

Comparative politics and democratic theory

Contact addresses

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Office hours: By appointment. Email me or ask me after class, and we'll schedule a meeting at your earliest convenience.

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Course overview and readings

This course presents a broad, in-depth, and up-to-date overview of the trends in contemporary democratic theory and of the results of the comparative study of politics. At the end of the course, students will be acquainted on the one hand with the most representative perspectives in the normative debate about democracy, and on the other with the most important findings of comparative political science.

The course is organized in seven sections. The first section (itself divided in six sub-sections) is taught by Prof. Nadia Urbinati (Columbia University). The six sub-sections will focus on the most representative theories in contemporary democracy. Students who want to make short presentations are welcome.

The remaining six sections are taught by Prof. Stanig.

In order to fully understand the lectures, and to productively contribute to class discussion, students should read the assigned materials before the class meeting in which they are going to be presented and discussed. All the required readings are available from the e-learning space.

Important note: the chapters of the Clark et al. textbook listed as “background” are not required reading prior to the class meeting. The textbook serves two functions:

1. students can refer to the textbook chapters if they need to fill some gap in the assumed prior knowledge

(which is, in itself, very minimal) or have the desire to fit the newly-acquired knowledge in some sort of “bigger picture”

2. students should refer to the the textbook if they need more detailed explanations of the concepts, theories, and results presented in class (read: explicitly mentioned in the lecture slides) and in the required readings.

To be clear: concepts, theories, and results discussed in the textbook but not mentioned in class are **not** part of the examinable program.

Concepts, theories, and results presented in class (e.g., mentioned in the lecture slides or in the required readings) about which, for some reason, the slides themselves or your own lecture notes do not provide enough information should be studied from the listed textbook chapters.

Non-attending students, in particular, should rely on the textbook to grasp the concepts, theories, and results that are mentioned in the lecture slides for sections 2-7 and are not paid extensive attention in the required readings. There is no textbook for Prof. Urbinati’s part, hence non-attending students must rely on the listed readings.

Please notice also that the textbook *is not a substitute* for the assigned papers and articles. This is particularly true for students who decide not to attend the lectures: *studying the Clark et al. book is not sufficient to successfully pass the exam*. In any case, attendance is strongly recommended.

The lecture slides for sections 2-7 are going to be posted at the end of each section. This is the result of a well-pondered decision. When students have the printouts of the lecture slides in front of them, they tend to be distracted by “what comes next” at the expense of what is being said at that moment. Hence it is better if you take your own notes in class, and then refer to the published slides to organize the material.

Full reference for the textbook:

Clark, William R., Matt Golder, and Sona N. Golder. 2013. *Principles of Comparative Politics* (second edition). CQ Press.

Honor Code

Università Bocconi conceives of education as an ongoing process that stretches across a person's entire professional life. The University hopes that the entire Bocconi community will respect the values of fairness and correctness associated with it, values which inspire and guide the conduct of all community members as they pursue common objectives and a shared mission. The Università Bocconi Honor Code is published at <http://www.unibocconi.eu/honorcode>. We encourage all students to read it.

Evaluation

For those attending lectures, there are two requirements. The first is a mid-term in-class exam, covering the first half of the course. The second is a final exam, covering only the second half of the course. Each of the partial exams is worth 50% of the grade.

For those not attending lectures, and therefore unable or unwilling to take the midterm exam, the midterm and the non-cumulative final exam are replaced by a final exam (worth 100% of the grade) covering the entire course content.

Students who have NOT passed the exam yet for the previous year have to prepare the current program. For information please contact prof. Stanig.

Plan of the course

Course introduction (Piero Stanig)

- Intro: positive, normative, and empirical approaches in political science
- Politics and the state

Required reading: Olson, Mancur. 1993. "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development." *American Political Science Review* 87 (03): 567-576.

1 Trends in Contemporary Democratic Theory (Nadia Urbinati)

- Democracy as elite selection

Required Reading: Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, New York: Harper Torchbook, 1962, first edition 1941 (Part IV).

Suggested Reading:

Roberto Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*, trans. Eden and Cedar Paul, New York: The Free Press, 1962, pp. 43-51 (chapter 1), pp. 333-56 (part 6, chapters 1-2)

Gerry Mackie, "Schumpeter's Leadership Democracy," in *Political Theory* 37 (2009): 128-53.

- Pluralism and the strategy of power containment

Required Reading: Robert A. Dahl, "Polyarchy, Pluralism, and Scale", in Id., *Democracy, Liberty, Equality*, Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1986. Available at https://tidsskrift.dk/index.php/scandinavian_political_studies/article/view/12886/24569

Suggested Reading:

Brian Barry, "Is Democracy Special?" in *Philosophy, Politics, and Society*, 5th ser., ed. Peter Laslett and James Fishkin, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979, pp. 155-96;

Robert A. Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989, chaps. 10 and 11;

- Deliberative theory

Required Reading: Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contribution to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996, chap. 7.

Suggested Reading:

Jon Elster, "The Market and the Forum: Three Varieties of Political Theory," in *Deliberative Democracy: Essays on Reason and Politics*, ed. James Bohman and William Rehg, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997, pp. 3-33 (in this collection you may find also the required text by Habermas);

Bernard Manin, "On Legitimacy and Political Deliberation," in *Political Theory* 15, no. 3 (1987): 338-68.

- Minimalist conception

Required Reading: Adam Przeworski, "Minimalist conception of democracy: a defense," in *Democracy's Value*, ed. Ian Shapiro and Cassiano Hacker-Cordón, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 23-55.

Suggested Reading:

Russell Hardin, "Public choice versus democracy," in *The Idea of democracy*, ed. David Copp, Jean Hampton, and John E. Roemer, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, pp. 157-72;

Robert A. Dahl, "Procedural Democracy," in *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology*, ed. Robert Goodin and Philip Pettit, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996, pp. 107-25.

- Collective Wisdom and the Epistemic Theory

Required Reading: Hélène Landemore, "Collective Wisdom. Old and New," in *Collective Wisdom: Principles and Mechanisms*, ed. Hélène Landemore and Jon Elster, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Suggested Reading:

Philip Pettit, "Depoliticizing Democracy," *Ratio Juris*, 17 (March 2004): 52-65;

David Estlund, *Democratic Authority: A Philosophical Framework*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007, chaps 1, 2, 5, 6.

- Pure Political Proceduralism

Required Reading: Maria Paula Saffon and Nadia Urbinati, "Procedural democracy: the Bulwark of Equal Liberty," in *Political Theory* 41 (2013): 441-81.

Suggested Reading:

Hans Kelsen, *The Worth and Value of Democracy* (1929), Rowman & Littlefield 2013 (Chaps. 1 and 6);

Norberto Bobbio, *The Future of Democracy*, London: Polity Press, 1987, chap. 1 (pp. 23-42);

Chantal Mouffe, "Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism?," *Social Research*, 66 (1999):745-58.

2 Regimes; regime transitions; varieties of autocracies. (Piero Stanig)

- lecture 1: democracy and development

Required Reading: Przeworski et al. 2000. *Democracy and Development*. Chapter 1 (only pp. 13-33) and 3 (without the appendix).

- lecture 2: transitions from dictatorship to democracy (democratization) and from democracy to dictatorship (coups)

Required Reading: Boix, Carles. 2003. "A Theory of Political Transitions", chapter 1 in *Democracy and Redistribution*.

- lecture 3: different types of non-democratic regime, and how institutions in autocracies work

Required Reading: Gandhi, Jennifer, and Adam Przeworski. 2007. "Authoritarian institutions and the survival of autocrats." *Comparative Political Studies* 40 (11): 1279-1301.

Required Reading: Boix, Carles, and Milan W. Svolik. 2013. "The foundations of limited authoritarian government: Institutions, commitment, and power-sharing in dictatorships." *The Journal of Politics* 75: 300-316.

- background: Clark et al., chapter 4, chapter 5, chapter 8, chapter 9, and chapter 10 (pages 349-370 only)

3 Elections and electoral systems. (Piero Stanig)

- lecture 1: two ways of thinking about democracy, and the electoral systems associated with these two visions; understanding why a given type of electoral system is chosen

Required Reading: Huber, John D., and G. Bingham Powell, Jr. 1994. "Congruence Between Citizens and Policymakers in Two Visions of Liberal Democracy." *World Politics* 46(3):291-326.

Required Reading: Leemann, Lucas, and Isabela Mares. 2014. "The Adoption of Proportional Representation." *The Journal of Politics* 76, 461-478

- lecture 2: how the desire to not "waste your vote" affects the number of parties that compete in different electoral systems

Cox, Gary W. 1997. *Making Votes Count: Strategic Coordination in the World's Electoral Systems*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 4 and 5.

- background: Clark, Golder and Golder, chapter 13, chapter 14 (pp.641-667) and chapter 16 (pp.743-765)

4 Redistribution and the welfare state. (Piero Stanig)

- lecture 1

Required Reading: Rehm, Philipp. 2009. "Risks and Redistribution: An Individual-Level Analysis." *Comparative Political Studies* 42: 855-881

Required Reading: Agranov, Marina, and Thomas R. Palfrey. 2015. "Equilibrium tax rates and income redistribution: A laboratory study." *Journal of Public Economics* 130:45-58.

- background: Clark, Golder and Golder, chapter 16 (pp.766-787)

5 Corruption; lobbies.(Piero Stanig)

- lecture 1: how elections can be used to discipline the behavior of politicians

Ferraz, Claudio, and Frederico Finan. 2011. "Electoral Accountability and Corruption: Evidence from the Audits of Local Governments." *American Economic Review* 101 (4): 1274-1311.

Klasnja, Marko, Joshua A. Tucker and Kevin Deegan-Krause. "Pocketbook vs. Sociotropic Corruption Voting." *British Journal of Political Science* (Forthcoming)

- lecture 2: why candidates need campaign funding, and what donors expect in return; what type of information do campaigns convey? Is campaign spending regulation a good thing?

Required Reading: Baron, David P. 1994. "Electoral Competition with Informed and Uninformed Voters." *APSR* 88(1): 33-47.

Required Reading: Prat, Andrea. "Rational Voters and Political Advertising." Typescript, Department of Economics, Columbia University.

- lecture 3: money is not the only way in which special interests can exert influence over politics

Dal Bó, Ernesto, Pedro Dal Bó, and Rafael Di Tella. 2006. "Plata O Plomo? Bribe and Punishment in a Theory of Political Influence." *American Political Science Review* 100(1):41-53

6 Legislatures; executives; federalism (Piero Stanig)

- lecture 1: the veto-player model of legislative policy-making

Tsebelis, George. 1999. "Veto Players and Law Production in Parliamentary Democracies: An Empirical Analysis." *APSR* 93(3): 591-608.

- lecture 2: who do representatives respond to? what is party discipline?

Carey, John M. 2007. "Competing principals, political institutions, and party unity in legislative voting." *American Journal of Political Science* 51 (1): 92-107.

- lecture 3: how prime ministers influence policy-making in the legislature

Huber, John D. 1996. "The vote of confidence in parliamentary democracies." *American Political Science Review*: 269-282.

- lecture 4: the direct connection between executive chief and voters in presidential systems

Canes-Wrone, Brandice, Michael C. Herron, and Kenneth W. Shotts. 2001. "Leadership and Pandering: A Theory of Executive Policymaking" *American Journal of Political Science* 45(3) 532-550

- lecture 5: the essence of federalism, and why it might be a desirable institution

Weingast, Barry R. 1995. "The Economic Role of Political Institutions: Market- Preserving Federalism and Economic Development." *J Law Econ Organ* 11: 1-31.

- lecture 6: getting the definitions straight: what is federalism, what is decentralization; how federalism needs to be designed in order to work

Required Reading: Rodden, Jonathan. 2004. "Comparative Federalism and Decentralization: On Meaning and Measurement." *Comparative Politics* 36(4): 481-500.

Required Reading: Rodden, Jonathan, and Erik Wibbels. 2002. "Beyond the Fiction of Federalism: Macroeconomic Management in Multitiered Systems." *World Politics* 54(4):494-531.

- background: Clark Golder Golder, chapter 15 (pp. 718-727), chapter 12 (pp. 457-499), and chapter 15 (pp.674-691).

7 Non-economic dimensions of conflict in democratic regimes: religion, secularism and ethnicity. (Piero Stanig)

- lecture 1: more religious people tend to vote for parties that are more conservative on economic issues; the role of ethnic identities in democratic regimes

Required Reading: Ben Gaskins, Matt Golder, & David Siegel. "Religious Participation and Economic Conservatism." *American Journal of Political Science* 57: 823-840.

Required Reading: Baldwin and Huber, 2010. "Cultural vs. Economic Differences: Forms of ethnic diversity and public goods provision" *American Political Science Review* 104.4: 644-662.

- lecture 2: when do parties emphasize economic interests and when do they rely on non-economic dimensions?

Required Reading: Tavits, M. and Potter, J. D. 2014 "The Effect of Inequality and Social Identity on Party Strategies." *American Journal of Political Science*

- background: Clark et al. chapter 14 (pp. 622-638).