

PO132-15 Contemporary Themes in Comparative Politics

24/25

Department

Politics & International Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 1

Module leader

Maria Koinova

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module provides an introduction to the study of world politics through the eyes of comparative politics scholars. It offers a broad overview of substantive questions such as states and political regimes, democracy, authoritarianism, revolutions, nationalism, and migration. It delves deeper into how these macro-phenomena affect the micro-politics of state institutions such as governments and parliaments, parties and elections, grassroots movements and referendums, and others. While comparative politics is classically the study of domestic politics within states, this course considers also international dimensions such as monitoring of elections and democracy promotion. It further innovates by integrating a transnational dimension, showing how states reach out politically to their citizens and diasporas abroad, thereby rendering comparative politics extraterritorial.

Module aims

The module aims to:

- to analyze key issues in the study of comparative politics;
- to introduce students to the comparative method and its application to empirical and systematic political science research including learning the "vocabulary";

to expose students to a number of contemporary examples of democratic and non-democratic politics and to encourage comparison across countries;
to develop generic skills such as the research and interpretation of political science literature, the analysis of empirical material, the preparation and presentation of the results of comparative political analysis.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Week 1: Introduction: The Course, Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method

Week 2: States and Political Regimes

Week 3: Revolutions

Week 4: Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict

Week 5: Migrants, Refugees and Diasporas

Week 6: Reading Week

Week 7: Democracy: An Institutional Perspective

Week 8: Democracy: Parties and Elections

Week 9: Democracy: A Grassroots Perspective

Week 10: Globalization and Governance, Concluding Mini-symposium

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a basic understanding of how comparative politics contributes to the study of politics as a whole.
- Demonstrate a basic knowledge of different approaches to the study of comparative politics, including a critical awareness of the role claimed by quantitative methods.
- Be able to relate scholarly literature theorising comparative politics and actual contemporary political developments including very topical events.
- Be able to make informed comparisons of various strengths and weaknesses of different political systems or regimes.

Indicative reading list

- Caramani, Daniele. 2020. *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dickovick, James Typer and Jonathan Eastwood. 2018. *Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lijphart, Arend. 1971. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method" *American Political*

Science Review 65 (3), pp. 682-693.

- Wimmer, Andreas and Nina Glick-Schiller. 2002. "Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation–state Building, Migration and the Social Sciences", *Global Networks* 2(4), pp. 301-334.
- Schmitter, Philippe and Terry Lynn Karl, 1991. "What Democracy is and is Not," *Journal of Democracy* 2(3), pp.75-88.
- Levitsky, Steven and Lucan Way, 2020. "The New Competitive Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy* 31(1), pp.51-65.
- Glasius, Marlies. 2018. What Authoritarianism is...And Is Not: A Practice Perspective," *International Affairs* 94(3), pp.515-533.
- Doorenspleet, Renske and Petr Kopecky. 2008. "Against the Odds: Deviant Cases of Democratization," *Democratization* 15(4), pp.697-713.
- Koinova, Maria. 2009. "Diasporas and Democratization in the Postcommunist World," *Communist and Postcommunist Studies* 42, pp.41-64.
- Skocpol, Theda. 1979. *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, "Introduction: Explaining Social Revolutions," pp.3-44.
- Beissinger, Mark, Amaney Jamal and Kevin Mazur. 2015. "Explaining Divergent Revolutionary Coalitions," *Comparative Politics* 48(1), pp.1-21.
- Norris, Pippa. 1997. "Choosing Electoral Systems: Proportional, Majoritarian and Mixed Systems," *International Political Science Review* 18(3), pp. 297-312.
- McGarry, John and Brendan O'Leary. 1994. "The Political Regulation of National and Ethnic Conflict," *Parliamentary Affairs* 47 (1), pp.94-115.
- Lynch, Gabrielle. 2006. "Negotiating Ethnicity: Identity Politics in Contemporary Kenya," *Review of African Political Economy* 33(107), pp.49-65.
- Hollifield, James F. 2004. "The Emerging Migration State," *International Migration Review* 38(3), pp. 885-912.
- Stepan, Alfred and Cindy Skach, 1993. "Constitutional Frameworks and Democratic Consolidation. Parliamentarism versus Presidentialism," *World Politics* 46, pp.1–22.
- Samuels, David. 2004. "Presidentialism and Accountability for the Economy in Comparative Perspective," *American Political Science Review* 98(3), pp. 425-436.
- Putnam, Robert. 1995. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* 6(1), pp. 65-78.
- Atikcan, Ece Ozlem, Richard Nadeau and Eric Belanger. 2020. *Framing Risky Choices: Brexit and the Dynamics of High-Stakes Referendums*, Montreal: McGill University Press, Chapter 1 "The Brexit Conundrum" pp. 3-33.

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

Research element

Students write a research essay in this module.

International

The topics covered in this module are all international in scope.

Subject specific skills

Theoretical and empirical understanding of comparative politics

Transferable skills

The module provides students with opportunities to acquire or develop the following key skills:

- Written communication skills
 - Oral communication skills
 - Problem-solving skills
 - Skills in the use of information technology
 - Skills of interpretation and the critical analysis of primary and secondary sources
 - Awareness and sensitivity to diversity (in terms of people, cultures) and the ability to understand unfamiliar ideas and ways of thinking
 - Ability to digest, retain and apply complex information and ideas
 - Ability to conduct research and reference their work appropriately
 - Time management skills and the ability to meet deadlines
 - The ability to reflect critically on the extent and limitations of how and what they have learned, discovered and understood.
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Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Private study	132 hours (88%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

TBC

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A1

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
Assessed essay 2500 word essay	100%		Yes (extension)
Reassessment component is the same			

Feedback on assessment

Essay feedback will be returned within 20 working days of essay submission. Formative and summative feedback will be provided in accordance with standard PAIS practice.

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 1 of UECA-LM1D Undergraduate Economics, Politics and International Studies
- Year 1 of UPOA-M102 Undergraduate Global Politics (with Integrated Year Abroad at Brussels School of Governance, VUB)
- Year 1 of UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
- Year 1 of UPOA-M162 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Quantitative Methods

This module is Unusual option for:

- Year 1 of UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics

This module is Core option list B for:

- Year 1 of UPHA-V5L2 Undergraduate Philosophy and Politics

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 1 of UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
- Year 1 of UPOA-M100 Undergraduate Politics
- Year 1 of UPOA-M16A Undergraduate Politics and International Studies

This module is Option list B for:

- USOA-L301 BA in Sociology
 - Year 1 of L305 Sociology with Specialism in Cultural Studies
 - Year 1 of L303 Sociology with Specialism in Gender Studies
 - Year 1 of L304 Sociology with Specialism in Research Methods
 - Year 1 of L302 Sociology with Specialism in Social Policy