



Syllabus
Comparing political systems
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Course Description

This course is an introduction to the comparative study of politics. It aims at familiarizing students with the main concepts of political science such as government, state, nation, democracy, democratization and so on. With a special focus on the evolution and the diversity of political situations and attention to not only national but also local and global scales, we will compare and contrast the political regimes of various countries of the world, the roles of key political actors, political institutions, political processes and patterns of political competition. We will be particularly interested in Asian countries. The main objective for this course is to provide students with the broad context needed for analyzing the political phenomena of any country and understand the main criteria and tools used to compare and rank countries in the world, as well as what we mean by democracy, what makes a non-democracy become more democratic, what makes a stable democracy and so on.

Teaching Method

The course is based on lectures introducing students with major political concepts, institutions, processes, theories, and detailing case studies taken both from consolidated Western democracies (Great-Britain, the United States, France), more recent democracies (India, Japan, Korea, Brazil) and authoritarian countries like China. Active participation is demanded on the part of students. Lectures will be supplemented with practical study based on class discussions, text commentaries in class and at home, as well as collective oral presentations on specific countries.

Schedule of Topics

Topic 1	What is politics? What is comparative politics?
Topic 2	How to classify political systems?
Topic 3	How to define democracy?
Topic 4	Minimalist v. maximalist definitions of democracy
Topic 5	Development and transitions
Topic 6	Representative, participatory, deliberative, cosmopolitan democracy

Textbook and Materials

Mark Kesselman, Joel Krieger & William A. Joseph, *Introduction to comparative politics, Political Challenges and Changing Agendas*, 6th edition, Cengage Learning, 2013, Chapter 1

G. Bingham Powell, Russel J. Dalton and Kaare Strom, *Comparative politics Today, a world view*, 11th edition, Pearson, 2015, chapters 1, 2, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17 and 18

Robert A. Dahl, Ian Shapiro and José Antonio Cheibub, *The Democracy Sourcebook*, MIT, 2003, chapter 1

Assessment

Students will be assessed through a short mid-term exam taking place on April 19 where the students' mastery of the main political concepts, processes and institutions will be tested. The final exam is a written text commentary taking place on Friday 29. Students will also prepare text commentaries throughout the course and will be assessed on these. Finally, collective groups will focus on case studies

and make oral presentations. Their final mark will also reflect their active participation in the class discussions.

Office hours

Contact email address: anmingli@gmail.com

Appointments with the professor must be taken before or after the class, or by email.
