

# Introduction to Comparative Politics

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*PSCI 2012, Spring 2020*  
*University of Colorado, Boulder*

## Class Information

Professor Carew Boulding  
Lecture: Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:00-10:50am, Math 100 (Plus your recitation section)  
My Office: Ketchum 231  
My Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 11-Noon, or by appointment  
My Email: [boulding@colorado.edu](mailto:boulding@colorado.edu)  
Course website: see Canvas

## Course description

Welcome to this class! This semester we are going to explore one of the major subfields of political science – Comparative Politics. Chances are many of you are already skilled comparativists. Have you ever wondered why some countries are rich and some are poor? Why are some countries governed as democracies and others ruled by dictators? Have you wondered how the politics and economics of some countries have changed so much and so rapidly? Have you ever talked about politics with someone from another country (or another part of the U.S.) and been amazed at how differently they see things? Comparative politics is the systematic study and comparison of these kinds of differences, with a focus on understanding *why* politics can produce such different outcomes.

This class will explore these questions through three major country case studies: Germany, China and Bolivia, and several mini-case studies. Each of these countries allows us to explore more specific questions related to the big questions of the course:

- ❖ Why did democracy break down in Germany before WWII? How did Germany overcome its tumultuous history and become a healthy democracy with a strong economy?
- ❖ How has China's authoritarian regime managed to build and consolidate state strength in just 60 years?
- ❖ How has Bolivia responded to the pressures of globalization and how has globalization affected democracy and economic issues in Bolivia?
- ❖ How does the United States compare to other countries in the world in terms of democracy and economic issues?

Overall, this class will be an exciting introduction to some of the big issues in world politics, an understanding of variation in the world, data sources for comparing countries, and the tools that Political Science can offer to make sense of the world.

## Required Materials

- The primary **textbook** for this course is a book by David Samuels, *Comparative Politics*
  - You can purchase the text [here](#).
- Additionally, please purchase the following **book** from the bookstore or bookseller of your choice
  - *China in Ten Words*, Yu Hua (2011)
- Occasional articles will also be assigned and made available on **Canvas**.
- Please also take advantage of CU's free access to the [New York Times](#) and read the news daily.
- Finally, you will also need a **clicker**, available from the bookstore if you don't already have one.

## Assignments and Grading

Assignment	Grade Percentage	Due Date
Clickers	5%	
Recitation Section Grade	20%	
1 <sup>st</sup> Midterm Exam	10%	Wed. 2/19
2 <sup>nd</sup> Midterm Exam	15%	Wed. 3/18
Final Exam*	20%	Sat. 5/2 4:30-7:00 pm
Simulation Project	10%	Write-up due Mon. 2/10
Final Research Paper	20%	Mon. 4/27 in Lecture

### Lecture Attendance and Clicker Responses (5%)

We will have daily clicker response questions during lecture. Some of these will be opinion-based, without a correct answer, and some will be quizzes based on readings and previous lectures. To receive proper credit, all students must have a Clicker registered to their name. To register, login to [the buff portal](#) and follow instructions To give students time to register and test-run their Clicker for this class, scores will not begin to affect grades until the lecture of 1/27 (week 3).

You have four “free” days to be used for absences. At the end of the semester, your four worst Clicker days will be discarded and the grade will be calculated over the remaining days. Use these four free days wisely! These should cover absences for ANY reason, including illness, injury, dead batteries, lateness, religious holidays, family obligations, etc. Students who are found cheating with their Clickers (including entering responses for a friend who is not in class) will receive an “F” for the course and will be referred to the Honor Council.

### Recitation Sections (20%)

Your sections are your chance to meet with a smaller group of students and a graduate teaching assistant. In section, you will have a chance for more discussion, debate, and small group projects related to the class. Your

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\* Per University Policy, if you have three or more final exams scheduled on the same day, you are entitled to arrange an alternate exam time for the last exam or exams scheduled on that day. If you have two final exams scheduled to meet at the same time, you are entitled to arrange an alternate exam time for the later class offered that day or week. Such arrangements must be made by the deadline to drop a class without your dean and instructor's permission in the tenth week of the semester (**before Friday, March 20th**). Students should make arrangements with the instructor of the affected class and are expected to provide evidence of these situations to qualify for exceptions.

section grade (20%) will be assigned by your TA based on your attendance (10%) and your performance (including quizzes and participation in section) (10%).

**Attendance:** You have 2 “free” absences for section attendance. Beyond those two, your attendance grade will be lowered from 100 by 10 points per absence. Students with eight or more absences will either have to drop the class or receive an “F.”

**Performance:** Your TA will evaluate your participation in the class based on your participation in discussion and performance on section quizzes and assignments.

### Examinations (45%)

There will be three closed book in-class exams for this class. The first midterm (10%) will cover material from weeks 1-5. The second midterm (15%) will cover weeks 1-10, and the Final Exam (20%) will cover all the material from the course (weeks 1-15).

### Simulation (10%)

During the fourth week of the semester, you will participate in a role-playing simulation of a parliament in your recitation sections. 1% of your grade will be based on the outcome of the simulation, and 9% will be based on your write-up paper. †

### Final Research paper (20%)

Twenty-percent of your final grade is based on a 1000-word research paper (4-5 pages) due the Monday of the last week of class (4/27). Papers handed in late will have 10% deducted from the final score for each business day they are late. Students must submit both a paper and an electronic version and the late penalty applies to both. More information on the research paper will be handed out after the first midterm.

### Other Guidelines

- ❖ Please come to lecture prepared to pay attention for 50 minutes. I will do my best to make these lectures worth your time and attention.
- ❖ Please turn off your cell phones, computers and tablets and take notes with pen and paper.
- ❖ All legitimate excused absences (including religious holidays, illness, injury, etc.) DO count against your four free absences. You are strongly encouraged to use your absences for these purposes. Of course, if you are dealing with something unusual and need special consideration, please come talk to me.

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† In the unlikely event that your final course letter grade is affected by your score on the 1% portion of this assignment, you may email me a petition for a grade change. This has occurred less than 3 times in over 1,000 students.

## Course Calendar

Week	Date	Lecture	Reading	Section
Week 1	1/13	Introduction: What is Comparative Politics?	Ch. 1 “Doing Comparative Politics”	Introductions
	1/15	Institutions, Identities and Interests		
Week 2	1/20	No Class – MLK		Data Sources
	1/22	What are we comparing? States, Nations, and Governments	Ch. 2 “The State”	
Week 3	1/27	Germany: What led to the rise of the Nazis?	Ch. 5 “Regime Change”	Picking your own countries to compare
	1/29	Germany: How did Germany become a democracy?		
Week 4	2/3	What is Democracy?	Ch. 3 “Democratic Political Regimes”	Parliamentary Simulation
	2/5	Types of Democracies		
Week 5	2/10	U.S. Institutions in comparative perspective	Article: Allen	Discussion
	2/12	Democracy Conclusions		
Week 6	2/17	Review/ Catch up		
	2/19	<b>Midterm 1</b>		
Week 7	2/24	Democratic Backsliding	Article: Bermeo (2017) “On Democratic Backsliding”	Discussion
	2/26	How do Non-Democratic Regimes work?	Ch. 4 “Non-Democratic Political Regimes”	
Week 8	3/2	States and Markets: What can states do to make the economy better or worse?	Ch. 11 “Political Economy of Development”	Paper ideas due
	3/4	China: How has China developed such a strong state and strong economy without becoming democratic?	first half of “China in Ten Words”	

Week 9	3/9	China: Institutions	Second half of “China in Ten Words”	Discussion
	3/11	China: Conclusions		
Week 10	3/16	Review		
	3/18	<b>Midterm #2</b>		
Week 11	3/23	<b>Spring Break</b>		
	3/25	<b>Spring Break</b>		
Week 12	3/30	Social Movements and Protest (1)	Ch. 9 “Collective Action”	Discussion
	4/1	Social Movements and Protest (2)		
Week 13	4/6	Gender and Politics (1)	Ch. 8 “Gender and Politics”	Discussion
	4/8	Gender and Politics (2)		
Week 14	4/13	What is Globalization?	Ch. 13 “Globalization”	Discussion
	4/15	How does globalization affect politics?		
Week 15	4/20	Bolivia: How has Bolivia responded to Globalization?	“Whispering in the Giant’s Ear” selection (available on website)	Discussion
	4/22	Bolivia: Conclusions		
Week 16	4/27	Conclusions		Final Paper Due in Lecture
	4/29	Final Review		

## CU Policies

### Accommodation for Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or [dsinfo@colorado.edu](mailto:dsinfo@colorado.edu) for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

## Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

## Preferred Student Names and Pronouns

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name.

## Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu)); 303-492-5550). Students found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#).

## Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, intimate partner abuse (including dating or domestic violence), stalking, or protected-class discrimination or harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or [cureport@colorado.edu](mailto:cureport@colorado.edu). Information about the OIEC, university policies, [anonymous reporting](#), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

## Religious Holidays

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. For each class, check with your faculty member in advance so that you are aware of their specific requirements for accommodating religious observances. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.