

# **POLI 359R - Topics in Comparative Politics**

**Winter 2023**

**Section 001: 1142 KMBL on M W from 3:30 pm - 4:45 pm**

## **Instructor/TA Info**

### **Instructor Information**

**Name:** Darin Self

**Office Location:** 790 KMBL

**Office Hours:** Mon 11:00am-12:00pm

Mon 2:00pm-3:00pm

**Email:**

### **TA Information**

## **Course Information**

### **Description**

POLI 359 is a topics course aimed at providing students with greater depth in a thematic field within Comparative Politics. This specific course is designed to help students gain a strong understanding in democracy, democratic development, democratization, authoritarianism, and autocratization. Through this class students will master the various ways to define democracy and authoritarianism and different strategies to measure these concepts. Students will also familiarize themselves with the leading theories which explain the emergence of democracy and democratic erosion, along with theories explaining the durability and stability of authoritarian regimes.

### **Grading Policy**

In this course you will be evaluated using reading responses, a research paper, and a final.

Reading responses must be completed 1 hour before class; late responses will not be accepted. Essays are due at the time specified in the syllabus, although these may be turned in late with a penalty (a half grade by 5 p.m. and another full grade for each 24-hour period after, starting at 5 p.m.). Any assignment missed for a legitimate reason (unpleasant things beyond your control, like illness) can be made up without penalty if you consult with me right away. Your grade will be based on the following assignments. Details are below. Assignments will be curved up (never down), so that the class average is set at a B/B+.

- Reading Responses 10%
- Paper 45%
- Engagement 10%
- Final Exam 35%

### **Reading Responses 10%**

The readings in this class are assigned to help you become acquainted with core works within comparative democracy and autocracy. At first glance it may

seem like a heavy load, but we will practice how to quickly read academic social science in way that allows you to draw the key conceptual, theoretical, and methodological points from either a paper or book chapter.

These readings will structure the course for the day, so you should come prepared to apply what you have read. To help improve your understanding of the readings, I have assigned reading responses. Because each class features 2-3 readings, you will choose one reading for the reading response. For the reading response you will state, in your own words, the research question(s), what is being explained (dependent variable/outcome) what explains the outcome (independent variable/explanation) and the theoretical story/model. You will also be required to provide a constructive critique of the work. It is easy to point out flaws in someone's work, but it takes more careful thought to critique work in a way that can help improve the scientific approach to explaining politics.

A longer description of the assignment follows. In exchange for your doing the on-line course evaluation at the end of the term, I will drop your lowest two reading response scores.

#### **Paper 45%**

During the term you will write one full length paper on a topic concerning democracy and/or autocracy. The essay will require you to use methods of comparison to draw inferences about the world while modestly incorporating modern social science. There are several smaller assignments attached to the full paper to help you progress through writing the paper. I will provide feedback at each stage to help you develop the best paper you can.

#### **Engagement 10%**

You are required to attend and participate in class discussions, and you should be prepared to be called on. You are expected to work with at least one other student to lead discussion three times during the semester which will significantly affect your engagement score. To lead discussion you and your classmate will post a number of questions on the discussion board in Learning Suite corresponding to the date of the class to help students prepare for class. These questions are due the night before class and can then be used to open discussion in class. When you are not leading discussion, you will be expected to comment on the discussion boards regularly and participate in class.

This class is intended to rely more on student engagement and less on instructor lecture. The quality of class will depend heavily and you engagement. We will keep track of your participation by noting when you join in open discussions and by having you submit your written responses to any in-class exercises at the end of each hour. If you need to go online this semester because of COVID-19, you are still required to be present and actively involved (camera on) in any Zoom meetings. We will not record class except under unusual circumstances.

#### **Final exam 35%**

Although there is a heavy emphasis on higher-level learning objectives in this class (critique, synthesis, application, etc.), we learn many concepts and skills that can only be evaluated on an exam. Take notes and review your reading responses. The final will be administered on the date and time listed in the syllabus. The final exam will test your ability to handle the concepts of democracy and autocracy while evaluating and developing theory.

## **Online course evaluation**

The university asks you to fill out the online course evaluation at the end of the term. The results of this evaluation are very important to my department and me, and if you do the evaluation on time, I will compensate you by dropping your two reading response scores.

## **Reading Responses**

### **Purpose**

To learn the theories of comparative politics, to prepare for discussion, and to practice critiquing theories. Reading Responses prepare you for the Essays.

### **Task**

The reading response should range from a half to a full page. The response should immediately identify the work's research question(s) and then provide a detailed explanation of the outcome of interest (dependent variable), the mechanisms which explain the outcome (independent variable(s)), and then summarize the theoretical model.

You should also provide a thoughtful and constructive critique of the work.

Rather than simply highlight weaknesses or disbelief, you should focus on how the author's theory, concepts, methods, or case selection/data, led them to draw certain inferences and what you would do differently.

Avoid complaining about the quality of the author's writing.

### **Grading**

Reading responses are due 1 hour before class on the day listed in the syllabus. They are graded based on (a) how well you understand the argument of the author and (b) the extent you offer thoughtful critique while applying the principles of scientific reasoning.

Each Reading Response is graded on a 1 to 3 scale with 3 being the highest.

Responses will receive 3 points for fulfilling full expectations on both the summary and critique, 2 points for a strong summary or critique but not both - or adequate summaries and critiques but with some weakness, and only 1 point if either summary or critique demonstrate a lack of effort and minimal understanding.

*The summary.* A good summary restates the author's core insights in ways that show you worked hard to understand them. You will not understand everything you read, but you should try to identify the author's research question, their answer (usually some scientific theory or causal argument), and their evidence. In particular, try to understand the mechanisms of their argument. If you don't understand something, indicate this in the response and bring your concerns to class. You will not be penalized if you can demonstrate that you read but did not fully understand something but you will be penalized if you only do a poor job of summarizing the reading.

*The critique.* The best critique makes a clear, interesting argument that forces us to stop and think, and backs up this argument with clear reasoning and telling evidence that make us want to continue the conversation; it also proposes a smart, compelling solution--a "fix"--that moves our theorizing forward. A less-effective critique makes potentially interesting arguments about core aspects of the reading, but sometimes its own reasoning and evidence are thin, or it doesn't really propose a fix to the theory's problems. An ineffective critique provides only vague, incoherent claims, or focuses on peripheral aspects of the author's argument.

	Fails to meet standards	Meets standards	Exceptional
Thesis and organization 20%	You wait to provide a thesis until the end, or never really have one. It's hard to tell what the research topic was, at least in the sense of a specific question. The paper wanders, suggesting you wrote this quickly and without much planning.	There is a clear overall claim at the beginning, although you maybe lose sight of it sometimes. The intro feels wordy and takes a while to get going, but the paper has a clear topic that is introduced in the beginning. We can follow the order of your argument as we read, but occasionally you surprise or lose us.	You introduce the research question quickly, in a way that engages us. There is a clear overall claim at the start of the paper, and you stay on message throughout. The paper follows a sensible outline with signposting to make transitions clear.
Reasoning and evidence 60%	You provide cursory, vague explanations to back up your claims, and you often focus on peripheral concerns. There is little evidence to back up your claims and reasoning. Often, you summarize others' theories without really critiquing them. You fail to go beyond the readings from class or overlook several of them.	You offer a clear explanation of a theory, with focused reasoning and evidence. You incorporate additional research that allows you to add meaningfully to existing literature. However, the way you summarize some of the theories is a little inaccurate, and some of the reasoning is thin or focused on peripheral concerns, making it hard for us to engage with your ideas. You didn't go much beyond the evidence at hand and maybe missed an important point from the class readings.	You offer a clear and strong explanation of your theory and test it with clear, persuasive arguments and crucial evidence. It is clear you understand the strengths and weaknesses of the theory presented and the limits of your work.
Writing/formatting 20%	You avoid major concerns with spelling errors but struggle with punctuation and grammar. Paragraphs are not built around clear topic sentences and are hard to read. You forgot to provide complete citations for all of your sources. No page numbers.	No noticeable concerns with sentence-level mechanics. Paragraphs flow pretty well, although you sometimes struggle with topic sentences or wordiness. The page numbers and section headings (if you use them) are helpful. You provide consistent in-text citations/footnotes and complete citations.	Clear writing at the sentence and paragraph levels. It is easy to understand and is not a mystery novel. Readers hardly notice the writing as they read and think about your ideas. The bibliography actually <i>looks</i> good. Sections headings, if needed, are sparing and clear.

### Reading Response 27

Due: Monday, Apr 17 at 2:30 pm

### Final Exam Due

Due: Wednesday, Apr 26 at 6:00 pm

### University Policies

### Honor Code

In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honor Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own must in fact be your own work and not that of another. Violations of this principle may result in a failing grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university. Students are also expected to adhere to the Dress and Grooming Standards. Adherence demonstrates respect for yourself and others and ensures an effective learning and working environment. It is the university's expectation, and every instructor's expectation in class, that each student will abide by all Honor Code standards. Please call the Honor Code Office at 422-2847 if you have questions about those standards.

### **Preventing Sexual Misconduct**

Brigham Young University prohibits all forms of sexual harassment—including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking on the basis of sex—by its personnel and students and in all its education programs or activities. University policy requires all faculty members to promptly report incidents of sexual harassment that come to their attention in any way and encourages reports by students who experience or become aware of sexual harassment. Incidents should be reported to the Title IX Coordinator at [t9coordinator@byu.edu](mailto:t9coordinator@byu.edu) or (801) 422-8692 or 1085 WSC. Reports may also be submitted online at <https://titleix.byu.edu/report> or 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours a day). BYU offers a number of resources and services for those affected by sexual harassment, including the university's confidential Sexual Assault Survivor Advocate. Additional information about sexual harassment, the university's Sexual Harassment Policy, reporting requirements, and resources can be found in the University Catalog, by visiting <http://titleix.byu.edu>, or by contacting the university's Title IX Coordinator.

### **Student Disability**

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. A disability is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Whether an impairment is substantially limiting depends on its nature and severity, its duration or expected duration, and its permanent or expected permanent or long-term impact. Examples include vision or hearing impairments, physical disabilities, chronic illnesses, emotional disorders (e.g., depression, anxiety), learning disorders, and attention disorders (e.g., ADHD). If you have a disability which impairs your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the University Accessibility Center (UAC), 2170 WSC or 801-422-2767 to request a reasonable accommodation. The UAC can also assess students for learning, attention, and emotional concerns. If you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, please contact the Equal Opportunity Office at 801-422-5895, [eo\\_manager@byu.edu](mailto:eo_manager@byu.edu), or visit <https://hrs.byu.edu/equal-opportunity> for help.

### **Academic Honesty**

The first injunction of the Honor Code is the call to "be honest." Students come to the university not only to improve their minds, gain knowledge, and develop skills that will assist them in their life's work, but also to build character. "President David O. McKay taught that character is the highest aim of

education" (The Aims of a BYU Education, p.6). It is the purpose of the BYU Academic Honesty Policy to assist in fulfilling that aim. BYU students should seek to be totally honest in their dealings with others. They should complete their own work and be evaluated based upon that work. They should avoid academic dishonesty and misconduct in all its forms, including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, cheating, and other academic misconduct.

### **Mental Health**

Mental health concerns and stressful life events can affect students' academic performance and quality of life. BYU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS, 1500 WSC, 801-422-3035, caps.byu.edu) provides individual, couples, and group counseling, as well as stress management services. These services are confidential and are provided by the university at no cost for full-time students. For general information please visit <https://caps.byu.edu>; for more immediate concerns please visit <http://help.byu.edu>.

### **Respectful Environment**

"Sadly, from time to time, we do hear reports of those who are at best insensitive and at worst insulting in their comments to and about others... We hear derogatory and sometimes even defamatory comments about those with different political, athletic, or ethnic views or experiences. Such behavior is completely out of place at BYU, and I enlist the aid of all to monitor carefully and, if necessary, correct any such that might occur here, however inadvertent or unintentional. "I worry particularly about demeaning comments made about the career or major choices of women or men either directly or about members of the BYU community generally. We must remember that personal agency is a fundamental principle and that none of us has the right or option to criticize the lawful choices of another." President Cecil O. Samuelson, Annual University Conference, August 24, 2010 "Occasionally, we ... hear reports that our female faculty feel disrespected, especially by students, for choosing to work at BYU, even though each one has been approved by the BYU Board of Trustees. Brothers and sisters, these things ought not to be. Not here. Not at a university that shares a constitution with the School of the Prophets." Vice President John S. Tanner, Annual University Conference, August 24, 2010

### **FHSS Diversity and Inclusion Syllabus Statement**

In the College of Family, Home, and Social Sciences, our classroom participation and behavior are guided by our mission statement<sup>i</sup>, the BYU honor code<sup>ii</sup>, and principles of Christian discipleship<sup>iii</sup>. It is imperative that we value and respect every person as a child of Heavenly Parents who has divine worth. Consequently, we need to take steps to listen to, learn from, and love one another by striving to consider thoughtfully the opinions of others and use language that is polite, considerate, and courteous even when we strongly disagree. It is essential to create an educational environment that ensures "the gift of personal dignity for every child of God"<sup>iv</sup>. This includes embracing one another compassionately and "eliminating] any prejudice, including racism, sexism, and nationalism"<sup>v</sup> "regardless of age, personal circumstances, gender, sexual orientation, or other unique challenges."<sup>vi</sup> It is vital to delight in individuality and welcome diverse perspectives and experiences as we "work tirelessly to build bridges of understanding rather than creating walls of segregation."<sup>viii</sup> To accomplish these goals we seek unity in higher principles of

equity, charity, collaboration, and inclusiveness in order to build an environment in which all students, faculty, and staff can participate in, contribute to, and benefit equally from the academic community.

<sup>i</sup> "provide an education that helps students become informed citizens and thoughtful leaders who make the communities and families in which we live more just, equitable, and happy."

<sup>ii</sup> "[we live] in accordance with the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ and strive to maintain the highest standards in [our] personal conduct regarding honor, integrity, morality, and consideration of others."

<sup>iii</sup> "The Creator of us all calls on each of us to abandon attitudes of prejudice against any group of God's children." President Russell M. Nelson, News Release, 2020; <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/president-nelson-shares-social-post-encouraging-understanding-and-civility>; [https://medium.com/@Ch\\_JesusChrist/locking-arms-for-racial-harmony-in-america-2f62180abf37](https://medium.com/@Ch_JesusChrist/locking-arms-for-racial-harmony-in-america-2f62180abf37)

"he inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile." (2 Nephi 26:33)

<sup>iv</sup> Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, "A Perfect Brightness of Hope", April, 2020

<sup>v</sup> Elder M. Russell Ballard, "The Trek Continues", October, 2017

<sup>vi</sup> President Russell M. Nelson, "The Love and Laws of God", September, 2019

## Schedule

Date	Readings	Assignments
M Jan 09 Monday	<b>What Democracy (maybe) Is</b> Dahl 1971.pdf Download Przeworski 1991.pdf Download Schmitter and Karl 1991.pdf Download	
W Jan 11 Wednesday	<b>Democracy-ish</b> Collier and Levitsky 1997.pdf Download Plattner 1998.pdf Download	
M Jan 16 Monday	<b>Martin Luther King Jr Day</b>	
W Jan 18 Wednesday	<b>Dimensions of Democracy</b> Ding and Slater 2021.pdf Download O'Donnell 1998.pdf Download	
M Jan 23 Monday	<b>What Autocracy Is</b> Frantz 2018.pdf Download Geddes 1999.pdf Download Levitsky and Way 2010.pdf Download	
W Jan 25 Wednesday	ACLP 1996.pdf Download Lindberg et al 2014.pdf Download	

M Jan 30 Monday	V-Dem: Select liberal democracy index under V-Dem Indices <a href="https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/">https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/</a>  Polity <a href="https://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm">https://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm</a>  Freedom House <a href="https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-world/scores">https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-world/scores</a>	
W Feb 01 Wednesday	<b>Modernization Theory</b> Lipset 1959.pdf Download ODonnell 1988.pdf Download Moore 1966.pdf Download	<b>Reading Response 6</b>
M Feb 06 Monday	<b>Critique of Modernization Theory</b> Przeworski and Limongi 1997.pdf Download Boix and Stokes 2003.pdf Download	<b>Paper Proposal Reading Response 7</b>
W Feb 08 Wednesday	<b>Economic Inequality and Democratization</b> Boix 2003.pdf Download Acemoglu and Robinson 2001.pdf Download Ansell and Samuels 2014.pdf Download	<b>Reading Response 8</b>
M Feb 13 Monday	<b>Democratic Transitions - Agency</b> O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986 - required book	<b>Reading Response 9</b>
W Feb 15 Wednesday	<b>Transitology Critiques</b> Linz 1990_transitions.pdf Download Schmitter 2014.pdf Download	<b>Reading Response 10</b>
F Feb 17 Friday		<b>Annotated Bibliography</b>
M Feb 20 Monday	<b>Presidents Day</b>	
T Feb 21 Tuesday	<b>Monday Instruction</b>  <b>Incumbent-led Democratization (Conservative Parties)</b> Ziblatt 2017.pdf Download Slater and Wong 2013.pdf Download	<b>Reading Response 11</b>
W Feb 22 Wednesday	<b>Incumbent-led Democratization (General/Militaries)</b> Riedl et al 2020.pdf Download Self 2023.pdf Download	<b>Reading Response 12</b>

Th Feb 23 Thursday		
F Feb 24 Friday		
M Feb 27 Monday	<b>Democracy and Social Trust/Capital</b> Putnam 1992.pdf Download Berman 1997.pdf Download	<b>Reading Response 13</b>
W Mar 01 Wednesday	<b>Democracy and Presidentialism</b> Cheibub and Limongi 2002.pdf Download Linz 1990_perils.pdf Download	<b>Reading Response 14</b>
M Mar 06 Monday	<b>Democratic Backsliding</b> Bermeo 2016.pdf Download Waldner and Lust 2018.pdf Download	<b>Reading Response 15</b>
W Mar 08 Wednesday	<b>Democratic Backsliding</b> Haggard and Kaufman 2021 - required book	<b>Reading Response 16</b>
F Mar 10 Friday		<b>Theory section</b>
M Mar 13 Monday	<b>Democratic Breakdown</b> Slater 2013.pdf Download Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018.pdf Download	Meet with Professor Self  <a href="https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet">https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet</a>
W Mar 15 Wednesday	<b>Polarization and Autocratization</b> Bermeo 2003.pdf Download Svolik 2019.pdf Download	Meet with Professor Self  <a href="https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet">https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet</a>
F Mar 17 Friday	<b>No Classes</b>	
M Mar 20 Monday	<b>Authoritarian Regimes -- The Basics</b> Brancati 2013.pdf Download Svolik 2012.pdf Download	<b>First Peer Review</b> <b>Reading Response 19</b>
W Mar 22 Wednesday	<b>Strategies of Autocratic Survival</b> Morgenbesser 2020.pdf Download Schedler 2002.pdf Download	<b>Reading Response 20</b>
F Mar 24 Friday		<b>Research design</b>
M Mar 27 Monday	<b>Authoritarian Institutions and Regime Survival</b> Gandhi 2008.pdf Download Geddes et al 2014.pdf Download Meng 2020.pdf Download	<b>Reading Response 21</b>
W Mar 29 Wednesday	<b>Authoritarian Parties and Survival</b> Greene 2007.pdf Download Magaloni 2006.pdf Download	<b>Reading Response 22</b>

F Mar 31 Friday		<b>Second Peer Review</b>
M Apr 03 Monday	<b>Elections in Autocracies</b> Bunce and Wolchik 2010.pdf Download Morgenbesser and Pepinsky 2019.pdf Download	<b>Reading Response 23</b>
W Apr 05 Wednesday	<b>Authoritarian Coalitions and Survival</b> Hassan 2020.pdf Download Rosenfield 2020.pdf Download	<b>Reading Response 24</b>
M Apr 10 Monday	<b>Autocrats and the Origins of Institutions</b> Pepinsky 2014.pdf Download Meng 2021.pdf Download	<b>Reading Response 25</b>
W Apr 12 Wednesday	<b>Authoritarianism and Violent Repression</b> Greitens 2016.pdf Download Nugent 2020.pdf Download	<b>Reading Response 26</b>
F Apr 14 Friday		<b>Final Paper</b>
M Apr 17 Monday	<b>Authoritarianism and the Military</b> Bellin 2004.pdf Download Bellin 2012.pdf Download Stepan 1988.pdf Download	<b>Reading Response 27</b>
W Apr 19 Wednesday	<b>Last Day of Class</b>	
M Apr 24 Monday	<b>Final Exam Day</b>	
T Apr 25 Tuesday	<b>Final Exam Day</b>	
W Apr 26 Wednesday	Final Exam: Take home -- open book/notes	
	<b>Final Exam Due</b>	