

Political Science 305
Comparative/Global Politics
Spring 2016 (Online)

Instructor: Amir A. Moheet

Class Schedule/Location: Online

Office: By email

Email: moheet@hawaii.edu

Texts: (required):

- Lisa Wedeen. 2009. *Peripheral Visions: Publics, Power, and Performance in Yemen*, University of Chicago Press.
- James Scott. 1987. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, Yale University Press.
- Daniele Caramani. 2014. *Comparative Politics*. 3rd Ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Karl Fields, Patrick O’Neil and Don Share. 2012. *Cases in Comparative Politics*. 4th Ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.

*Note: All required books are available for purchase at the UH bookstore. Alternatively, you can purchase or rent them from Amazon or other online merchants.

Supplementary Readings: All supplementary readings (i.e., those not from any of the required books) will be posted under the “resources” tab on Laulima.

Important: I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus provided I give you reasonable advance notice.

Course Description: This course will provide students with the basic analytical skills necessary to understand comparative politics—the study of domestic politics and institutions within and across countries. Some of the questions we will explore include: Why are some countries more democratic than others? How has the Arab Spring challenged many widespread assumptions regarding the robustness of authoritarian rule throughout the Middle East? Why are postcolonial countries disadvantaged economically? Is there an ethnic basis to the nation-state? What role does history play in shaping political outcomes? By examining key questions surrounding the study of comparative politics, this online course aims to provide students with a critical perspective of global politics. We will integrate empirical review of specific countries and examine relevant theoretical, methodological and conceptual issues in the study of comparative politics. Additional topics include the origins and durability of authoritarian regimes, transitions to democracy, the institutional and political structure of nation-states, and social movements. This course assumes nor prior background knowledge of comparative politics and is thus suitable for students with varying levels of familiarity of global/comparative politics.

Course Philosophy: A Chinese proverb says that “teachers open the door, but you must enter by yourself.” Therefore, this course asks you to be active participants in your own education and to

critically engage the wide range of topics we will address by intervening in online discussions as much as possible. The structure of an online course is especially well-suited (and restricted to) written communication. Your ability to participate in the various online forums and class discussions will demonstrate your commitment to exploring and engaging the content of course.

Readings: Since this is an online course and because of the nature of distance learning, we will be reading and reflecting upon quite a bit of literature. This need not deter or dismay you. If you do the readings, are punctual with the submission of assignments, and make an earnest attempt to participate online, there is no reason why you shouldn't perform well.

Course Requirements:

Important Note - **This is a writing intensive course and therefore carries a “W” or “WI” focus designation.** However, this should not discourage you. Given that this is also an online course, written communication is not only the primary means of class interaction, it is the *only* means: writing not only remains central to classroom interaction, it is also a designated university requirement for this course. As such, you must be prepared to fulfill this commitment in two fundamental ways. First, you should be prepared to write and submit your assignments on time. Second, your writing should not merely reflect that have you written the required minimum. It must also demonstrate that you have done the readings and are actively engaged with the course literature as well as your classmates. In short, the quality of your writing is just as important as its quantity.

1) Threaded Discussion Posts (25%): You are required to write two (2) discussion posts per week: the first post is a response to a question I pose, which will be based on the readings of the week. You are also required to respond to at least one (1) of your classmates' postings. Thus, **you must have a minimum of at least two (2) discussion posts per week.** Each post should be at least two paragraphs, for a total of four paragraphs for your two posts. This should translate to roughly one page total per week for both of your posts. **I will post the questions every Sunday. You will have until the following Sunday to complete your two discussion posts for the week. Discussion posts can be accessed and submitted via the “discussions and private messages tab” on Laulima.** They are based on a 100-point scale (per week).

As a major component of any online course, the discussion thread is critical for the overall success of the class as well as the success of individual students. In addition to constituting a significant portion of your grade, discussion posts act as a proxy for your “attendance.” Although this is an online class, the discussion thread will not only reflect your commitment to reading and writing about the course literature, but it will also demonstrate your ability to be punctual with the submission of your posts. You must be prepared to discuss the readings and thoughtfully contribute to our online discussions. Assigned readings should be completed in full before you post to the discussion thread. If you fail to complete the readings, your submission posts will reflect as much. Conversely, if you fail to post at all, it will similarly demonstrate that you have not done the readings. Having said all this, you will be excused for missing two discussion posts.

Your discussion posts will be graded based on the following criteria:

- Punctuality and logical coherence of posts.

- The persuasiveness of your argument, partially reflected by supporting theoretical and conceptual evidence found in the readings.
- Form and style (spelling, grammar and composition).

Accordingly, posts will be downgraded if they:

- Suffer from sloppy/colloquial writing
- Do not address the questions and demonstrate that you have not done the readings.
- Are insulting in tone. This is will absolutely not be tolerated under any circumstance.

2) Written Assignment (15%): You will have a short written assignment every week. I will post a question on Lulima every Sunday and you will have until the following Sunday to submit your written response (same schedule as the threaded discussion posts). **You can access the assignment questions in the “Assignments” tab on Lulima. You are required to write at least a three-paragraph response to a question I pose and upload it via the “Dropbox” tab on Lulima.** At a minimum, you should be writing at least three-quarters of a page. While you can earn yourself full credit by writing more, you will definitely not earn full credit for writing less. It is worth repeating: merely writing the required minimum will not suffice for full credit. Your responses should be well crafted and supported by evidence from the readings, class discussions, or other independently derived research. I will provide individualized student feedback for each comment. Written assignments are based on a 100-point scale (per week).

3) Quizzes (25%) There will be eight (8) quizzes throughout the semester, occurring on average once every two weeks. They will be based on the assigned readings. They are not designed to be difficult. They *are* designed, however, to make sure that you understand the basic conceptual and theoretical ideas expressed in the readings. You can access the quiz in the “Assignments Tool” tab of Lulima. The quizzes will consist of 25 multiple-choice questions. I will post them on Thursday at 12pm. You have until Friday, or just 24 hours, to upload your response via the Dropbox tab on Lulima. Please clearly identify your answer, title it as Quiz #1, QUIZ #2, etc., and upload the document to the DropBox tab. Each quiz is worth 100 points.

Please note: I will accept quizzes that are late up until 3 pm. Friday, but you will receive an automatic ten-point deduction for every hour it is late. I will not grade or accept quizzes that are submitted after 3 pm. To repeat: **there will be absolutely no make up quizzes, even if you have a legitimate excuse, for quizzes submitted after 3 pm.**

4) Final Exam (35%): Thursday May 15. There will be a cumulative final exam on May 15. It will consist of 75 multiple-choice questions, at least half of which will come directly from the weekly quiz. The final will be posted at 10am Hawaiian Standard Time (HST). You will have two-and-a-half hours to submit your final via the “Dropbox” feature on Lulima, or 12:30 pm HST. You also have the option of emailing the final to me at moheet@hawaii.edu should you encounter difficulty with Lulima. As we approach the end of the semester, I will provide more detailed information about the questions on the final. Needless to say, since half the questions on the final will come from our weekly quizzes, if you perform well throughout the semester it will make it that much easier for your to earn a good grade on the final. For late submissions, I will be abiding by the weekly quiz guidelines.

***** IMPORTANT NOTE: *** If you have trouble uploading your documents to Laulima, please submit all assignments via e-mail to moheet@hawaii.edu. Please write in the subject line the title and number of the assignment such as QUIZ #2, WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT #3, FINAL EXAM, etc. However, keep in mind that this option is also time sensitive and should be a last resort if you are having difficulty with Laulima. Otherwise, Laulima should be the primary means by which you submit and upload your assignments.**

How To Succeed in this Course

Do the readings. Given that this an online course, there is no substitute for the readings. It will be readily clear which students have covered the readings. The inverse of this also holds true; completing the assigned readings cannot act as a substitute for missing written assignments, quizzes, or discussion posts. Because of the nature of distance learning, the only way for you to demonstrate your commitment to engaging the course material is through active and regular participation in our weekly “meetings.” If you fail to read the course literature in its entirety, you will be unable to participate with your classmates or earn the necessary credit.

Complete Written Assignments and Discussion Posts on Time. It bears repeating: because there are no class lectures or meetings, class assignments and the discussion thread act as a proxy for class attendance and lectures. Posts on the discussion thread should answer the questions posed at the end of each chapter and should be based on a thoughtful articulation of the readings.

Read critically: Focus on the big picture to identify the main arguments in the texts. Think about the logical coherence of the arguments. Compare and contrast the concepts and theories in the readings.

Ask questions and participate. Although this is an online based course, you should not hesitate to ask questions or raise issues during online discussions. In fact, you are required to post questions and responses to your fellow classmates. Your comments and questions will only enrich the course for all of us.

Be civil. The relative anonymity of an online course can sometimes provoke heated discussion. This is to be expected, particularly in a political science course. What will not be tolerated are personal attacks on the discussion posts of your classmates or otherwise uncivil behavior that is insulting or verges on intellectual and ideological intolerance. Discussion posts should thoughtfully consider the questions and responses of your classmates, including the initial question I pose to launch the discussion thread. Your posts should be based on supporting evidence from the readings. Responses that simply respond with a “good post” or “interesting thought” will not suffice and will be downgraded accordingly.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Part 1: Introduction

Week 1 - February 1 - 7: What is comparative politics and how do we study it?

Assigned Readings:

- David Collier, “The Comparative Method,” in Ada W. Finifter, ed., *Political Science: The State of the Discipline* (1993).
- Arendt Lijphart, 1971. “Comparative Politics and Comparative Method,” *American Political Science Review* Vol. 65, No. 3: 682-69.
- Caramani, *Comparative Politics*, Introduction and Ch. 1 - “The Evolution of Comparative Politics”

Discussion Thread (posts due February 7)

Written Assignment: (due February 7)

Week 2 - February 8 - 14: Comparative Methods

Assigned Readings:

- James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, 2004, “Comparative Historical Analysis,” in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* Princeton: Princeton University Press: 3-38.
- Caramani, *Comparative Politics*, Ch. 2 – “Approaches in Comparative Politics” & Ch. 3 – “Comparative Research Methods”

Discussion Thread: posts due February 14

Written Assignment: due February 14

Quiz # 1: posted February 11, due February 12

Part 2: States and Regimes

Week 3 - February 15 - 21: The Nation-State

Assigned Readings:

- Charles Tilly. 1985. “State Building as Organized Crime,” In *Bringing the State Back In* Cambridge University Press: 169-186.
- Andreas Wimmer and Yuval Feinstein. 2010. “The Rise of the Nation-state across the World, 1816-2001.” *American Sociological Review* 74:4.

- Caramani, *Comparative Politics*, Ch. 4 – “The Nation-State” and Ch. 24 – “Globalization and the Nation-State”

Discussion Thread: posts due February 21

Written Assignment: due February 21

Week 4 - February 22 – 28: Democracies and Autocracies

Assigned Readings:

- Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way. “The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism,” *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 13, no. 2 April 2002: 51-65.
- Barbara Geddes. 1999. “What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2:115-144.
- Lisa Wedeen. 2004. “Concepts and Commitments in the Study of Democracy,” Chapter 13 in Ian Shapiro et. al. (eds.), *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*, New York: Cambridge University Press: 274-306.
- Caramani, 2014. *Comparative Politics*, Ch. 5 – “Democracies” and Ch. 6 – “Authoritarian Regimes”

Discussion Thread: posts due February 28

Written Assignment: due February 28

Quiz # 2: posted February 25, due February 26.

Week 5 - February 29- March 6: Case Studies – Iran, Mexico and Nigeria

Assigned Readings:

- Fields, O’Neil, and Share. 2012, *Cases in Comparative Politics*, Ch, 10, 11, & 14.

Discussion Thread: posts due March 6

Written Assignment: due March 6

Part 3: Institutions

Week 6 - March 7 – 13: Constitutions and Electoral Systems

Assigned Readings:

- Kenneth Benoit. 2007. “Electoral Laws as Political Consequences: Explaining the Origins and Change of Electoral Institutions,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 10: 363-90.

- Carles Boix. 1999. "Setting the Rules of the Game: The Choice of Electoral Systems in Advanced Democracies," *American Political Science Review* 93:3: 609-624.
- James Scott. 1987. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, Yale University Press, Ch 1-3.
- Caramani, *Comparative Politics*, Ch. 8 – "Governments and Bureaucracies," Ch. 10 - "Elections and Referendums," and Ch. 11 – "Federal and Local Government Institutions"

Discussion Thread: posts due March 13

Written Assignment: due March 13

Quiz # 3: posted March 10, due March 11.

Week 7 - March 14 – 20: Case studies: UK, US, France and Germany

Assigned Readings:

- Fields, O'Neil and Don Share, *Cases in Comparative Politics*, Ch. 2, 3, 4, 5.

Discussion Thread: posts due March 20

Written Assignment: due March 20

Week 8 - March 21-27: **Spring Recess, No Assignments Due**

Part 4: Actors

Week 9 - March 28 – April 3: Political parties and party systems

Assigned Readings:

- Giovanni Sartori. 1990. "A Typology of Party Systems," in Peter Mair, ed., *The West European Party System* New York: Oxford University Press: 316-347.
- Caramani, *Comparative Politics*, Ch. 12 – "Political Parties" and Ch. 13 – "Party Systems"
- Scott Mainwaring and Timothy R. Scully. 1995, "Introduction," In Mainwaring & Scully, eds., *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America*, Stanford University Press: 1-34.

Discussion Thread: posts due April 3

Written Assignment: due April 3

Quiz # 4: posted March 31, due April 1

Week 10 – April 4 – April 10: Advocacy Groups and Social Movements

Assigned Readings:

- Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, Ch. 7-8.
- Kevin O'Brien. 1996, "Rightful Resistance," *World Politics*, 49, 1: 1-55.
- Charles Kurzman. 2012, "The Arab Spring Uncoiled," *Mobilization* 17, no.4 :377- 390.
- Caramani, *Comparative Politics*, Ch. 14 – "Interest Groups" and Ch. 16 – "Social Movements"

Discussion Thread: posts due April 10

Written Assignment: due April 10

Quiz # 5: posted April 7, due April 8

Week 11 - April 11 - 17: Culture

Assigned Readings:

- Lisa Wedeen. 2009. *Peripheral Visions: Publics, Power, and Performance in Yemen*, University of Chicago Press, Ch. 1-3.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1973, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books, 1973, pp. 3-30.
- Caramani, *Comparative Politics*, Ch. 17 – "Political culture"

Discussion Thread: posts due April 17

Written Assignment: due April 17

Week 12 - April 18 – 24: Political Economy

Assigned Readings:

- Michael L. Ross. 2001, "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" *World Politics* vol. 53: 325-361.
- Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson. 2001. "Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation," *American Economic Review* 91:5: 1369-1401.
- Caramani, *Comparative Politics*, Ch. 21 – "The Welfare State" and Ch. 22. – "The Impact of Public Policies"

Discussion Thread: posts due April 24

Written Assignment: due April 24

Quiz # 6: posted April 21, due April 22

Week 13 - April 25 – May 1: Ethnicity, Nationalism and Violence

Assigned Readings:

- Benedict Anderson. 2006. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Ch. 1-3 (pp. 1-48).
- James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin. 2000, "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity," *International Organization* 54, 4: 845-77.
- Walker Connor, "Beyond Reason: The Nature of the Ethnonational Bond," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 16:3 (July 1993), pp. 373-89.

Discussion Thread: posts due May 1

Written Assignment: due May 1

Week 14 – May 2 - May 8: Case Studies – Brazil and South Africa

Assigned Readings:

- Fields, O'Neil and Share, *Cases in Comparative Politics*, Ch. 12, 13.

Discussion Thread: posts due May 8

Written Assignment: due May 8

Quiz # 7: posted May 5, due May 6

Week 15 - May 9 - 13: **Final Exam Week, no assignments due**

The final will be posted at 10 am Hawaiian Standard Time (HST) on Thursday May 12. You can access the final in the *Assignments* tab on Lulima. You will have two-and-a-half hours to submit the final (by 12:30pm HST). You have two options for ensuring its timely submission: First, as you do with all other assignments, you can submit it via the Dropbox tab on Lulima . This is the preferred method. If you encounter trouble with Lulima, you can directly email it to me at moheet@hawaii.edu. Remember, the final is time sensitive! I must receive it by 12:30 pm HST in order for you to receive full credit.

A Note on Plagiarism: The University of Hawai'i defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism includes but is not limited to submitting, in fulfillment of an academic requirement, any work that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual's work without attributing that borrowed portion to the individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation another's idea and particular phrasing that was not assimilated into the student's language and style or paraphrasing a passage so that the reader is misled as to the source; submitting the same written or oral or artistic material in more than one course without obtaining the

authorization from the instructors involved; or “drylabbing”, which includes obtaining and using experimental data and laboratory write-ups from other sections of a course or from previous terms.