

## COURSE INFORMATION

Course: Introduction to Comparative Politics, POLI 2053-section 3, Fall 2019

Classroom: 015 Atkinson

Instructor: W. Kim

Instructor's email: wkim@lsu.edu

Office Hours: 3:00 – 4:30 pm on Thursdays, or by appointment

Office: 229 Stubbs Hall, Department of Political Science

Integrated learning allows students to make simple connections among ideas and experiences and across disciplines and perspectives. The LSU Integrative Learning Core (ILC) curriculum is designed to develop student abilities to transfer their learning to new situations, and demonstrate a sense of self as a learner. A fundamental goal of the ILC is to foster students' practical and intellectual capacities associated with integrative learning in preparation for high competence and functionality in their post-baccalaureate careers. This course fulfills the BOR Area of Social/Behavioral Sciences and provides students experience with the ILC proficiency of Global Learning.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

We study the essence of politics in this course. Understanding politics is a *sine qua non* of leading a good life, for politics fundamentally affects our “everyday life” – *la vie quotidienne*. Political science is a “master science,” in the words of Aristotle, on which all arenas of human activity depend, and from which all other practical sciences take their cue. Broadly speaking, studying politics necessarily involves comparison – for example, comparing countries (the USA and the PRC), systems (democracies and dictatorships; universal and selective social welfare), ideologies (conservatism, liberalism, and socialism), and time periods (the 19<sup>th</sup> century and 20<sup>th</sup> century; “the glorious thirty years” and the neoliberal era). Hence, comparative politics is the most important subfield in political science, which requires critical thinking and rigorous analytical skills. We will learn why we compare, what to compare, and how to compare.

The main purpose of this course is to equip students with solid understanding of ‘big issues’ in politics around the world. As an introductory course, this class has three major goals: 1) to understand various theories, approaches, and empirics widely studied in the comparative study of politics, 2) to provide an analytical and comparative framework to understand ‘big issues’ in the world, and 3) to provide a broad perspective about the world we live in and the ability to relate some of our own interests to existing concerns of other scholars. Therefore, we study politics explicitly from **a comparative and global perspective**, so that we categorically reject ethnocentrism still pervasive in the American politics literature.

The course is organized around questions that reflect both interesting phenomena and puzzles that call for explanations. We will examine some of the answers to these questions that have been proposed on the basis of comparative research. In this way, we will cover the areas in which research in political science is the most active and has contributed most significantly to the production of knowledge. To do so, this course is divided into four parts.

The first part entitled “Power, Ideology, and the Capital-Nation-State” constitutes the foundations of comparative politics. We will conceptualize politics, discuss competing ideologies, and understand the capitalist modern nation-state: its meaning and the historical formation. Some ontological and methodological issues will be discussed between the first and second parts. The second part “Democracies, Dictatorships, and People” will deal with the emergence and demise of political regimes (democracies and dictatorships), by focusing on various features of democratization, and by comparing top-down (elite-driven) and bottom-up (mass-driven) processes of democratic transitions. We will also study different types of dictatorship.

In the third part “Democratic Institutional Design” we will discuss the institutional design under democracy, by comparing different electoral rules (majoritarian and proportional), executive-legislative relationships (parliamentary and presidential), and different party systems (two-party and multiparty). The final part “Socioeconomic Policies under Globalization” will investigate why and how social welfare and economic policies differ across countries and their divergent consequences. Attention should be paid to varieties of welfare capitalism. Economic “miracles” and “disasters” will be examined as well. We will also study the impacts of globalization on domestic politics.

## READING

There are three types of required readings. The first required reading is the course textbook. Shively, W. Phillips. 2019. *Power & Choice*. 15th Edition. Rowman & Littlefield Publisher.

The second is required readings from journal articles to book chapters. These required readings are posted as pdf files on Moodle. Please make sure that all of you have a LSU account so that you have an access to Moodle through your PAWS desktop.

Students need to purchase and read the following book to write a critical review paper (see the course requirements below).

Levitsky, Steven, and Daniel Ziblatt. 2018. *How Democracies Die*. New York: Crown.

## REQUIREMENTS

Final grades are based on 1) three examinations, 2) a critical review paper, and 3) attendance/participation for a total of 100 points.

1) Two in-class exams and one take-home exam (each exam worth 20%, so total 60%)  
First in-class exam: September 26, Thursday, 10:30 – 11:50 am  
Second in-class exam: November 7, Thursday, 10:30 – 11:50 am  
Third take-home exam: The deadline of submission via email: December 13, Friday, 5:00 pm

2) Critical review paper (20%)

Students will write a critical review of Levitsky and Ziblatt’s *How Democracies Die*. The format and guide of the paper will be discussed in class. The deadline of submission: December 5, Thursday.

### 3) Attendance and participation (20%)

#### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All students are expected to read and be familiar with the LSU Code of Student Conduct and Commitment to Community, found online at [www.lsu.edu/saa](http://www.lsu.edu/saa). It is your responsibility as a student at LSU to know and understand the academic standards for our community. A student suspected of violating the Code of Conduct will be referred to the Office of Student Advocacy and Accountability.

#### WEEKLY SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1 (08/27, 08/29) Preliminaries  
No require reading

Week 2 (09/03, 09/05) What Is Politics?  
Shively, Chapter 1

Week 3 (09/10, 09/12) What Do We Believe, and Why?  
Shively, Chapter 2

Week 4-5 (09/17, 09/19, 09/24) Where Does the State Come from, and Where Will It Go?  
Shively, Chapter 3  
Tilly, Charles. 1985. "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime." In *Bringing the State Back In*, ed. Peter Evans, Dietrich Reuschmeyer, and Theda Skocpol. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Week 5 (09/26) First Examination  
10:30 – 11:50 am in our classroom

Week 6 (10/01, 10/03) Three Research Traditions and Methods of Comparison  
Shively, Appendix, and the section on "Political Science" in Chapter 1

Week 7 (10/08, 10/10) What Is Democracy? Which Countries Are Democratic?  
Shively, Chapter

Week 8 (10/15, 10/17) Conference and the Fall Break  
No class meeting

Week 9-10 (10/22, 10/24, 10/29) Why and How Do Democracies Emerge and Endure?  
Shively, Chapter 7 (continue) and Chapter 13  
Przeworski, Adam, and Fernando Limongi. 1997. "Modernization: Theories and Facts." *World Politics* 49: 155-183.

Week 10-11 (10/31, 11/05) Does Culture Matter for Democracy?

Shively, Chapter 8

Week 11 (11/07) Second Examination

10:30 – 11:50 am in our classroom

Week 12 (11/12) How Are the Elections Organized?

Shively, Chapter 9 and Chapter 10

Week 12 (11/14) Where Do Parties Come from? Are They Indispensable?

Shively, Chapter 11 and Chapter 12

Week 13 (11/19, 11/21) How Are Governments Formed?

Shively, Chapter 14 and Chapter 15

Linz, Juan. 1990. "The Perils of Presidentialism." *Journal of Democracy* 1(1): 51-69.

Week 14 (11/26) What Do Governments Do for Their People?

Shively, Chapter 4 and Chapter 6

Week 14 (11/28) Thanksgiving Holiday

No class meeting

Week 15 (12/03) Why Are There "Miracles" and "Disasters"?

Shively, Chapter 5

Week 15 (12/05) Is Globalization Inevitable? Conclusion

Shively, Chapter 5 and Chapter 18

Final take-home exam is given in class on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December. The deadline of the exam is 5:00 pm on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December (Friday) via an email attachment.