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**GOVT-133 Comparative Politics**

**Spring 2022**

Instructor: Sina Azodi

Meeting Time: Thursdays 4:30-7:30pm

Office Phone: (202) 994-2162

Email: [sazodi@gmu.edu](mailto:sazodi@gmu.edu)

Office Hours: By Appointment.

**Course Description:**

This course is designed to give students an overview of the subfield of comparative politics, in political science. It explores the origins, structure, evolution and implications of political, social and economic institutions. Specifically, we will examine core concepts and debates concerning states, nationalism, ethnicity, democracy, authoritarianism, political economy, political violence, and development. The course will also familiarize students with the basic tools of analysis employed in comparative politics, including case studies, survey research, and the use of cross-national datasets.

I encourage all students to familiarize themselves with ongoing domestic and international issues and frequently refer to outlets that publish on current affairs.

Some of the outlets you can use:

* Foreign Affairs.
* Foreign Policy.
* New York Times.
* Washington Post.
* Wall Street Journal.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Students taking this course should:

* Become familiar with major concepts and debates in the subfield of comparative politics.
* Compare and Contrast Politics in different countries
* Analyze formal and informal institutions to recognize similarities and differences between them.
* Have a general understanding of different types of regimes and their characteristics.
* Practice and develop the skills of critical thinking, analysis and argumentative writing.

**Required Reading Textbook – please purchase as soon as possible:**

* *Essentials of Comparative Politics* (Hereafter: **ECP**)by Patrick O’Neil 7th edition. *Note: I am OK if you use the 5th edition of the book.*
* *Other Materials posted on Blackboard.*

**General Course Requirements:**

**Attendance** is mandatory, especially because we meet once a week. Students are expected to attend the class, having read the assigned readings in advance, and actively participate in the class discussion. If you don’t attend class sessions and don’t participate it will naturally affect your grade. Remember, attendance and participation are part of your course grade, so take them seriously.

I understand that unforeseen events happen. If you are feeling sick and going to miss a class due to illness, please write me a note and let me know that you will not be attending. Unexcused absences will have a negative impact on your performance.

**Midterm Exam:** In class mid-term exam will be held on March10, 2022. Your exam will be a combination short and long essays. I will provide more information as we approach the date.

**Country Profile:** In this exercise student are required to write a short briefing on a country of their choice. This memo should briefly discuss the history, its regime type, and basic government structure and economy. The idea is to be brief, selective and analytical. Make sure your essay is analytical not simply description. Students will then present their country of choice to the class. Please note that you are required consult at **least four peer reviewed articles or books.**

***2000-2500 words, double spaced. Use Chicago style of citation, endnotes.*  You cannot choose the United States.**

**In your memo make sure to include the following:**

* *Why you chose this country. i.e. why is it important to you?*
* *Significance of the country (if any?)*
* *Historical development of the state*
* *Regime type*
* *Political economy*
* *Current issues facing the country* (climate change, ethnic problems, civil war, economy, etc.)

***At the end of the semester, students will present their country of choice to the class. Dates will be announced later.***

**Final Exam: In class Final-exam on Thursday May 14, 2022. Details will be provided.**

**Grading Criteria**

Attendance and Participation 20%

Country Memo 20%

Mid-Term 30%

Final Exam 30%

**Grading Scale:**

A+ = 97–100; A = 94-96; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B= 84-86; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C = 74-76; C- = 70-73; D+ = 67-69; F = 0-59

**\*\*Three Easy tips to succeed in the class\*\***

1. **Do the Readings**
2. **Come to the class**
3. **Participate in the discussions**

**Late work policy:** Deadlines for written work should be taken very seriously. Unexcused late submissions will lose a third of a grade for each day they are late (e.g. A >>> A-). Extensions will only be granted in case of emergency, and with the instructor’s prior approval. Come see me if you have a question. After two days, the assignment will not be accepted.

**Makeup exams:** There are none, with the exception of **extraordinary** **circumstances**. Those include, but not limited to family and medical emergencies. The instructor, nevertheless, reserves the right to require documentation for those circumstances. Please note that routine doctor’s appointments are **not** “emergencies.” Bottom line, do not skip your exam unless it is truly an unforeseen emergency situation.

**George Mason University Honor Code:  
Academic Integrity:** Put simply, If you obtain ideas, data, phrases, etc. from elsewhere, you must give the author the credit. In other words, cite them. A violation of the University Honor Code your final grade will become automatically an “F” and you will be reported to the student/faculty honor committee. I maintain a zero-tolerance policy for any act of plagiarism. Please familiarize yourself with GMU Honor Code here. <https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/>

**Students with Disabilities:** Students who self-identify and provide sufficient documentation of a qualifying disability are entitled to receive reasonable accommodations, such as modifications of programs, academic adjustments, or auxiliary aides as a means to participate in programs and activities. If you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the **Disability Resource Center (DRC)** at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

**Counseling and Psychological Services:** The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance . More information available here: <http://caps.gmu.edu>

**Coronavirus Resources**

[Mason’s website on Coronavirus/COVID-19](https://www2.gmu.edu/coronavirus) is the official source for university updates. It also provides information and resources regarding the university’s response for students, faculty and staff. Please check this webpage regularly for updates. You may also find updated resources and information from the following offices which continue to serve students in Summer 2020: [University Libraries](https://library.gmu.edu/), [Writing Center](https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/), [Learning Services](https://learningservices.gmu.edu/), and [Counseling and Psychological Services](https://caps.gmu.edu/). If you have individual concerns about the university’s response, please contact safety@gmu.edu.

**Problems that may arise –** Please if you are experiencing any problems that are affecting your schoolwork --- please feel free to contact me ASAP and let us see what we can do to help. I will listen and do my best to assist you. There are many available resources. Please do not wait until the end of our course/semester to inform me that you are dealing with a problem(s) since the beginning of the summer session. Let us talk and work on getting you the needed assistance early on so it does not affect your schoolwork down the road. **Remember**, **I am here to help you succeed!**

**Sexual Misconduct and Interpersonal Violence**

George Mason University is committed to providing a safe learning, living and working environment free from discrimination. The University’s environment is meant to be experienced as vibrant and dynamic, and one that includes ample opportunities for exploration of self, identity and independence. Sexual misconduct and incidents of interpersonal violence deeply interrupt that experience, and **George Mason University is committed to a campus that is free of these types of incidents in order to promote community well-being and student success**. George Mason University encourages individuals who believe that they have been sexually harassed, assaulted or subjected to sexual misconduct to seek assistance and support.

**Student Support Resources**: We have several academic support and other resources to facilitate student success. Please be sure to include links to relevant student support resources (e.g., Counseling and Psychological Services, Learning Services, University Career Services, the Writing Center, etc.).

Confidential resources are available on campus at Counseling and Psychological Services (caps.gmu.edu), Student Health Services (shs.gmu.edu), the University Ombudsperson (ombudsman.gmu.edu), and Wellness, Alcohol and Violence Education and Services (waves.gmu.edu). All other members of the University community (except those noted above) are not considered confidential resources and are required to report incidents of sexual misconduct to the University IX Coordinator. For a full list of resources, support opportunities, and reporting options, contact the University Title IX Coordinator at integrity.gmu.edu and/or at 703-993-8730. Our goal is to create awareness of the range of options available to you and provide access to resources

**Class Schedule \*\* I reserve the right to modify the schedule if necessary\*\***

Week 1: 01/27

*Make sure you obtain your textbook.*

Syllabus and overview of the course.

ECP, Ch.1

*Recommended:*

Munck, Gerardo. The Past and the Present of Comparative Politics*.*

<https://kellogg.nd.edu/sites/default/files/old_files/documents/330_0.pdf>

*(This is a classic article on the evolution of the field of CP. It overlaps with the Ch.1 of your textbook.)*

Week 2: 02/03

**States**

ECP, Ch.2

Charles Tilly, “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime,” in Tilly et al., Violence: A reader (1985), pp. 169-191.

Available at: <https://www.jesusradicals.com/uploads/2/6/3/8/26388433/warmaking.pdf>

Fukuyama, Francis. "The Imperative of State-Building." *Journal of Democracy* 15, no. 2 (2004): 17-31. [doi:10.1353/jod.2004.0026](http://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2004.0026).

Week 3: 02/10

**Nations and Society**

ECP, Ch.3

Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (London and New York: Verso, 1991), pp. 1-46. Available at: <https://is.muni.cz/el/1423/podzim2013/SOC571E/um/Anderson_B_-_Imagined_Communities.pdf>

Week 4: 02/17

**Political Economy**

ECP Ch. 4

Acemoglu, Daron. "Root causes." *Finance & Development* 40, no. 002 (2003). Available at:

<https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/022/0040/002/article-A009-en.xml>

Britannica. *Wealth of Nations by Adam Smith*

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Adam-Smith/The-Wealth-of-Nations#ref388285>

Week 5: 02/24

**Democratic Regimes**

ECP Ch.5

Walt, Stephen. “Why is America so Bad at Promoting Democracy in Other Countries.” *Foreign Policy.* April 2016. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/04/25/why-is-america-so-bad-at-promoting-democracy-in-other-countries/>

Democracy Index 2020: In Sickness and in Health

<https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2020/>

# Levine, Sam. “US sinks to New Low in Rankings of World's Democracies.” *The Guardian.* March 2021

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/mar/24/us-world-democracy-rankings-freedom-house-new-low>

Week 6: 03/03

**Nondemocratic Regimes**

ECP Ch.6

Fisher, Max. “U.S. Allies Drive Much of World’s Democratic Decline, Data Shows.” *The New York Times.* November 16, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/16/world/americas/democracy-decline-worldwide.html>

Zakaria, Fareed. “The Rise of Illiberal Democracy.” *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 6 (1997): 22–43. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20048274>

Week 7: 3/10

**Midterm Exam in class.**

March 17, 2022

***Spring Recess***

**No class**

Week 8: 3/24

**Political Violence**

ECP Ch. 7

Abrahms, Max. “What Terrorists Really Want: Terrorist Motives and Counterterrorism Strategy.” *International Security*32, no. 4 (2008): 78–105. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30129792>

Brzezinski, Zbigniew. “Confronting Anti-American Grievances*.*” *The New York Times.* September 2002. <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/01/opinion/confronting-anti-american-grievances.html>

Week 9: 3/31

**Developed Democracies**

ECP. Ch. 8

Mearsheimer, John.J. Liberalism and Nationalism in Contemporary America. Available at: <https://www.mearsheimer.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Madison-Lecture.September-10-2020.pdf>

Olsen, Henry. “Europe is Proof that Right-wing Populism is Here to Stay.” *The Washington Post.* March 18, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/03/18/europe-is-proof-that-right-wing-populism-is-here-stay/>

Levitsky, Steven and Ziblatt, Daniel. “Is Donald Trump a Threat to Democracy.” *The New York Times.* December 16, 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/16/opinion/sunday/is-donald-trump-a-threat-to-democracy.html>

Week 10: 04/07

**Communism and post-Communism**

**Read**

ECP. Ch.9

Marx and Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party, section I (“Bourgeois and Proletarians”) Available at: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm#007>

Kotkin, Stephen. “Russia’s Perpetual Geopolitics.” *Foreign Affairs.* December 2016. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2016-04-18/russias-perpetual-geopolitics>

**Watch**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CCqsIbsPC9M>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBeU7o6DODI>

Week 11: 04/14

**Developing Countries**

ECP Ch. 10

Nicolas Van de Walle, “Presidentialism and Clientelism in Africa’s Emerging Party Systems,” The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 41, No. 2 (2003), pp. 297-321.

Week 12: 04/21

**On Democracy**

Sen, Amartya Kumar. "Democracy as a Universal Value." *Journal of Democracy* 10, no. 3 (1999): 3-17. [doi:10.1353/jod.1999.0055](http://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1999.0055).

Huntington, Samuel P. "Democracy's Third Wave." *Journal of Democracy* 2, no. 2 (1991): 12-34. [doi:10.1353/jod.1991.0016](http://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1991.0016).

Mansfield, Edward D., and Jack Snyder. “Democratization and the Danger of War.” *International Security* 20, no. 1 (1995): 5–38. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539213>

Watch

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w06x8Q_hdMU>

Week 13: 04/28

**Climate Change and Impact on Global Affairs**

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-04-13/foreign-policy-climate>

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2020-04-13/climate-debt> <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2022-02-22/scorched-earth>

**Watch**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8q5WVCTXkk>

Week 14: 05/05

**Globalization And Future of Comparative Politics**

ECP Ch. 11

**Final Exam: Thursday May 12, 2022**