

**Political Change and Conflict:
An Introduction to Comparative Politics (PSC 200-02)
Spring 2020**

Course Syllabus (*updated: 01/20/2020*)

**Southern Connecticut State University
M/W 3:25–4:40 PM, Location EN C008**

**Instructor: Tiago Peterlevitz
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Office Hours: By appointment**

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the study of key topics in politics focusing on the experience of countries other than the United States. Political efforts to organize interests and reach agreed-upon decisions are contrasted with the use of coercion and violence by governments and groups. We will discuss concepts and theories that help us to explain political behavior, political institutions, and policy outcomes. Students will develop and practice skills that will serve them well no matter the professional career of choice.

Class Format

Class will be a mix of lectures and discussions; as such, students are to be prepared to contribute to class discussions. All readings are mandatory and should be done before class. Except for the textbook indicated below, which students should purchase, readings will be posted on Blackboard. Written assignments will be used to make students think critically, connect theory and evidence, and develop logical arguments. Multimedia activities will be used in order to reinforce understanding of topics covered in readings and class. Group activities will be used so students can work collectively and value different perspectives.

Required Textbook

Samuels, David J. (2018). *Comparative Politics*. Second Edition. Pearson (ISBN 9780134562674).

As electronic devices will not be allowed during most of the class, I strongly recommend the purchase or rental of the paper format version of the book (so you can consult it during class). The university bookstore has the paper format version available for rent:

<https://southern-ct.bncollege.com/shop/southern-ct/page/find-textbooks>

Course Evaluation

- Individual Participation: 10%. Students will receive a tent card with their names on the first day of class. Participation and presence will be registered and rewarded.
- Class Quizzes: 15%. Students should sign up for the Kahoot (www.kahoot.com) platform and use smartphones to answer in-class quizzes. These will take place at the beginning of classes and will cover the assigned readings.
- Group Participation: 10%. Students will be assigned to groups of four or five members on the first day of class. Groups will have to develop arguments collectively, answering questions proposed in class.
- Group Paper and Presentation: 15%. Student groups will have to prepare a research paper. This should be structured as an academic paper (containing abstract, introduction, literature review, theory and hypotheses, data and methods, results, conclusion, and bibliography) and have approximately 20–25 double-spaced pages. The paper should follow the APSA Style Manual (<https://connect.apsanet.org/stylemanual/>). The topic of the paper should speak directly to the themes covered in class and should be authorized by the instructor. A five-page paper proposal summarizing the literature and theory is due on 03/30. The final paper is due on 05/11. By the end of the semester, students will have to present the paper to the class.
- First Exam: 10%
- Midterm Exam: 15%
- Final Exam: 25%

Electronic Devices

All electronic devices—cell phones, laptops, and tablets—should be turned off for the duration of the class. There are two exceptions to this rule. Cell phones will be used to answer quizzes. Laptops and tablets can be used to consult the readings during group exercises. Therefore, please use a regular notebook to take notes.

Students with Disabilities

I am eager to cooperate with any special needs that students have. Please see the Disability Resource Center in order to follow the proper protocol and come talk to me.

Academic Integrity

Integrity is a crucial part of the academic experience. Students are responsible for knowing what constitutes plagiarism. Make sure you read our university's policies on plagiarism: <https://inside.southernct.edu/student-conduct/academic-misconduct>.

Plagiarism is a serious offense. The first offense will be penalized with an F for the assignment. A second offense will be punished with an F for the class. You must always do

your own work, and you may never plagiarize or cheat on tests or papers. In all written work and exams, you may paraphrase and cite your class notes, but do not copy sentences or fragments of sentences word for word from any textbook, journal, newspaper, magazine, book, or on-line source. You must cite all references made within your written work, whether quoted directly or paraphrased.

Course Schedule (subject to change with advance notice)

Week 1: Course Introduction and Organization

- Mon, January 20: MLK, No Class
- Wed, January 22: Class Organization

Week 2: What is Comparative Politics?

- Mon, January 27. Samuels Chap. 1.
- Wed, January 29. King, Gary; Keohane, Robert O. and Verba, Sidney. (1994). *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press. (Chap 1: The Science in Social Science).

Week 3: The State

- Mon, February 3. Samuels Chap. 2.
- Wed, February 5. Herbst, Jeffrey. I. (2014), *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Introduction and Chap. 5: National Design and the Broadcasting of Power). Princeton University Press.

Week 4: Democratic Political Regimes

- Mon, February 10. Samuels Chap. 3.
- Wed, February 12. Dahl, R. A. (1971). *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (Chapter 1: Democratization and Public Opposition). Yale University Press.

Week 5: First Exam

- Mon, February 17: President's Day: no class
- Wed, February 19: First Exam

Week 6: Non-Democratic Political Regimes

- Mon, February 24. Samuels Chap. 4.
- Wed, February 26. Gandhi, Jennifer and Lust-Okar, Ellen. (2009). Elections Under Authoritarianism, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 12: 403-422.

Week 7: Regime Change

- Mon, March 2. Samuels Chap. 5.
- Wed, March 4. Bellin, Eva (2012). Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring. *Comparative Politics*, 44(2), 127-149.

Week 8: Political Identity

- Mon, March 9. Samuels Chap. 6.
- Wed, March 11. Posner, Daniel. (2004). The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi. *American Political Science Review* 98(4): 529-545.

Week 9: Spring Break, No Class

- Mon, March 16: Spring Break
- Wed, March 18: Spring Break

Week 10: Religion and Politics + Midterm Exam

- Mon, March 23. Samuels Chap. 7.
- Wed, March 25: Midterm Exam

Week 11: Gender and Politics

- Mon, March 30. Samuels Chap. 8. Paper proposal due.
- Wed, April 1. Bursztyn, Leonardo; Fujiwara, Thomas and Pallais, Amanda. (2017). “Acting Wife”: Marriage Market Incentives and Labor Market Investments. *American Economic Review*, 107(11): 3288-3319.

Week 12: Collective Action

- Mon, April 6. Samuels Chap. 9.
- Wed, April 8. Olson, Mancur. (2002) [1964]. *The Logic of Collective Action* (Introduction; Chap. 1: A Theory of Groups and Organizations; and Chap.2: Group Size and Group Behavior). Harvard University Press.

Week 13: Political Violence

- Mon, April 13. Samuels Chap. 10.
- Wed, April 15. Aksoy, Deniz (2018). Electoral and Partisan Cycles in Counterterrorism. *The Journal of Politics*, 80(4): 1239-1253.

Week 14: The Political Economy of Development

- Mon, April 20. Samuels Chap. 11.
- Wed, April 22. Humphreys, Macartan and Weinstein, Jeremy M. (2009). Field Experiments and the Political Economy of Development. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 12: 367-378.

Week 15: The Political Economy of Redistribution

- Mon, April 27. Samuels Chap. 12.
- Wed, April 29. Solt, Frederick. (2008). Economic Inequality and Democratic Political Engagement. *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(1): 48-60.

Week 16: Globalization + Student Presentations

- Mon, May 4: Student Presentations. Samuels Chap. 13.
- Wed, May 6: Student Presentations. Bove, Vincenzo and Böhmelt, Tobias. (2016). Does Immigration Induce Terrorism? *The Journal of Politics*, 78(2): 572-588.

Week 17: Final Exam

- Mon, May 11: Final Exam. Final Paper due.