

**Political Science 221**  
**Introduction to Comparative Politics and Research**  
**Spring Semester**  
**Haag Hall 302**  
**Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: 3:00-3:50pm,**

Professor Debra Leiter  
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Office Location: Manheim 303G  
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 4:00-5:00, or by appointment

**Course Summary:**

This course introduces students to general concepts of political authority, and systematically analyzes the causes and consequences of variation in political institutions, processes and policies across countries. This course also introduces students to research in comparative politics, with students developing an independent research project.

Credit Hours: 3  
Format: Lecture (P)  
Prerequisites: None  
GE Course Type: Focus C

**Welcome to Introduction to Comparative Politics and Research!**

Comparative political science is one of my favorite things and I am excited for the opportunity to introduce you to this field of study. The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the methods and fundamental concepts used to study political behavior and outcomes in the comparative perspective. By the end of this course, you will be able to apply comparative political methods and concepts to all types of political issues, behaviors, and outcomes. In this course, you will be creating your own comparative political research. All students will develop and implement a basic quantitative research design on comparative political behavior and present their research in a public forum. Perhaps for some of you, comparative politics will become one of your favorite things too.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Apply the comparative and social scientific method to the study of domestic political behavior and outcomes
2. Classify and differentiate autocratic and democratic governments
3. Compare institutions across countries and examine how institutions affect citizen and elite behavior, including issues of political and ethical problems and concepts.
4. Evaluate and discuss variation in concepts of ideology, civic duty, and values vary across countries and how this affects political outcomes
5. Create, implement, and present a comparative political behavior research project.
6. Analyze comparative political data and interpret the results.

### Required Texts:

- *Essentials of Comparative Politics, Fifth Edition*  
Author: Patrick H. O'Neil  
ISBN-13: 978-0-393-933897-5  
(Referred to as **Textbook** in reading assignments)
- *Empirical Research and Writing*  
Author: Leanne C. Powner  
ISBN-13: 9781483369631  
(Referred to as **Powner** in reading assignments)
- Online reading – noted as **Online**.
- News – Any national, professional news source is fine. A few suggestions:

### Assignments/Grades:

Students' final grades will be based on the following assignments. I recommend turning in assignments early, so as to avoid late penalties.

Midterm Exam 20%

Research Design Assignments 25%

Research Project Poster 25%

Final Exam 30%

(1) **Midterm (20%) – 3/9**

- Students must bring a pencil to the midterm exam

(2) **Research Design Assignments (25%) –5 total.**

- In order to complete your research project, you will have 5 assignments that will help you to build your research design. Each assignment will build upon the previous. The date that you will **receive** the new assignment is highlighted in green on the syllabus. They are due one week from when you receive them.

(3) **Research Project Poster (25%) – 5/5**

- For your final research project, you will create a professional quality research poster
- This poster will be presented in a public poster session for the UMKC community

(4) **Final (25%) – 5/12.** The exam will be based on the entire course but will emphasize material from after the midterm.

- Students must bring a pencil to the exam
- You know the date and time of the final well in advance. Short of a serious personal emergency (serious illness, death in the family, military service – for all these things, you must provide documentation) or religious observance (in which case you must let me know at the start of the quarter), I will not offer alternative final exam dates.

(5) **Extra Credit Paper (2%)- 4/21):** Prompt will be posted on Blackboard

*Numerical grades translate into letter grades as follows:*

93-100 = A	87-89 = B+	77-79 = C+	67-69 = D+	0-59 = F
90-92 = A-	83-86 = B	73-76 = C	63-66 = D	
	80-82 = B-	70-72 = C-	60-62 = D-	

### **Course Policies and Expectations**

-Please also read my Course Expectations, which can be found on Blackboard.

-Please refer to the following web page and the linked resources for critical information regarding course policies and resources. You are expected to abide by all the rules and regulations regarding student conduct referenced in these pages. <http://cas.umkc.edu/CPR/>

-I am happy to allow recording of lectures in my class. Please contact me beforehand if you wish to do so

### **Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty**

[http://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/collected\\_rules/programs/ch200/200.010\\_standard\\_of\\_conduct](http://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/collected_rules/programs/ch200/200.010_standard_of_conduct)

I have zero tolerance in my class for any type of academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarizing, or sabotage. Any student caught plagiarizing in my course, or engaging in any form of academic dishonesty (as defined by the university above), will receive a zero on the assignment and will have the assignment submitted to University Judicial Affairs.

You must cite all the sources that you use in your paper. If you take an idea or fact from somewhere, you should cite it. If you take another paper or persons exact words, this must appear in quotation marks, and must be properly cited. There are no exceptions.

### **Class Dates, Topics and Assignments**

- The instructor reserves the right to change the assignments as circumstances require
- Changes will be mentioned in class, through email, and placed on the syllabus
- The reading listed for a given class session is the reading you should do prior to that day.

## **PART I: SOCIAL SCIENCE & COMPARATIVE POLITICS**

### **Week 1: Introduction and the Social Scientific Method**

#### **1. 1/20 (Wednesday): Introduction**

- Readings:
  - Syllabus – Please read the syllabus closely and make sure everything is clear.  
**Blackboard**
  - Project Description – Please read closely. **Blackboard**  
-Students should read the project description and expectations closely.

#### **2. 1/22 (Friday): Social Science and Comparative Politics**

Readings:

- **Textbook:** Chapter 1, pg.3-19

## Week 2: Applied Social Science

### 3. 1/25 (Monday): Doing Research in Political Science: Voter Decision-Making

- **Readings**
  - Leiter, Debra. *Manuscript*. “The Conditionality of Voter Decision-Making.”  
**ONLINE**

### 4. 1/27 (Wednesday): Movie: *Freakonomics*

- Please note that I cannot make the DVDs available outside of class. It is your responsibility to watch it in class or make arrangements – independent of the course instructor – to watch them on your own.

### 5. 1/29 (Friday): Developing a Research Question

- **Assignment: Research Assignment 1.**
- Research Workshop 1: In today’s class, we will discuss what a good research question is and discuss how to craft one.
- Readings:
  - Powner: Chapter 1: pg 3-15

## PART II: DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION

## Week 3: Collective Action Problems

### 6. 2/1 (Monday): States, Nations, and Collective Action Problems

- Readings:
  - **Textbook:** Chapter 2: Defining the State, pg. 33-38  
Optional: 66-72

### 7. 2/3 (Wednesday): Voter Turnout

- Readings:
  - Dubner, Stephen J and Steven D. Levit. (2005) “Why Vote?” *New York Times Online*

### 8. 2/5 (Friday): Background Research

- Research Workshop 2: In today’s class, we will discuss how to find and evaluate academic articles that provide background on your research topic
- Readings:
  - Powner: Chapter 3: 58-62
  - Find 3 articles on your topic.

## Week 4: Electoral Systems

### 9. 2/8 (Monday): Electoral Systems I – Basics

- Readings:
- **Textbook:** Chapter 5: Electoral Systems, pg. 159-167

## 10. 2/10 (Wednesday): Electoral Systems II – Impact on Policy Passage

## 11. 2/12 (Friday): Synthesizing Literature

### • Assignment: Research Assignment 2.

- Research Workshop 3: In today's class, we will discuss how to bring literature together in to help develop your theory and identify existing arguments.
- Readings:
  - Powner, Chapter 3: 68-70; 72-73
- Additional Optional Readings:
  - Powner: Chapter 3, 65-68; 70-72
  - Knopf, Jeffrey K. (2006) "Doing a Literature Review." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 1: 127-132

## Week 5: Executive Legislative Relationships (Presidential v. Parliamentary)

## 12. 2/15 (Monday): Presidential vs. Parliamentary Systems I – Mechanics

Readings:

- **Textbook**: Chapter 5: Institutions of the Democratic State, pg. 148-149  
Chapter 5: Models of Democracy, pg. 152-155

**NOTE: Last Day to Drop Class without "W"**

## 12. 2/17 (Wednesday): Presidential vs. Parliamentary Systems II – Problems and Issues

Readings:

- **Textbook**: Chapter 5: Benefits and Drawbacks, pg. 156-158
- Mainwaring, Scott, and Matthew Shugart. 1997. "Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy: A Critical Appraisal." *Comparative Politics*. 29: 449-472. **Online**

## 13. 2/19 (Friday): Developing a Theory

### • Assignment: Research Assignment 3.

- Research Workshop 4: In today's class, we will discuss proper theory building, including what theories are and are not, and the importance of identifying mechanisms.
- Readings
  - Powner: Chpt 2: 36-22-25; 28-31; 36-39
- Additional Optional Readings:
  - Powner: Chpt 2: 21-44
  - Lave, Charles and James March. (1993) "An Introduction to Speculation" *An Introduction to Models in the Social Sciences*. Boston: University Press of America: 19-45

## Week 6: Hybrid Political Systems

## 14. 2/22 (Monday): Mixed Electoral Systems and Electoral System Change

Readings:

- Frank Thames and Martin Edwards. "Differentiating Mixed Electoral Systems: Mixed Member Majoritarian and Mixed Member Proportional Systems and Government Expenditures" *Comparative Political Studies*.

Read pages 4-8 (stop at “Electoral Systems and Government Expenditures”)

**15. 2/24 (Wednesday): Hybrid Systems: Semi- Presidentialism**

Readings:

- **Textbook:** Chapter 5: Semi-Presidential Systems, 155
- Whitney, Craig R. “An Uneasy First Encounter in France’s Political Cohabitation” *New York Times*. **ONLINE**

**16. 2/26 (Friday): Producing Testable Hypotheses**

- **Assignment: Research Assignment 4.**

- Research Workshop 5: In today’s class, we are going to discuss the focus on testable implications of our models – what needs to be demonstrated to lend support to our theories.
- Reading
  - Powner Chapter 6: Causal Thinking and the Design of Research

**Week 7: Parties and Party Systems**

**16. 2/29 (Monday): Parties and Party Systems I**  
**WHOOOO! LEAP DAY**

Readings:

- **Textbook:** Chapter 5: Political Parties, pg. 158-159  
Chapter 3: Political Attitudes, pg 77-83 (skip 78-79),

**17. 3/2 (Wednesday): Parties and Party Systems II**

Readings:

- Huber, John D., and G. Bingham Powell, Jr. 1994. “Congruence Between Citizens and Policymakers in Two Visions of Liberal Democracy.” *World Politics* 46(3): 291-326.  
**Online**

**18. 3/4 (Friday): Finding Data**

- Research Workshop 6: In today’s class, we are going to discuss different types of data and how to find it. Particularly, we will discuss what types of data we need to test different types of hypotheses.
- Reading:
  - Powner Chapter 7: 171-175; 157-167

**Week 8: Midterm**

**19. 3/7 (Monday): Review Session**

- The review session will be based ENTIRELY on your questions. Bring in any and all questions that you have about the class to this point.
- **\*\*\*20. 3/9 (Wednesday): Midterm**  
Covers all material since the start of class
- Bring Pencil and ID Card to class

**21. 3/11 (Friday): Project Review Day**

- Bring in Completed Project for Discussion

**PART III: DEMOCRACY, AUTOCRACY, AND TRANSITION**

**Week 9: Autocracies**

**22. 3/14 (Monday): What is an Autocracy?**

Readings:

- **Textbook:** Chapter 5, Defining Democracy: 140-141  
Chapter 6, Defining Non-Democratic Rule: 178-181

**23. 3/16 (Wednesday): Differences across Autocratic Governments I**

Readings:

- **Textbook:** Chapter 6, pg 193-202 (skip 200-201)

**24. 3/18 (Friday): Analyzing Data I: Identifying Variables and Descriptive Statistics**

- Research Workshop 7: In today's class, we are going to go through data sets and learn to identify and explore variables and concepts of interest, and particularly learn how to engage in descriptive statistics.
- Reading
  - Social Science Research Methods: Descriptive Statistics
    - <http://circ.ahajournals.org/content/114/1/76.full>
    - **Note: Don't get bogged down in the math!! Just get a general idea of what descriptive statistics tell us**

**Week 10: Regime Transitions I**

**25. 3/21 (Monday): What Leads to Regime Transition?**

Readings:

- **Textbook:** Chapter 5: Contemporary Democratization, pg. 131-136  
Chapter 2: Power, Autonomy, and Capacity, 51-58

**26. 3/23: Regime Transitions II**

**27. 3/25: Analyzing Data II : Bivariate Analyses**

- Research Workshop 8: In today's class, we are going to going to focus on how to do basic statistical analyses to test relationships between variables (and therefore our hypotheses).
- **Assignment: Research Assignment 5.**
- Reading
  - Dononvan and Hoover: 94-113 ONLINE

**3/28-4/3: Spring Break: No Class. Enjoy your Break!**

## Week 11: Case Studies in Regime Transition: Germany and Russia

### 28. 4/4 (Monday): Successful Transitions: Germany I

Readings:

- Kershaw, Ian (2008) “How Democracy Produced a Monster” *New York Times* **ONLINE**
- Bernstein, Richard. (2005) “Germans Told to Cheer Up. ‘Why Should We?’ Some Say” *New York Times* **ONLINE**
- Kulish, Nicholas (2010). “German Identity, Long Dormant, Reasserts Itself.” *New York Times*. **ONLINE**

### 29. 4/6 (Wednesday): Reverse Transition: Russia

Readings:

- Barry, Ellen and Michael Schwirtz (2012) “After Election, Putin Faces Challenges to Legitimacy” *New York Times*
- Herszenhorn, David M. (2013) “Putin Orders Change in Election Rules” *New York Times*

### 30. 4/8 (Friday): Analyzing Data III: Reporting Results

- Research Workshop 9: In today’s class, we will focus on how to present research results in an effective and clear manner.
- Reading:
  - <http://writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb/polisci/bivariate2.html>
  - Powner, Chapter 9: 210-217

## Week 12: New Democracies

### 31. 4/11 (Monday): Women, Politics, and Democratization I

Movie: *Frontrunner: A Woman’s Heroic Run for Presidency of Afghanistan*

- In-class assignment based on movie

Readings:

- **Textbook:** Chapter 6: Culture and Nondemocratic Rule, 185-187

### 32. 4/13 (Wednesday): Women, Politics, and Democratization II

Movie: *Frontrunner: A Woman’s Heroic Run for Presidency of Afghanistan*

### 33. 4/15 (Friday): Writing in Political Science

- **Readings:**
  - Review APSA Style Guide: **ONLINE**
  - <http://www.apsanet.org/media/PDFs/Publications/APSASStyleManual2006.pdf>

## Week 13: Political Violence

### 34. 4/18 (Monday): Political Violence: Causes and Consequences

**Assignment: Extra Credit Paper Due**

Readings:

- **Textbook:** Chapter 7, pg 207-219



**35. 4/20 (Wednesday): Political Violence: Using the Comparative Method I**

Readings:

- Weinstein, Jeremy M. (2005) "Resources and the Information Problem in Rebel Recruitment" *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 49.4: 598-624. **ONLINE**.

**36. 4/22 (Friday): Creating a Research Poster**

- Research Workshop 10: In today's class, we will focus on how to present research results using a poster format. The poster will be the final research project of the semester.
- Reading
  - Powner: Chpt 11: pg. 252-259

**Week 14: Designing a State**

**37. 4/25 (Monday): Creating a New Country I**

Readings:

- Read through your paper and be prepared to discuss

**38. 4/27 (Wednesday): Creating a New Country II**

**39. 4/29 (Friday): Creating a New Constitution**

Readings:

- Taylor, Shugart, Lijphart, and Grofman. "Political Engineering and the US Constitution" in *A Different Democracy*.  
[http://laderafrutal.com/DD\\_PDFs/c2-political\\_eng.pdf](http://laderafrutal.com/DD_PDFs/c2-political_eng.pdf)

**Week 15: Poster Session**

**40. 5/2 (Monday): POSTER SESSION**

**• Assignment: Final Research Poster Due Today**

- In Today's Class, we will have a poster session. We will invite other faculty members and students to attend the poster session and ask questions.

**41. 5/4 (Wednesday): Review Session**

The review session will be based entirely on your questions. Bring in any and all questions that you have about the class to this point.

**\*\*\*Final Exam is Thursday, May 12, 1-3 pm in our regular classroom\*\*\***

Exam will be comprehensive.