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## Comparative Politics (T407016)

Fall 2022

Lectures: Thursdays 14.15-16.00, Room M 2140 (Uni-Mail).

Tutorials: Thursdays 16.15-17.15, Room M 2140 (Uni-Mail)

\* *Tutorials are held irregularly throughout semester. See schedule below for more information.*

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### *Course summary*

This course looks deeper at theoretical and methodological debates in the field of comparative politics. Each week, we look at a specific topic by asking ourselves an overarching research question. We focus on themes related to political economy, democratization, political institutions, and electoral systems—and examine particularly theories rooted in rational choice.

### *Course objectives*

By the end of the course, students should be able to: (A) have knowledge about core debates in the field comparative politics; (B) engage critically with extant research; (C) employ analytical tools to interject in debates, by evaluating competing causal claims.

### *Course requirements*

Aside from weekly lectures, students are expected to attend tutorials as well as participate in a student symposium at the end of the semester. Grading is based on three deliverables:

1. In advance of December symposiums, students need prepare a 1500-word research design. For this, you may select your own research question—but the question should address one of the topics of the class (*make sure your RQ is approved before writing!*). Research designs will be shared to all class participants and must be uploaded to Moodle latest on **1 December 2022** (at 23.59).<sup>1</sup>
2. Students need attend one of three scheduled symposium sessions in December. Each symposium is structured in a mini-conference format. As a student, you are expected to

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<sup>1</sup> This deadline holds for everyone—regardless of when you are scheduled to present.

participate by discussing the research design of one of your peers (5 min). Symposiums are held in smaller groups, to facilitate dialogue. To see which symposium that you need to attend, check Moodle where groupings will be published by the end of October.

3. At the end of the course, each student must submit a final term paper (approx. 4000 words, excl. bibliography). The mid-term research design should form the basis of this term paper.<sup>2</sup> Deadline for submitting the final essay is **15 January 2023** (at 23.59).

### *Grading*

Final grades are determined by assessments of your research design (30%) and your final essay (70%). Participation in the Student Symposium is obligatory but graded only on a pass/fail basis.

### *Tutorials*

Two general tutorials are scheduled during the semester: a first one on academic writing, and a second one on research designs in comparative politics. These two sessions are designed to aid you in your efforts to generate your mid-term and final papers. Aside from this, three sessions have been scheduled in December for Student Symposiums.

### *Organization*

All course materials are made available via Moodle. On the platform, the course is dubbed ‘Comparative Politics (MA 2022)’ and the course code is **T407016 2022-23**. You are encouraged to make use of office hours—but I ask that you sign-up via Moodle in advance to facilitate the scheduling of appointments.

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<sup>2</sup> Note: The more time you invest in your research design, the better feedback you’ll get from both your peers as well as the course convenor. This, in turn, is conducive to improving the quality of your term paper.

## Course Schedule

Date	Lecture (Thursdays, 14.15 – 16.00)	Tutorial (Thursdays, 16.15 – 18.00)	Notes
22/09	<i>What is 'Comparative Politics'?</i>	'How to write an academic essay'	
29/09	<i>Democracy, Repression and Growth</i>	'Designing research for credible inference'	
06/10	<i>Inequality and Redistribution</i>		
13/10	<i>Welfare Systems</i>		<b>Last day</b> to select your research topic!
20/10	<i>Origins of Taxation</i>		
27/10	<i>Trade Unions</i>		
03/11	<i>The Labor Market</i>		
<b>No classes (Reading week)</b>			
10/11			
17/11	<i>Electoral Systems</i>		
24/11	<i>Descriptive Representation</i>		
01/12	<i>Voter Enfranchisement</i>		<b>Last day</b> to submit mid-term research designs!
08/12	<i>Colonialism, Slavery and Violence</i>	Student Symposium A	See Moodle for symposium groupings.
15/12	Student Symposium B	Student Symposium C	See Moodle for symposium groupings.

Other important dates:

**15.01.2023** Last day to submit term paper! (at 23.59)

# Lectures

*Notes:* Asterisks denote obligatory course readings; bold marking indicates female authorship.

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Week 1

## What is 'Comparative Politics'?

22 September 2022

This first session serves as a (re-)introduction to the study of comparative politics. We familiarize ourselves with the main sub-disciplines of the field—and map out the core research questions tackled in each of them. We also discuss the course's structure, topics, and learning objectives.

Readings: *No course readings are required for this week's lecture. But for those interested, I recommend:*

- Blyth, M. (2006). 'Great Punctuations: Prediction, Randomness, and the Evolution of Comparative Political Science', *American Political Science Review* 100(4): 493-98.
- Laitin, D. (2003). 'Comparative Politics: The State of the Sub-discipline', In *Political Science: The State of the Discipline* (Eds: Katznelson and Milner), New York: WW Norton: pp. 630-59.
- Boix, C., & **Stokes, S. C.** (Eds.). (2007). 'Introduction', in *The Oxford handbook of comparative politics* (Vol. 4). Oxford: Oxford Handbooks of Political.

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Week 2

## Democracy, Repression and Growth

29 September 2022

### When does economic growth foster democracy?

Examples such as Russia, China and India highlight that economic growth does not always foster (deepened) democracy. This week we look at the scope conditions under which development translates into democracy.

Readings:

- **\*\*Ansell, B. W., & Samuels, D. J.** (2014). 'Inequality and democratization', Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Selected chapters)
  - **\*\*Rosenfeld, B.** (2020). 'The autocratic middle class: how state dependency reduces the demand for democracy', Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Selected chapters)
  - Wright, J., Frantz, E., & **Geddes, B.** (2015). 'Oil and autocratic regime survival', *British Journal of Political Science*, 45(2), 287-306.
  - Knutsen, C. H., Gerring, J., Skaaning, S. E., Teorell, J., Maguire, M., Coppedge, M., & Lindberg, S. I. (2019). 'Economic development and democracy: An electoral connection', *European Journal of Political Research*, 58(1), 292-314.
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### Why is rising inequality not leading to increased redistribution?

Recent decades have seen a global surge in income and wealth inequality. In advanced democratic systems with broad voter enfranchisement, this should lead to higher levels of redistribution. But we are still not taxing the rich. To disentangle this puzzle, we spend the week examining rationalist accounts on the (non-)causes of state-led redistribution.

#### Readings:

- \*\*Gilens, M., & Page, B. I. (2014). 'Testing theories of American politics: Elites, interest groups, and average citizens', *Perspectives on politics*, 12(3), 564-581.
- \*\*Cavaillé, C., & Trump, K. S. (2015). 'The two facets of social policy preferences', *The Journal of Politics*, 77(1), 146-160.
- Schakel, W. (2021). 'Unequal policy responsiveness in the Netherlands', *Socio-Economic Review*, 19(1), 37-57.
- Flavin, P. (2012). 'Does higher voter turnout among the poor lead to more equal policy representation?', *The Social Science Journal*, 49(4), 405-412

### Why do welfare states look so different across countries?

One move between Geneva and Stockholm and your tax rate more than doubles. And yet, the standard of welfare provision remains comparable. How did we end up with so different welfare systems across Europe? This week we go through different analytical frameworks on the causes of welfare state design.

#### Readings:

- \*\*Korpi, W. (2006). 'Power resources and employer-centered approaches in explanations of welfare states and varieties of capitalism: Protagonists, consenters, and antagonists', *World politics*, 58(2), 167-206.
- \*\*Thelen, K. (2012). 'Varieties of capitalism: Trajectories of liberalization and the new politics of social solidarity', *Annual review of political science*, 15, 137-159.
- **Estevez-Abe, M., Iversen, T., & Soskice, D. (2001). 'Social protection and the formation of skills: A reinterpretation of the welfare state'. *Varieties of capitalism: The institutional foundations of comparative advantage*, 145, 145-183.**
- Baccaro, L., & Pontusson, J. (2016). 'Rethinking comparative political economy: the growth model perspective'. *Politics & society*, 44(2), 175-207.

**When can we tax the rich?**

Taxing the rich is notoriously difficult (*recall week no 3!*). Still, advanced democracies have all adopted progressively designed tax schemes. How did this come about? And how can we explain differences in the progressivity of tax systems? This week we look at the historical origins of tax regimes.

Readings:

- **\*\*Scheve, K., & Stasavage, D. (2016).** ‘Taxing the rich’, Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Selected chapters)
- **\*\*Barnes, L. (2020).** ‘Trade and redistribution: trade politics and the origins of progressive taxation’. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 8(2), 197-214.
- Limberg, J., & **Seelkopf, L. (2022).** ‘The historical origins of wealth taxation’, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 29(5), 670-688.
- Kato, J. (2003). ‘Regressive taxation and the welfare state: path dependence and policy diffusion’, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Selected chapters)

**Do unions affect political behavior?**

Essentially all advanced democracies are experiencing declines in union membership. Should we care? This week we re-hash class theories on the (non-)desirability of union presence. And then we proceed to look at recent empirical work on the effects of unionization.

Readings:

- **\*\*Kim, S. E., & Margalit, Y. (2017).** ‘Informed preferences? The impact of unions on workers’ policy views’. *American Journal of Political Science*, 61(3), 728-743.
- **\*\*Becher, M., Stegmueller, D., & Käppner, K. (2018).** ‘Local union organization and law making in the US congress’, *The Journal of Politics*, 80(2), 539-554.
- Arndt, C., & **Rennwald, L. (2016).** ‘Union members at the polls in diverse trade union landscapes’, *European Journal of Political Research*, 55(4), 702-722.
- **Mosimann, N., & Pontusson, J. (2017).** ‘Solidaristic unionism and support for redistribution in contemporary Europe’. *World Politics*, 69(3), 448-492.

**Are structural changes to labor markets affecting politics?**

Labor markets are in a state of flux. The past two decades have seen an erosion of middle-class jobs in advanced economies, stemming from factors such as automation and outsourcing. We start this week by examining these trends—and then we ask ourselves: how are these changes affecting politics?

Readings:

- **\*\*Kurer, T.** (2020). ‘The declining middle: Occupational change, social status, and the populist right’, *Comparative Political Studies*, 53(10-11), 1798-1835.
- **\*\*Owen, E., & Johnston, N. P.** (2017). ‘Occupation and the political economy of trade: Job routineness, offshorability, and protectionist sentiment’, *International Organization*, 71(4), 665-699.
- **Galleo, A., Kuo, A., Manzano, D., & Fernández-Albertos, J.** (2022). Technological risk and policy preferences. *Comparative Political Studies*, 55(1), 60-92.
- Mansfield, E. D., & **Mutz, D. C.** (2013). ‘US versus them: Mass attitudes toward offshore outsourcing’. *World Politics*, 65(4), 571-608.

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10 November 2022: Fall study break: No class will take place during this week.

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**Why do we have proportionality in politics?**

Nearly all countries maintain some degree of proportionality in their electoral systems. But this was not always the case—and noticeable differences across polities are still detectable today. How can we explain extant variation?

Readings:

- **\*\*Norris, P.** (1997). Choosing electoral systems: proportional, majoritarian and mixed systems. *International political science review*, 18(3), 297-312.
  - **\*\*Boix, C.** (1999). Setting the rules of the game: the choice of electoral systems in advanced democracies. *American political science review*, 93(3), 609-624.
  - Cusack, T. R., Iversen, T., & Soskice, D. (2007). Economic interests and the origins of electoral systems. *American Political Science Review*, 101(3), 373-391.
  - Leemann, L., & **Mares, I.** (2014). The adoption of proportional representation. *The Journal of Politics*, 76(2), 461-478.
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**What are the effects of descriptive representation?**

Across the world and in all levels of government, policymakers do not look like their constituents. They are older, more educated, and disproportionately male. During class, we look at theories and evidence on descriptive (or statistical) representation. Does it affect political outcomes—and if so, how?

Readings:

- \*\*Poertner, M. (2022). Does political representation increase participation? Evidence from party candidate lotteries in Mexico. *American Journal of Political Science* (FirstView).
- \*\*Folke, O., Rickne, J., & Smith, D. M. (2021). Gender and dynastic political selection. *Comparative Political Studies*, 54(2), 339-371.
- Carnes, N., & Lupu, N. (2016). What good is a college degree? Education and leader quality reconsidered. *The Journal of Politics*, 78(1), 35-49.
- O'Grady, T. (2019). Careerists versus coal-miners: welfare reforms and the substantive representation of social groups in the British Labour Party. *Comparative Political Studies*, 52(4), 544-578.

**Why do we give others the right to vote?**

Democracy has existed in many forms throughout history. But broad-based voter enfranchisement is new phenomenon. What incentives did men have to give women the right the vote? Are these incentives the same as those that exist for us to extend voting rights to non-citizens and/or persons under 18?

Readings:

- \*\*Teele, D. L. (2018). 'How the west was won: Competition, mobilization, and women's enfranchisement in the United States'. *The Journal of Politics*, 80(2), 442-461.
- \*\*Hofstetter, S. (2022). 'The non-progressive women's vote: The varied political impact of female suffrage', *Democracy & Polarization Lab Working Paper*, Stanford: Stanford University.
- **Morgan-Collins, M., & Natusch, G.** (2021). At the Intersection of Gender and Class: How Were Newly Enfranchised Women Voters Mobilized in Sweden?. *Comparative Political Studies*.
- Vernby, K. (2013). 'Inclusion and public policy: Evidence from Sweden's introduction of noncitizen suffrage. *American Journal of Political Science*, 57(1), 15-29.

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**What are the long-run consequences of state-led violence?**

Recent years have seen a surge in discourse surrounding legacies of colonialism and state-led violence. Many argue that societies continue to be affected by historical atrocities. But how does this come about? This week we look at mechanisms that tie us to the past.

**Readings:**

- \*\*Acharya, A., Blackwell, M., & Sen, M. (2016). The political legacy of American slavery. *The Journal of Politics*, 78(3), 621-641.
- \*\*Banerjee, A. V., & Iyer, L. (2008). *Colonial land tenure, electoral competition and public goods in India*. Cambridge: Harvard Business School Working Paper.
- Charnysh, V., & Finkel, E. (2017). The death camp Eldorado: political and economic effects of mass violence. *American political science review*, 111(4), 801-818.
- Lupu, N., & Peisakhin, L. (2017). The legacy of political violence across generations. *American Journal of Political Science*, 61(4), 836-851.

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15 December 2022: *This week is dedicated solely to Student Symposiums.*

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## Tutorials

**Tutorial 1:** *How to Write an Academic Essay* 22 September 2022

In this tutorial, we look at the ‘Monarch’ of persuasive essays: the scientific article. We discuss the basic structure and contents of a *social scientific* research article, section by section. We explore linguistic ‘hacks’ that allow for persuasive argumentation—and we examine a wide range of best (and worst) practice. To conclude, we go through grading criteria for mid-term and final essays.

**Tutorial 2:** *Designing Research for Credible Inference* 29 September 2022

What makes for a good research design? In this tutorial, we discuss strategies of case selection, sampling, measurement, and modelling. The class is exercise-based, so come armed with (installed and updated) statistical software on your computers.<sup>3</sup> Note: you need not write quantitative essays—but some descriptive statistics (bar plots, tables etc.) are expected, even in qualitative work.

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<sup>3</sup> I’m agnostic about software choice, but R or STATA are certainly preferable.