to some of the core conceptual, theoretical, and analytical tools of the field. In this sense, although the course is open to all graduate students, it is designed to be especially useful for doctoral students preparing candidacy exams.

Requirements
This is not a research seminar, and you are not expected to carry out any original empirical research for this class. Instead, this is a reading, writing, and discussion-intensive seminar, which focuses on the list of required readings, on any of the optional readings you may decide to dive more deeply into, and on any further related readings where appropriate. (Doctoral students writing comprehensive exams would be well advised to master both the required and deeper dive lists as a point of departure for their preparation.)

Students will be expected to play an active role in class discussions. This means coming to class well prepared, having completed and thought about each week’s assigned readings. To help you do that, each student will submit a 500-700-word review of the required reading. The reviews may focus on all the week’s readings (and aim for a broad synthesis), or on some of it (and aim for a more in-depth analysis). A successful review will not simply summarize the key ideas, but
critically engage them. All reviews will be made available to the class through the D2L discussion forum by noon the day before class. You are encouraged to engage with each other’s posts online.

I will lead each week’s discussion with a general statement framing some of the central problems and questions to be addressed, but then will call (randomly) on one student each week to make a brief presentation on the readings. Each presentation (about 10 minutes long) should build on the review and explain in some greater depth what you take to be the key ideas and questions for the seminar to consider. The presentation is also an opportunity to engage with other students’ reviews, and to explore possible tensions, disputes, etc. The online and in-class discussions are intended to complement each other, in the sense of starting and continuing various conversation threads from one forum to another.

In addition to the reviews, there are two other writing requirements: a 2,500-word take-home exam, as well as a review essay of 3,000-4,000 words (each double-spaced, with standard margins in 12pt font). I will distribute a set of questions in advance for the take-home exam, and you will be able to choose one from among 2-3. The review essay should evaluate at least three major books or five major articles on a related subject published in the last decade. You should discuss these works against a general background of the field in which they are situated, using the themes of the course as a point of departure. (The list of books for review is not limited to the items in the syllabus.) For models, you may wish to consult representative review essays in journals such as Comparative Politics, the American Political Science Review, the Canadian Political Science Review, Latin American Research Review, or World Politics, among others. The review essay will be due one week after the last day of class.

Late papers without a valid excuse (supported with appropriate documentation) will not be accepted.

**COURSE COMPONENT WEIGHTS AND DUE DATES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPONENT</th>
<th>WEIGHTING</th>
<th>DUE DATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 weekly reviews (@3% each)</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take-home exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>October 20th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation (incl. in-class and online discussion, weekly presentations)</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review essay</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>December 8th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Readings
Some PDF copies of the readings are available on D2L, and the balance of the required readings is available online (e.g., through the links below).

Grading criteria

A- (80-84%) → A (85-89%) → A+ (90% +)
Exceptional performance: strong evidence of original thinking; good organization; capacity to analyze and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base. Work at this level will also be clearly written, with no spelling or grammar faults.

B- (70-73%) → B (74-76%) → B+ (77-79%)
Competent performance: evidence of grasp of subject matter; some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the literature. Work at this level will generally be clearly written, containing at most a few, if any, spelling or grammar faults.

D (50-54%) → D+ (55-59%) → C- (60-62%) → C (63-66%) → C+ (67-69%)
Adequate performance: understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material; acceptable but uninspired work, not seriously faulty but lacking style and vigour. Work at this level is sometimes or often unclear, and contains from some to many spelling and/or grammar problems.

F (0-49%)
Inadequate performance: little or no evidence of understanding of the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited or irrelevant use of the literature. Work at this level is usually poorly written, with numerous spelling and grammar problems.
Schedule

September 8 (no review required this first day)

1. Introduction


Diving deeper...

- Peter Hall, “Aligning Ontology and Methodology in Comparative Research,” in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, 2003), Chapter 11; https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/10.1017/CBO9780511803963.012


PART I – APPROACHES

September 15

---

¹ May be modified as necessary.
2. A single logic of inquiry?


*Diving deeper…*


September 22

3. **Causality, explanation, and mechanisms**


*Diving deeper…*


- Jon Elster, “A plea for mechanisms,” in Peter Hedström and Richard Swedberg, eds. *Social Mechanisms: Analytical Approaches to Social Theory* (Cambridge, 1998), Ch. 3; https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/10.1017/CBO9780511663901.003


September 29

4. Decision-making and collective action


**Diving deeper...**


October 6

Take-home exam topics handed out

**PART II – AREAS OF STUDY**

5. **Institutions**


*Diving deeper...*
• Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (Peter Smith, 1978)


October 13

6. **The emergence of the state**


*Diving deeper…*


• Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Harvard, 2000), Part 2.1 “Two Europes, Two Modernities,” and 2.2 “Sovereignty of the Nation-State” (pp. 67-113); https://libcom.org/library/empire-antonio-negri


October 20

Take-home exam due
7. The spread of the state?


Diving deeper...


October 27

8. **Democracy**


*Diving deeper…*


• David Collier and Steven Levitsky, “Democracy: Conceptual hierarchies in comparative research,” in David Collier and John Gerring, eds. *Concepts and Method in Social Science: The Tradition of Giovanni Sartori* (Routlegde, 2009), Chapter 10, pp. 269-288; [https://escholarship.org/uc/item/29t3x8dr](https://escholarship.org/uc/item/29t3x8dr)


• Barrington Moore Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (1966), Chapters 7-8, pp. 413-452.


November 3

9. Authoritarianism


• Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, How Democracies Die (Crown, 2018), Chapters 4 & 5, pp. 72-117.


Diving deeper...

• Juan Linz, “Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes,” in Fred Greenstein and Nelson Polsby, eds. Handbook of Political Science 3 (1975), pp. 191-357 (skim to get main ideas)


- Beatriz Magaloni, *Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and its Demise in Mexico* (Cambridge, 2006); https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/10.1017/CBO9780511510274

- Jennifer Gandhi, *Political Institutions under Dictatorship* (Cambridge, 2008); https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/10.1017/CBO9780511510090


- Dan Slater, *Ordering Power: Contentious Politics and Authoritarian Leviathans in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge, 2010); https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/10.1017/CBO9780511760891

November 10

Reading week – no classes

November 17

10. Conflict, Violence and (Dis)Order


Diving deeper...


• Jeremy Weinstein, Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence (Cambridge University Press, 2006); https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/10.1017/CBO9780511808654

November 24

11. Political economy and globalization


• Wendy Brown, Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism’s Stealth Revolution (Zone Books, 2015), Chapter 1 “Undoing Democracy: Neoliberalism’s Remaking of State and Subject,” pp. 17-46; https://ebookcentral-proquest-

• Jamie Martin, “Cooperation without Domination,” *The Boston Review* (July 20, 2022); https://bostonreview.net/articles/cooperation-without-domination/

**Diving deeper...**

• Dani Rodrik, “How to Save Globalization from its Cheerleaders,” CEPR Discussion Paper No. DP6494 (September 2007); https://drodrik.scholar.harvard.edu/publications/how-save-globalization-its-cheerleaders


• Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957 [1944]).

• Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (Unwin, 1943).

• Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago, 1962)


December 1

12. **Complex governance**


*Diving deeper...*


December 8 – **Review essays due**
Adapted from David Woodruff and Kanchan Chandra, MIT Department of Political Science:

Reading Skills

As you manage the reading for this and other graduate courses, you are likely to find, if you have not already, that there is no correlation between effort and outcome. It is entirely possible to spend several hours reading something without “getting it.” And it is equally possible to spend less than a half-hour reading something else and getting to the heart of the argument. You will have to devise for yourselves ways to read efficiently. These suggestions may help:

1. Figure out what the heart of an argument is before you read deeply: skim, read the abstracts, the jacket blurbs, often short reviews published elsewhere. When you know what the centre of gravity is, you read more efficiently.

2. Read actively: do not simply soak up the reading for what the author wants to tell you, but approach it with questions, and try to answer them for yourself as you make your way through.

3. Use other peoples’ skills: you do not have to do all the work yourself. It is not “cheating” if you talk through the argument with someone else before or after you delve in, or look at reviews for explication, or form reading groups where you can discuss the argument with each other.

4. Write in order to read. The response papers for this class and the (non-graded) attached worksheet should help.

5. Use diagrams if necessary: often, the structure of an argument can be most clearly expressed if you “draw” it, using arrows and lines, than by trying to understand it in words.

6. Organize your notes in a way that makes retention and information retrieval possible: you could use index cards, annotated bibliographies, database programmes like EndNote etc.

These rules may be obvious to some and not to others. Basically, do whatever works for you. But be self-conscious about the reading process as a skill that has to be learned and not necessarily as an ability that either comes naturally or does not.

Reading Worksheet

For each book, chapter, or article assigned in this course, you may wish to fill out a worksheet like this one. Many of these points can be addressed in a sentence or two; in some cases, answers will not need to be full sentences; and in some cases, the answers may overlap. Keep these worksheets: they will be useful for future reference, especially as you prepare for exams.

1. State the central question that the reading addresses.

2. State the central argument(s) defended in the paper in response to this question.
3. What type of reasoning or evidence is used to support these arguments? If it is an analytical paper, what is the logic that undergirds the argument? If an empirical paper, what type of data is employed? Are there other data sources that you think might be more appropriate?

4. Do you find the claims of the reading convincing? What do you see as the main gaps that need to be filled?

5. Why (if at all) is the reading interesting?

6. Do you agree with the main claims? What are your hesitations? (This may simply involve restatement of previous points.)

7. Identify one or two implicit premises or background assumptions in the paper that you think are especially controversial or objectionable.

8. In light of your answers to the previous questions, write an abstract for the article of no more than 100 words. Feel free to repeat formulations given in response to earlier questions.

This video by a doctoral student in History at Yale may also be useful:
“How to Read & Take Notes Like a PhD Student”: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EOX6PAFMy3Y

Writing well

“If people cannot write well, they cannot think well, and if they cannot think well, others will do their thinking for them.” — George Orwell

Although it should go without saying at the graduate level, it’s not only what you write that matters in how you will be evaluated, but also how you write it. That includes such things as grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, clarity, citation, and organization. As George Orwell wrote, “the slovenliness of our language makes it easier for us to have foolish thoughts.”2 The advice in these articles should help you avoid slovenly writing, at least:

https://theamericanscholar.org/writing-english-as-a-second-language/
http://chronicle.com/article/Why-Academics-Writing-Stinks/148989/

And beyond Pinker’s article, I would very strongly recommend his book The Sense of Style:


If after all this advice you still need help with writing, it is available through Writing Support Services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library) or at http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support.

---

2 George Orwell, “Politics and the English Language” (1946): https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/orwell46.htm
IMPORTANT POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Supporting Documentation and the Use of a Statutory Declaration

As stated in the University Calendar:

Students may be asked to provide supporting documentation for an exemption/special request. This may include, but is not limited to, a prolonged absence from a course where participation is required, a missed course assessment, a deferred examination, or an appeal. Students are encouraged to submit documentation that will support their situation. Supporting documentation may be dependent on the reason noted in their personal statement/explanation provided to explain their situation. This could be medical certificate/documentation, references, police reports, invitation letter, third party letter of support or a statutory declaration etc. The decision to provide supporting documentation that best suits the situation is at the discretion of the student. Students cannot be required to provide specific supporting documentation, such as a medical note.

Students can make a Statutory Declaration as their supporting documentation (available at ucalgary.ca/registrar). This requires students to make a declaration in the presence of a Commissioner for Oaths. It demonstrates the importance of honest and accurate information provided and is a legally binding declaration. Several registered Commissioners for Oaths are available to students at no charge, on campus. For a list of locations to access a Commissioners for Oaths, visit ucalgary.ca/registrar).

Falsification of any supporting documentation will be taken very seriously and may result in disciplinary action through the Academic Discipline regulations or the Student Non-Academic Misconduct policy.

This statement is accessible at: https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html
Absence From a Mid-term Examination
Students who are absent from a scheduled term test or quiz for legitimate reasons are responsible for contacting the instructor via email within 48 hours of the missed test to discuss alternative arrangements. A copy of this email may be requested as proof of the attempt to contact the instructor. Any student who fails to do so forfeits the right to a makeup test.

Deferred Term Work Form: Deferral of term work past the end of a term requires a form to be filled out by the student and submitted, along with any supporting documentation, to the instructor. The form is available at: https://live-ucalgary.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/teams/14/deferral-of-term-work-2020.pdf
Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the instructor will email the form to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (ascarts@ucalgary.ca) for approval by the Associate Dean.

Deferral of a Final Examination
Deferral of a final examination can be granted for reasons of illness, domestic affliction, and unforeseen circumstances, as well as to those with three (3) final exams scheduled within a 24-hour period. Deferred final exams will not be granted to those who sit the exam, who have made travel arrangements that conflict with their exam, or who have misread the examination timetable. The decision to allow a deferred final exam rests not with the instructor but with Enrolment Services. Instructors should, however, be notified if you will be absent during the examination. The Application for Deferred Final Exam, deadlines, requirements and submission instructions can be found on the Enrolment Services website at https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred-exams.

Reappraisal of Grades:
For Reappraisal of Graded Term Work, see Calendar I.2
http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-2.html

For Reappraisal of Final Grade, see Calendar I.3
http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-3.html

Academic Misconduct:
Academic Misconduct refers to student behavior that compromises proper assessment of students’ academic activities and includes: cheating; fabrication; falsification; plagiarism; unauthorized assistance; failure to comply with an instructor’s expectations regarding conduct required of students completing academic assessments in their courses; and failure to comply with exam regulations applied by the Registrar.

Student committing academic misconduct during the final exam will not receive a passing grade for the course.

For information on the Student Academic Misconduct Policy, Procedure and Academic Integrity, please visit: https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-3.html
**Plagiarism And Other Forms Of Academic Misconduct**

Academic misconduct in any form (e.g. cheating, plagiarism) is a serious academic offence that can lead to disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion from the University. Students are expected to be familiar with the standards surrounding academic honesty; these can be found in the University of Calgary calendar at [http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html](http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html). Such offences will be taken seriously and reported immediately, as required by Faculty of Arts policy.

**Recording of Lectures:**
Recording of lectures is prohibited, except for audio recordings authorized as an accommodation by SAS or an audio recording for individual private study and only with the written permission of the instructor. Any unauthorized electronic or mechanical recording of lectures, their transcription, copying, or distribution, constitutes academic misconduct. See [https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-6.html](https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-6.html).

**Academic Accommodations:**
Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services. SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at [https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/accommodation-students-disabilities-procedure](https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/accommodation-students-disabilities-procedure).

**Research Ethics**
Students are advised that any research with human subjects – including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation – must have the approval of the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subject research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

**Instructor Intellectual Property**
Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

**Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act:**
Personal information is collected in accordance with FOIP. Assignments can only be returned to the student and will be accessible only to authorized faculty and staff. For more information, see [https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/access-information-privacy](https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/access-information-privacy).
**Copyright Legislation:**
See the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright at https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

**Evacuation Assembly Points**
In the event of an emergency evacuation from class, students are required to gather in designated assembly points. Please check the list found at https://www.ucalgary.ca/risk/emergency-management/evac-drills-assembly-points/assembly-points and note the assembly point nearest to your classroom.

**Important Dates:**
Please check: http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-schedule.html.

**Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources**
- Have a question, but not sure where to start? The Arts Students’ Centre is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS102, call them at 403-220-3580, or email them at artsads@ucalgary.ca. You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate, which has detailed information on common academic concerns, including program planning and advice.
- For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at 403-210-ROCK [7625] or visit them in the MacKimmie Tower.

**Important Contact Information**
Campus Security and Safewalk (24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year)
Phone: 403-220-5333

Faculty of Arts Undergraduate Students’ Union Representatives
Phone: 403-220-6551
Email: arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca, arts4@su.ucalgary.ca
Students’ Union URL: www.su.ucalgary.ca

Graduate Students’ Association
Phone: 403-220-5997
Email: askgsa@ucalgary.ca
URL: www.ucalgary.ca/gsa
Student Ombudsman
   Phone: 403-220-6420
   Email: ombuds@ucalgary.ca

**Campus Mental Health Resources**

The University of Calgary recognizes the pivotal role that student mental health plays in physical health, social connectedness and academic success, and aspires to create a caring and supportive campus community where individuals can freely talk about mental health and receive supports when needed. We encourage you to explore the excellent mental health resources available throughout the university community, such as counselling, self-help resources, peer support or skills-building available through the following resources:

*SU Wellness Centre*: [http://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/)

*Student Wellness Services:*
[https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/services/mental-health-services](https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/services/mental-health-services)

*Campus Mental Health Strategy website*: [https://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/](https://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/).