

## Comparative Political Parties

PLCP 4201  
Tu 1-3:30 pm  
Spring 2016

Prof. Mershon  
Office hours: M 3:45-4:45 pm, Tu 4-5 pm Gibson 382  
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*Overview.* This seminar compares parties and party systems around the world. Political parties are fundamental to democratic political life. Parties compete for popular support in elections, organize decision-making in legislatures, vie for control of the executive, and channel citizen participation in politics during and beyond election campaigns. We thus devote substantial attention to parties in democratic regimes. We also study parties in non-democratic settings in order to explore how party politics might contribute to the survival—or demise—of authoritarian regimes.

*Course goals.* This course pursues five chief goals. Naturally enough, several aims regard parties and party systems. This course is designed to help you:

- identify major similarities and differences in parties and party systems across countries and across sets of countries (e.g., new vs. established democracies),
- explain the patterns you observe, and
- articulate why the explanation(s) you find to be persuasive actually hold explanatory power.

The first three goals point to two general ones. The course will equip you to:

- hone your critical and analytical skills and
- acquire a scientific perspective on political behavior and phenomena.

*Course organization.* This course operates as a seminar, with active engagement and discussion expected on the part of all its members. This statement leads to the next topic.

*Course requirements.* All class members are expected to complete the assigned readings before the class meeting for which the particular readings are assigned. That basic requirement will permit students to complete the following categories of work:

- participation in online forums (10%)
- participation in in-class discussions (10%)
- mid-term exam (20%)
- one-hour exam near the semester's end, covering only material since Spring Break (15%)
- separate submissions of draft elements of research paper, spaced at intervals over the semester (12%)
- partial draft of research paper, revising and integrating prior separate submissions (11%)
- research paper (22%)

No single category of work weighs unduly in the course grade. All course work is spaced relatively evenly over the semester. These statements hold true even for the research paper, since work on it begins early, occurs in stages, and cumulates over the semester. Each component of the course grade deserves fuller discussion.

Participation in online forums. For each of 11 weeks, you are required to post in an online forum at Collab Forum. Each forum's questions will help you assess the reading for the particular week

and also equip you to frame, research, and write your research papers. You are required not only to post your own contribution but also to **read all other postings before class**. You should contribute **your posting** to each week's forum **by Monday, 11:55 pm**. This timing should give everyone time to read all postings before our class meets at 1 pm Tuesday. If anyone's course schedule creates difficulties with the deadline for postings, please let me know.

Participation in in-class discussion. Posting in forums and reading others' postings lays the basis for fruitful in-class discussion. You can expect class meetings to feature a mix of class-wide and small-group discussion. It is your responsibility as a member of the class to help keep discussion lively, engaged, and focused on the topics at hand. If you believe discussion is lagging or moving off topic, pose a simple question, such as one of the following:

- That's an important comment. How can we link that to the author's argument that XXX?
- That's interesting, and it makes me wonder XXX about our reading YYY for this week.
- Reflecting on the last few points made, I wonder XXX.
- How does this fit in the bigger picture?

These examples by no means exhaust the possibilities, and yet illustrate how you can contribute proactively to thoughtful discussions in class. Moreover, these examples illustrate how you can treat each other respectfully and justly in class. (See the statement on respect and justice below.)

Note that you will engage in self-assessment and peer-assessment of participation (by 02/11, 03/23, respectively, as shown below). I will comment on those assessments and will provide feedback on your participation (03/01, 04/05, and end of semester).

Midterm exam. The **blue-book** exam 03/01 will cover all material since the start of the semester. Exam questions will emphasize concepts and explanatory thinking, not memorization.

Second exam. The **blue-book** exam 04/19 will cover material since Spring Break; i.e., it will *not* be cumulative. Questions will emphasize concepts and explanatory thinking, not memorization.

Draft elements of research paper. On four separate occasions, you will submit draft elements of your research paper. Submissions are as follows:

- tentative choice of research area (02/25 at latest, as detailed below)
- statement of research question (03/18)
- statement of chief hypotheses (04/01)
- statement of types and sources of evidence (04/14)

The submissions are tied to foci of assessment of readings in forums and in-class discussions. For instance, one online forum is devoted to evaluating the framing of the research questions in a particular reading, and another invites you to reflect on types and sources of evidence. You thus simultaneously appraise assigned readings and equip yourself to work on your research paper.

As you work on the submissions, partial paper draft, and full paper, you should consult items in the Resources folder entitled, "Resources for Research Papers." Of the two documents I have written, one lists resources you will find useful for papers on comparative political parties (e.g., journals, online data). The other offers guidelines on writing good papers in comparative politics. Among the topics treated are how to frame a research question in the form of puzzle, how to frame testable hypotheses and use prior research to develop the logic leading up to each

hypothesis, and how to specify the rationale for choosing the types of evidence to be used in your paper. (Yes, the “Guidelines” topics echo the submissions outlined p. 2.)

Partial draft of research paper. The partial draft, due Wednesday, 05/04, allows you to revise and integrate the elements of your paper that you have submitted earlier. Where do you need to expand and where should you trim? Re-read and revise again. Is your writing as concise and precise as possible? You should also choose an apt, informative paper title and include a few tentative conclusions, which, however preliminary, will enable me to offer feedback that you can then incorporate into your final paper. The partial draft should be double-spaced, should be paginated, and should be a minimum of 1,750 words and a maximum of 2,000 words, excluding references and any tables or figures. (Use Tools > Word Count in MS Word; the word length specified translates roughly to 7-8+ double-spaced pages, assuming Times New Roman font.) This rule puts everyone on a level playing field, of obvious importance.

If you have aspects of the paper draft that you cannot polish to your satisfaction, keep a written record and exploit that record as a resource for your last stage of work on the paper. What are your key challenges, and how can you best tackle them? Be sure to email me and/or make an appointment with me if you need to.

Research paper. The final research paper is due Tuesday, 05/10. Think carefully about how to build on your partial draft and how to respond to suggestions received from me. Again: revise, refine, re-read, flesh out or trim where needed, and re-read again. Is your central research question genuinely puzzling? Are your hypotheses as clearly and logically developed as they can be? Do you show that your evidence is appropriate for evaluating your hypotheses? Is your interpretation of evidence judicious and fair? Do your conclusions not only recapitulate what you have done but also discuss broader implications? The research paper should be double-spaced and should be a minimum of 3,750 words and a maximum of 4,000 words, excluding references and any tables or figures. (This translates roughly to 15.5-16.5 double-spaced pages, assuming Times New Roman font.)

*Course rules and policies.* The following rules and policies are designed to help you benefit as much as possible from taking the class, interacting with fellow students, and interacting with me as the professor. The rules and policies are designed to help you learn.

- Attendance: I will not take official attendance, but if you do not attend class you will not be able to participate in in-class discussion. For each class you do not attend, your learning and your course grade will suffer.
- Phones: Send your last text before class starts, and then, shortly before 1 pm, silence your cellphones and put them away.
- Laptops: In our first class meeting on 01/26, we will discuss several possibilities for policy on use of laptops in our classroom. All students will be individually and collectively responsible for abiding by that policy for the remainder of the semester.

*Statement on equality of respect and equality of justice.* All class members are expected to treat each other at all times with respect, courtesy, tolerance, fairness, and justice. I strive to assure that students in this class are treated with equal respect and equal justice. As part of that effort, I identify my office as a safe haven for anyone who believes she or he is being treated with

prejudice or injustice. Moreover, I view it as my essential responsibility to include on this syllabus the Statement on Sexual Violence distributed by the UVa Office of the Dean of Students. You will find that statement, quoted in its entirety, as the Appendix to the syllabus.

*Statement on academic integrity.* I quote extensively from Prof. Bloomfield of the UVa Department of Physics, who offers this eloquent statement as part of his syllabus for Physics 1060, How Things Work (<http://rabi.phys.virginia.edu/1060/2015/ethics.html>).

“In a community dedicated to scholarship and learning, there is no substitute for academic and intellectual integrity. Honesty and forthrightness are essential pillars upon which our enterprise rests and, without them, there can be no trust and little community. All participants in this course are therefore expected to conduct themselves honestly and forthrightly at all times. Truth is the coin of our realm and that truth applies not only to words, facts, and ideas, but also to the authorship of those items. Misrepresentation of authorship is a form of intellectual dishonesty known as plagiarism and intolerable.”

I agree with this statement wholeheartedly and cannot think of a way to improve on it. Moreover, I put in writing the following expectations.

- I hold each student in this class responsible for knowing what actions violate the Honor System at this University.
- I hold each student responsible for abiding by the Honor System.

We all as members of the class have a collective responsibility to uphold academic and intellectual integrity.

*Readings.* The following books are required readings and are (or soon will be) available in the UVa Bookstore.

- Hunter, Wendy. 2010. *The Transformation of the Workers' Party in Brazil, 1989-2009*. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Meguid, Bonnie M. 2010. *Party Competition Among Unequals: Strategies and Electoral Fortunes in Western Europe*. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Scheiner, Ethan. 2005. *Democracy without Competition in Japan: Opposition Failure in a One-Party Dominant State*. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Other readings are posted at our course website at Resources. If you ever have difficulty locating readings, email me as soon as possible. When a set of articles is assigned, please read assignments in the order listed; I have identified a logical sequence in the week's readings.

## **Class Meeting Topics and Reading Assignments**

### 01/26 *Introduction*

- Choose one journal article abstract on Collab—your choice of readings before Spring Break, thus excluding book chapters. (An abstract is the short summary paragraph usually placed at the very start of an article; for Cox and Moser, which lack abstracts, read the first three paragraphs.) Be prepared to discuss:
  - What is (are) the central research question(s), as stated in the abstract?Other questions and issues will emerge as our collective discussion unfolds. Please bring a **printout** of the abstract with you.

02/02 *What drives the historical development of parties and party systems?*

- Cox, Gary W. 1986. "The Development of a Party-Oriented Electorate in England, 1832–1918." *British Journal of Political Science* 16 (2): 187-216. (At Collab Resources: a non-required 1-page reading offers guidance on Cox's use of quantitative methods.)
- Kalyvas, Stathis N. 1998. "From Pulpit to Party: Party Formation and the Christian Democratic Phenomenon." *Comparative Politics* 30 (3): 293-312.
- Heersink, Boris, and Jeffery A. Jenkins. 2015. "Southern Delegates and Republican National Convention Politics, 1880–1928." *Studies in American Political Development* 29 (1): 68-88.
- Kreuzer, Marcus. 2009. "How Party Systems Form: Path Dependency and the Institutionalization of the Post-War German Party System." *British Journal of Political Science* 39 (4): 669-697.

⇒ Forum posting due by 11:55 pm Monday; read all other students' postings as well. Topic: challenges in readings.

02/09 *How many and which parties win votes?*

- Moser, Robert G. 1999. "Electoral Systems and the Number of Parties in Post-Communist States." *World Politics* 51 (3): 359-384.
- Bale, Tim and Aleks Szczerbiak. 2008. "Why Is There No Christian Democracy in Poland—and Why Should We Care?" *Party Politics* 14 (4): 479-500.
- Grzymala-Busse, Anna. 2013. "Why There is (Almost) No Christian Democracy in Post-Communist Europe." *Party Politics* 19 (2): 319-342.
- Benoit, Kenneth and Jacqueline Hayden. 2004. "Institutional Change and Persistence: The Evolution of Poland's Electoral System, 1989-2001." *Journal of Politics* 66 (2): 396-427. (At Collab Resources: a non-required 2-page reading on Benoit-Hayden's methods.)

⇒ Forum posting due by 11:55 pm Monday; read all other students' postings as well. Topic: evolution of research ideas.

➤ Between 02/09, 5 pm, and 02/11, 11:55 pm, Thursday, complete the brief self-assessment rubric online at our Collab Assignments page.

02/16 *What explains the success and failure of new parties in established party systems? Part I*

- Meguid, *Party Competition Among Unequals*, Chapters 1-5, 1-142. (At Collab Resources: a non-required 2-page reading offers guidance on Meguid's use of quantitative methods; you will likely find this beneficial if you lack background in statistics.)

⇒ Forum posting due by 11:55 pm Monday; read all other students' postings as well. Topic: hypotheses and evidence.

02/23 *What explains the success and failure of new parties in established party systems? Part II*

- Meguid, Chapters 6-9, 143-282.

⇒ Forum posting due by 11:55 pm Monday; read all other students' postings as well. Topic: hypotheses and evidence.

➤ Between 02/23, 5 pm, and **02/25, 11:55 pm, Thursday**, submit one paragraph at Collab Assignments on your **tentative choice of research area** for your research paper. You may—but are not required to—include in your submission a statement of the research

question for your paper. (See “Guidelines” at the Collab Resources folder, “Resources for Research Papers.”)

03/01 First in-class blue book exam.

Please **bring blue books**. The exam should last **two** hours. You must **pledge your exam**.

- ✓ By 03/01, 5 pm, I will release to you my brief assessment of your in-class and online participation at our Collab Assignments page.

03/08 No class: Spring Break.

03/15 *Weakly institutionalized parties and party systems in new democracies*

- Mainwaring, Scott. 1992. "Brazilian Party Underdevelopment in Comparative Perspective." *Political Science Quarterly* 107 (4): 677-707.
  - Mainwaring, Scott, and Mariano Torcal. 2006. "Party System Institutionalization and Party System Theory After The Third Wave of Democratization." In Katz, Richard S., and William J. Crotty, eds., *Handbook of Party Politics*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 204-227.
  - O’Dwyer, Conor, and Branislav Kovalčik. 2007. "And the Last Shall Be First: Party System Institutionalization and Second-Generation Economic Reform in Post-communist Europe." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 41 (4): 3-26.
  - Yardımcı-Geyikçi, Şebnem. 2015. “Party Institutionalization and Democratic Consolidation: Turkey and Southern Europe in Comparative Perspective. *Party Politics* 21 (4): 527-538.
- ⇒ Forum posting due by 11:55 pm Monday; read all other students’ postings as well. Topic: framing of research questions.
- Between 03/15, 5 pm, and **03/18, 11:55 pm, Thursday**, submit to our Collab Assignments page a two- to three-paragraph **statement of the research question** anchoring your course research paper. (See “Guidelines” at the Collab Resources folder, “Resources for Research Papers.”)

03/22 *Incentives for change in party organization, I*

- Hunter, *The Transformation of the Workers' Party in Brazil*, Chapters 1-4, 1-105.
- ⇒ Forum posting due by 11:55 pm Monday; read all other students’ postings as well. Topic: hypotheses and evidence.
- Between 03/22, 5 pm, and **03/23, 11:55 pm, Wednesday**, complete the brief peer-assessment rubric online at our Collab Assignments page.

03/29 *Incentives for change in party organization, II*

- Hunter, Chapters 5-7, Appendix, 106-210.
- ⇒ Forum posting due by 11:55 pm Monday; read all other students’ postings as well. Topic: hypotheses and evidence.
- Between 03/29, 5 pm, and **04/01, 11:55 pm, Friday**, submit to Collab Assignments a 2-3 page **statement of the chief hypotheses bearing on the research question** addressed in your course research paper. For each hypothesis, use your understanding of relevant prior research to sketch the logic leading up the hypothesis. Use readings assigned in our class, this week and in the past, as models to emulate. Include with this submission a partial list

of **references** for your paper. (See “Guidelines” at the Collab Resources folder, “Resources for Research Papers.”)

04/05 *The puzzle of permanent incumbency, I*

- Scheiner, *Democracy Without Competition in Japan*, Introduction-Chapters 1-5, 1-131.
- ⇒ Forum posting due by 11:55 pm Monday; read all other students’ postings as well. Topic: types and sources of evidence, including rationale for case selection.
- ✓ By 04/05, 5 pm, I will release to you my brief assessment of your in-class and online participation at our Collab Assignments page.

04/12 *The puzzle of permanent incumbency, II*

- Scheiner, Chapters 6-10, 132-232.
- ⇒ Forum posting due by 11:55 pm Monday; read all other students’ postings as well. Topic: use of evidence.
- Between 04/12, 5 pm, and **04/14, 11:55 pm, Thursday**, submit to Collab Assignments a ~2-page **statement of the types and sources of evidence** you will use in your course research paper. Show that your choice of evidence is well suited to evaluating your hypotheses. If you use case studies, specify your rationale for case selection. Specify the links between each hypothesis and the evidence needed to evaluate it. Use readings assigned in our class as models to emulate. (See “Guidelines” at the Collab Resources folder, “Resources for Research Papers.”)

04/19 Second in-class blue book exam (1 hour); discussion of challenges in papers (1 hour).

Please **bring blue books**. The **low-key** exam will last **one** hour and will only cover material since Spring Break. You must **pledge your exam**.

After a brief break, you **must return** on 04/19 for a one-hour small-group and class-wide discussion of challenges in research papers and how to resolve them. Failure to return for the second hour will count as an F for participation 04/19 and also will likely harm your paper down the road.

04/26 *Parties and elections in authoritarian regimes: Why bother?*

- Langston, Joy, and Scott Morgenstern. 2009. "Campaigning in an Electoral Authoritarian Regime: The Case of Mexico." *Comparative Politics* 41 (2): 165-181.
  - Levitsky, Steven R., and Lucan A. Way. 2012. "Beyond Patronage: Violent Struggle, Ruling Party Cohesion, and Authoritarian Durability." *Perspectives on Politics* 10 (4): 869-889.
- ⇒ Forum posting due by 11:55 pm Monday; read all other students’ postings as well. Topic: insights from case studies.

05/03 *Parties across democracy and authoritarianism: Conclusions*

- Grzymala-Busse, Anna. 2006. “Authoritarian Determinants of Democratic Party Competition: The Communist Successor Parties in East Central Europe.” *Party Politics* 12 (3): 415-437.
- Riedl, Rachel Beatty. 2010. “The Iron Cage of Democracy: Institutional Similarity and Stasis in African Political Party Systems.” University of Notre Dame, Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies, Working Paper #372.

⇒ Forum posting due by 11:55 pm Monday; read all other students' postings as well. Topic: drawing conclusions.

✚ Our in-class small-group discussion today will focus on challenges in drawing conclusions for research papers. We will of course discuss the two assigned readings, but we will also give everyone the opportunity to compare their efforts in drawing tentative conclusions for their paper. What seems to be working and what is not, so far?

**05/04 Submit** via Collab Assignments a **draft of your research paper** by **Wednesday, 05/04, 11:55 pm**.

➤ Revise, refine, and integrate elements of the paper already submitted. Also include a title and a draft of tentative conclusions. For more guidance, see p. 3 here and see the "Guidelines" in Research Paper folder at Collab Resources.

**05/10 Submit** via Collab Assignments **your final research paper** by **Tuesday, 05/10, 5 pm**. For guidance, see p. 3 here and see the "Guidelines" in Research Paper folder at Collab Resources. The due date and time coincides with what would have been the end of exam time for our class, if we had had a final exam.

**APPENDIX: STATEMENT ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE** from the UVa Office of the Dean of Students.

"The University of Virginia is dedicated to providing a safe and equitable learning environment for all students. To that end, it is vital that you know two values that the University and I hold as critically important:

1. Power-based personal violence will not be tolerated.
2. Everyone has a responsibility to do their part to maintain a safe community on Grounds.

If you or someone you know has been affected by power-based personal violence, more information can be found on the UVA Sexual Violence website that describes reporting options and resources available - [www.virginia.edu/sexualviolence](http://www.virginia.edu/sexualviolence).

As your professor and as a person, I care about you and your well-being and stand ready to provide support and resources as I can. As a faculty member, I am a responsible employee, which means that I am required by University policy and federal law to report what you tell me to the University's Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator's job is to ensure that the reporting student receives the resources and support that they need, while also reviewing the information presented to determine whether further action is necessary to ensure survivor safety and the safety of the University community. If you would rather keep this information confidential, there are Confidential Employees you can talk to on Grounds (See [http://www.virginia.edu/justreportit/confidential\\_resources.pdf](http://www.virginia.edu/justreportit/confidential_resources.pdf)). The worst possible situation would be for you or your friend to remain silent when there are so many here willing and able to help."