

Point Loma Nazarene University
Department of History and Political Science

Political Science 3070: Comparative Politics

Instructor: Prof. Maria Voss

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Office Hours: Mondays 2-3pm; Tuesdays
and Thursdays 12:00-1:00pm; as well as by
appointment

Spring 2025

Course Time: T/TH 10:00am-11:45am

Course website: On Canvas

Class Location: Ryan Learning 104

*“Without comparisons to make, the mind does not
know how to proceed.”*

- Alexis de Tocqueville, 1830

*“A man who has tasted only his mother’s soup has
no basis to claim that hers is the best.”*

- African proverb

*“And what should they know of England, Who only
England know?”*

- Rudyard Kipling



PLNU Mission:

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where truth is pursued, grace is foundational, and holiness is a way of life.

Department of History and Political Science Mission:

As followers of Christ, the Department of History and Political Science promotes wisdom and scholarship about historical contexts and political systems, so that graduates can become local and global leaders in the service of Christ and humanity.

Course Description:

This course examines the many ways in which we can make meaningful comparisons across political systems throughout the world. We will compare and contrast the variety of ways in which different countries have chosen to shape their political institutions and processes, and assess the costs and benefits of these choices. In other words, we will ask: how and why do political choices matter to the people living in that country? For instance, we will analyze the variety of public policies different countries have adopted to address common problems, such as poverty, disease, and pollution. Special emphasis will be placed on the comparative structures and functions of government, as we survey contemporary politics and political trends in selected countries and regions around the world.

In the first part of the class, we will learn the different political structures that have been erected in countries throughout the world, focusing on theories for assessing these structures and analyses of the processes and policies in place. In the second part of the course, we'll read and study one of the major comparative politics books today – *Citizen Politics* by Russell Dalton. This book looks at advanced, industrial democracies and studies how they compare to one another in terms of public opinion and political parties. In the final and third part of the course, we'll travel around the world and touch on every continent (well, not Antarctica) as we study 8 countries in-depth.

Course Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Understand why comparative politics continues to be one of the most important sub-fields in political science, both in terms of epistemological advancement and real-world relevance.
- Identify some of the key theoretical approaches, conceptual tools, and methods used in the field of comparative politics.
- Describe political institutions that are common to all governments in the world and identify key distinctions across different types of political systems.
- Utilize ideas to frame explanations of political outcomes around the world.
- Apply concepts learned to country case studies and analyze their similarities and differences.
- Analyze and evaluate the findings of a seminal comparative politics book.
- Write an original research analysis paper that systematically compares two countries on one key structural-functional component.

Program Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Evaluate, design, and apply social science research with respect to political phenomena (PLO assessed through the final paper, the in-class paper on *Citizen Politics*, and the 30 second elevator speeches).
- Understand and critically assess the processes, theories, and outcomes of political institutions and political behavior (PLO assessed through the midterm exam).
- Demonstrate social scientific information literacy (PLO assessed through the *Citizen Politics* abstracts).

Course Readings:

All readings are required and are available at the bookstore (copies of both Dalton and Kesselman are available on two-hour reserve at the library).

1. Dalton, Russell J. 2020 (7th edition). *Citizen Politics*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

2. Kesselman, Mark, editor. 2010 (2nd edition). *Readings in Comparative Politics*. Boston: Wadsworth.
3. Powell, G. Bingham, Jr., Kaare Strom, Melanie Manion, and Russel J. Dalton (hereafter PSMD). 2018 (12th edition). *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*. New York: Pearson.

Course Format and Expectations:

This course will meet two times per week. It is in your best interest that you attend each class session. It is also essential that the readings be completed prior to coming to class as the lecture and discussion will usually expand on and draw from the readings.

Students are encouraged to participate during the lectures. In addition, discussion time will be built into each class. “Lecture” time will be spent on a combination of lecture, discussion, group activities, and short videos.

At the end of this course, you should understand the comparative method of political research, how comparative politics relates to the other three areas of political science (American politics, international relations, and political theory), how institutions, structures, and processes differ throughout the political world, how public opinion varies between advanced, industrial democracies, and finally, have a detailed understanding of the political system of eight countries in particular.

Finally, I promise to work hard to help you in this learning journey and in return, I ask that you commit yourself to a few things this semester: attending class regularly, keeping up with assignments and readings, coming to class on time and prepared, engaging with the classroom community while in class, and thinking about the course material in a deep and reflective way. If we all dedicate ourselves to the learning process, we can have so much fun – I promise!

Assessment Requirements:

Attendance/Participation – To incentivize attendance, I will start each day by distributing a sign in sheet. Attendance for this course is wrapped up in participation in the sense that if you don’t come, you’re not participating, and your grade will go down. Participation grades will therefore be a combination of general attendance patterns (including arrival time), in-class discussion contributions (whether with the whole class or in small groups), contributions to in-class presentations, your peers’ assessment of your elevator speech contributions (assessed through a confidential peer-reviewed form distributed at the end of the course), out-of-class contact with the professor, limiting non-course related distractions during class time, and your general attitude toward and involvement with the course.

Midterm Exam – the midterm exam will focus on main concepts from the reading, lecture, and in-class discussions. The exam will consist of eight short answer questions, of which you’ll choose four to answer. The midterm will also include a map quiz. You will identify 10 countries on a map. You will not have a choice of the 10 countries that you will place on the blank map. *A “study guide” list of possible countries and concepts that will be used in the short answer questions will be posted on Canvas before the midterm exam.*

Abstracts and In-Class Paper for *Citizen Politics* – For this in-class writing assignment, you’ll be writing an essay on Dalton’s *Citizen Politics*. You will have the entire class period to write the essay and it will be open-note and open-book. In preparing for the assignment, you will be asked to write short abstracts of each chapter as you read them. These abstracts will be due (on Canvas) in the weeks leading up to the in-class essay (please see the schedule below for due dates). Generally, each abstract should accurately convey the content of the chapter and should be comprehensive and balanced with clear sentence structure and

logical and smooth transitions between points. Specifically, it should briefly summarize the overall purpose of the chapter, the main findings of the chapter, and the chapter's contribution to the overall argument of the book. Each abstract (one per chapter) should be 150-250 words and I will be firm with this – *the goal is to help you practice being robust but concise in your written communication*. Please note the number of words on the top of each abstract and please write any abstracts due on one day on one document (this makes it easier to view on Canvas). Finally, each abstract is worth 2 points, for a total of 20 points. The paper itself is worth 60 points, making the point total for this assignment 80 points. Please see the last page of the syllabus for an example of an abstract.

Country Study News Articles – During Part III of the course (“Politics Around the World”), you’ll be reading chapters from our PSMD text that focus on a particular country. These are a great introduction to the politics of the country, but I’d like you to also gain some insight into current developments in each of these countries. Therefore, for each of these days, you should read one current (within the last 6 months) news article about that day’s assigned country and come prepared to tell your small group (I’ll create these groups of 4-6 students) about your news story. In particular, you should prepare a 45 second “elevator speech” telling us: 1) the general topic of the story 2) how the story relates to the PSMD chapter for that day’s assigned country and 3) why people should pay attention to this story. Every student can take one day “off” (missed classes will be counted as a day off) but otherwise, the expectation is that you come to class ready to give a short elevator speech to your small group (again, this is only for the last section of the course – “Politics Around the World”).

While there are no graded points associated with this exercise, your effort, articulation, and insight will be factored into your participation grade. Please practice keeping to the 45 second time limit as we’ll be keeping time and someone will alert you when you hit this mark. This is to help you practice the art of publicly articulating complex topics in a very concise manner – a useful skill in both the professional world and in life.

Finally, the article must come from one of the following approved sources: *The Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *The Economist*, *BBC News*, *NPR*, *Reuters News*, *The Atlantic*, or the *San Diego Union Tribune* (much of the international news in the *San Diego UT* comes from the other outlets listed here). In some cases, as with *BBC News*, the “article” may be an audio story or video – that’s okay. The goal is to have you engaging with more in-depth, high quality, analytical, and as impartial-as-possible news. Some of the online versions of these news sources limit the number of free articles you can read each month, but both the HPS department lounge and the Ryan Library have hard copies of many of these newspapers or weekly magazines. Feel free to take a paper copy from the department lounge home with you! Finally, many of these outlets offer great student subscription rates (as little as \$1 a week).

Final Paper – Your final paper will have you researching either two separate countries or one country pre- and post-regime change. At least one of your countries must be from the list of countries assigned on the schedule below (the last section of the course); the second is your choice and can come from the list as well or be an entirely different country (or non-state nation). You will compare these countries using one particular criterion. The full paper prompt is on Canvas.

Final Paper Prep Sheet – To help you in your research and writing process, I am asking you to submit a short prep sheet approximately two weeks before the final paper is due. Please see the assignment on Canvas for more information.

Buffer Points – Another goal of this class is to familiarize students with how politics is actually practiced around the globe. This activity provides students the opportunity to check their learning, understanding, and ability to apply course concepts to events outside of their textbooks. During the course, you may bring in up to six 1-2 page (12 point font, double spaced, standard margins) analyses of a current (within the last 15

days) news article. Your write-up should link the news story to *any* of the course’s topics (not necessarily that day’s assigned reading) and should analyze (*not* summarize) the article, drawing on lessons from lecture, the readings, and class discussions. For instance, what concept is this story an example of? Does the article support or contradict what you have learned in class? A sound analysis (insightful, articulate, and cogent) will earn you one point, with a maximum of six such extra-credit or “buffer points” being possible during the course. *Earning a point is not guaranteed*; if the write-up is deemed as too much of a summary, no points will be given. There are three further restrictions: 1) You may turn in only one analysis per class session (you can bring a hard copy or email your response, but either way it must be turned in by the start of class) and 2) The article must come from one of the following approved sources: *The Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *The Economist*, *BBC News*, *NPR*, *Reuters News*, *The Atlantic*, or the *San Diego Union Tribune* and 3) Please do not reuse the articles that you choose for the country study elevator speeches (see above). You can email these to me and when you do, please include a link to the article you are analyzing.

**All late assignments/exams (in-class and out of class) will have points deducted – exceptions to this policy are rare and made on a case-by-case basis. Additionally, please note that I may change the structure of any make-up exam or assignment given. If you have some special circumstance that might affect your ability to meet all the course’s expectations – e.g., a brother’s wedding, a broken laptop, or whatever – come and talk to me immediately. With abundant notice, I’ll be as accommodating as possible, as long as it does not compromise fairness for all.*

Grading:

Midterm Exam	90 Points
Abstracts for <i>Citizen Politics</i>	20 Points (10 Abstracts at 2 Points Each)
In-Class Paper on <i>Citizen Politics</i>	60 Points
Participation (including attendance)	25 Points
Final Paper Prep Sheet	5 Points
Final Paper	100 Points
TOTAL	300 Points
Buffer Points (optional extra credit)	6 Points

Grade Scale Based on Percentages:

A	B	C	D	F
A 93.3-100	B+ 86.6-89	C+ 76.6-79	D+ 66.6-69	F 59.9 and below
A- 90-93.2	B 83.3-86.5	C 73.3-76.5	D 63.3-66.5	
	B- 80-83.2	C- 70-73.2	D- 60-63.2	

Schedule - Full citations appear at the end of the syllabus:

	Topic	Reading/Research Assignment
	Part I: Concepts and Issues in Comparative Political Science	
Week 1		
January 14	Introduction and Welcome!	No Reading
January 16	Comparative Politics in Political Science	PSMD, chapters 1-2; Kesselman, chapter 1.1
Week 2		

January 21	Doing Comparative Politics I <i>If you are able, please bring a computer or tablet to class.</i>	Kesselman, chapters 4.3 and 2.4; Freedom House essay on press freedom; Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index; <i>The Economist</i> article
January 23	Doing Comparative Politics II	PSMD, chapter 3; Economist Intelligence Unit (“Democracy Index 2022”– pay particular attention to the country to which you were assigned in the previous class)
Week 3		
January 28	Political Culture and Socialization; Interest Articulation	PSMD, chapter 4 (through section 4.5); Kesselman, chapter 5.1
January 30	Interest Aggregation & Political Parties	PSMD, chapter 4 (section 4.6 to the end); Kesselman, chapters 6.5 and 6.6
Week 4		
February 4	Policymaking	PSMD, chapter 5; Kesselman, chapter 6.1
February 6	Public Policy	PSMD, chapter 6; Kesselman, chapters 5.4 and 7.7
Week 5		
February 11	Midterm Review	No Reading
February 13	Midterm Exam	No Reading – study for today’s exam! ☺
Week 6		
Part II: Citizen Politics		
February 18	Citizen Politics	Dalton, chapters 1-2; Kesselman, chapter 7.3 Due: Abstracts for <u>each</u> of the following Dalton chapters: chapters 1-2 (see description above)
February 20	Getting Involved: Political Participation	Dalton, chapters 3-4; Kesselman, chapter 7.2 Due: Abstracts for <u>each</u> of the following Dalton chapters: chapters 3-4
Week 7		
February 25	Value Change	Dalton, chapter 5
February 27	Issues and Ideology	Dalton, chapter 6 Due: Abstracts for <u>each</u> of the following Dalton chapters: chapters 5-6

Week 8		
March 4	Party Time: Elections and Political Parties Around the World	Dalton, chapter 7
March 6	Social Groups and Political Parties	Dalton, chapter 8 Due: Abstracts for <u>each</u> of the following chapters: chapters 7-8
★ Spring Break! ★		
March 11 & 13	No Classes; Spring Break!	No Reading – Relax!
Week 9		
March 18	Partisanship and Electoral Behavior	Dalton, chapter 9; Levin article
March 20	Attitudes and Electoral Behavior	Dalton, chapter 10 Due: Abstracts for <u>each</u> of the following chapters: chapters 9-10
Week 10		
March 25	Citizens and Democracy	Dalton, chapter 12; Howe article
March 27	In-Class Paper	No Reading – Prep for today’s in-class writing assignment! ☺
Week 11		
Part III: Politics Around the World		
April 1	Politics in Britain	PSMD, chapter 7; country study news article (see description above)
April 3	Politics in China	PSMD, chapter 12; country study news article (see description above)
Week 12		
April 8	Politics in Russia	PSMD, chapter 11; country study news article (see description above)
April 10	Politics in Mexico	PSMD, chapter 13; country study news article (see description above)
Week 13		
April 15	Politics in Iran	PSMD, chapter 15; country study news article (see description above) Due: “Final Paper Prep Sheet”(it is posted on Canvas; please submit your completed prep sheet on Canvas)
April 17	No classes; Happy Easter!	No readings

Week 14		
April 22	Politics in India	PSMD, chapter 16; country study news article (see description above)
April 24	Politics in Nigeria	PSMD, chapter 17; country study news article (see description above)
Week 15		
April 29	Politics in the U.S.	PSMD, chapter 18; country study news article (see description above)
May 1	No Class; Flex Day	No reading – Work on your final paper!
Finals Week		
Tuesday, April 30 th at 10:30am	Final Research Paper	Final paper due by 10:30am on Canvas.

Full Citations

The Economist. 2019. “How Victor Orban Hollowed Out Hungary’s Democracy.” *The Economist*, August 29. Available at <https://www.economist.com/briefing/2019/08/29/how-viktor-orban-hollowed-out-hungarys-democracy>.

The Economist Intelligence Unit. 2023. “Democracy Index 2022” *The Economist*. Available at <https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2022/>.

Howe, Paul. October 2017. “Eroding Norms and Democratic Consolidation.” *Journal of Democracy* 28 (4): 15-29.

Levin, Yuval. “Partisanship is Good.” *Newsweek*, February 23, 2009, page 30. Available at <http://www.newsweek.com/yuval-levin-defense-partisan-politics-82735>.

Late Assignments:

All assignments are to be submitted when they are due, both in class and on Canvas. Late assignments will have points deducted. If you anticipate needing to turn something in late, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss options.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy:

You are allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g, ChatGPT, iA Writer, Marmot, Botowski) to generate ideas, but you are not allowed to use AI tools to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that will end up in any work submitted to be graded for this course. If you have any doubts about using AI, please gain permission from the instructor.

Trigger Warning (TW):

I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive several types of information. In this class, you may encounter topics that you find triggering, including violence and sexual assault. Each time this topic appears in a reading or unit, it is marked on the syllabus with a “TW.” If your own research focuses on a topic that you think may be triggering for others, please let me know so we can give the class advance warning before your research presentation.

PLNU Copyright Policy:

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU Academic Honesty Policy:

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one’s own when in reality they are the results of another person’s creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See Academic Policies for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy:

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities. Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). Once a student’s eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will issue an academic accommodation plan (“AP”) to all faculty who teach courses in which the student is enrolled each semester.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course and/or if they do not wish to utilize some or all of the elements of their AP in that course.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student’s responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC.

PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy:

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university withdrawal date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation.

Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination:

In support of a safe learning environment, if you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual discrimination or misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that accommodations and resources are available through the Title IX Office at pointloma.edu/Title-IX. Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, faculty and staff are required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office. If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Counseling Services at counselingservices@pointloma.edu or find a list of campus pastors at pointloma.edu/title-ix.

Spiritual Care:

Please be aware PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as whole persons. To this end, we provide resources for our students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith. If students have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain or have prayer requests you can contact the Office of Student Life and Formation.

Campus Resources:

Research librarians are available to help you in the Ryan Library. You can reach them by phone at (619) 849-2337, by text at (619) 592-8884, or by email at reflib@pointloma.edu. To search the library for books and articles, please click here to visit their main website.

The Wellness Center is available for medical, counseling and nutrition services to students. Many college students experience strained relationships, stress, anxiety, depression, physical health challenges, and other barriers to learning. The Wellness Center offers help and resources to deal with these kinds of issues. The Wellness Center is located on the first floor of Nicholson Commons and is open Monday-Friday, 8 am-12:30 pm and 1:30-4 pm. They can be reached at sdwellnesscenter@pointloma.edu or at (619) 849-2574. In an emergency after hours, call 911 and PLNU Public Safety at (619) 849-2525.

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact *PLNU's Student Care Case Manager*, Rachel Martinez (rmarintine@pointloma.edu). Additionally, if you struggle with food insecurity or unstable housing, please let me know if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to better understand the hardships you are navigating and to help connect you to available resources. Finally, please note that PLNU offers a Swipe Out Hunger program that allows students that are experiencing food insecurity to request free meal swipes (contact Rachel at the email above).

Title IX of the Education Amendments (1972) protects your right to an educational experience that is free from sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. It is my goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions, in your written work, and in our one-on-one meetings. I will seek to keep any information you share private to the greatest extent possible. You should know that I have a mandatory reporting responsibility under PLNU policy and federal law, and am required to share any information I receive regarding sexual harassment, discrimination, and related conduct with PLNU's Title IX Coordinator.

PLNU strives to provide a learning and living environment that promotes safety, transparency, personal integrity, civility, mutual respect, and freedom from unlawful discrimination or sexual harassment. Detailed information on discrimination, harassment, and sexual assault policies and processes for getting help and for reporting are available on the PLNU website. PLNU's Title IX Coordinator is Danielle Brown Friberg and she can be reached at titleix@pointloma.edu or (619) 849-2313. The Title IX office will seek to maintain

your privacy to the greatest extent possible, but cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Students can receive confidential support (with the exception of a few critical situations) from the Wellness Center (619-849-2574) or campus pastors in the Office of Student Life and Formation (619-849-2655).

Finally, you may also report an incident(s) of discrimination or bias using the [Bias Incident Reporting Form](#).

Lexi Lomaland
POL 3070: \$Comparative Politics
Sample Book Chapter Abstract¹

Book: Haire, Susan B. and Laura P. Moyer. 2015. *Diversity Matters: Judicial Policy Making in the U.S. Courts of Appeals*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.

Abstract of Chapter 4: “Diversity on the Panel”
Abstract Word Count: 246

This chapter examines how gender and racial diversity on appellate panels affects deliberative processes. At the outset of the chapter, Haire and Moyer note that there are two dominant perspectives on diversity in the court system. The first perspective suggests that stereotypes will shape expectations toward one’s colleagues and fuel processes that diminish the influence of women and minority judges. The second perspective suggests that the presence of nontraditional judges will enhance the robustness of information processing in deliberations. In this chapter, Haire and Moyer analyze the validity of both perspectives and find higher levels of support for the second. Although the analysis finds that white male judges’ voting behavior is more variable in the presence of nontraditional judges (as predicted by the first perspective), they are no more likely to author a dissent in response to a majority opinion by a woman and/or a minority judge. Additionally, the analysis provides support for the premise that diverse panels yield opinions with more points of law when compared to those produced by panels composed of only white males – as predicted by the second perspective. However, this effect held only if two of the three panel judges were nontraditional judges. Thus, this chapter illustrates how the makeup of appellate panels drives decisional outcomes, adding to the book’s main argument about the ways in which diversity on the bench affects not only the choices of individual judges, but also the overall character and quality of judicial deliberation and decisions.

¹ This sample was partially adapted from The University of Virginia Press website. The original can be found at (<http://www.upress.virginia.edu/content/abstract-guidelines-samples>).