

PS119 Nation-States and Democracy

Seminar Leader: Jean-Rémi Carbonneau

Course Times: Wednesday & Friday 10:45-12:15

Office Hours: by appointment

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Course Description

Why and how do political systems differ from one another? Which processes have led to the formation of distinct political regimes? And how do these historical variations affect politics today? In addressing these questions in a wide set of contexts, this course provides an introduction to key theoretical approaches and concepts in the comparative study of politics. It focuses on contemporary core topics in political development such as state and nation-building, processes of democratization, the interplay between state and civil society as well as the modalities of social organization and mobilization to resist and, ultimately, change state policies. We will also look at different types of political regimes, electoral and party systems—and the ways in which they affect the structure, functioning, and social role of political institutions. Special attention will be given to the effects of institutional constraint on individuals' actions and values, and on the sustainability of historical diversity in various state contexts. To do so, we will analyze a corpus of both theoretical and empirical texts, including case studies and comparisons of similar cases. By the end of the course, students will be able to understand important topics in domestic politics, grasp the diversity of political systems and regimes, and relate them to each other in order to analyze current political developments in various societal contexts.

Course Requirements

Reading material

- Class Reader (available at the library)
- Caramani, Daniele. (Ed). (2020). *Comparative Politics* (5th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press. You must have your own copy of the edition with the following ISBN: 978-0-19-882060-4. <https://global.oup.com/ukhe/product/comparative-politics-9780198820604?cc=de&lang=en&>

Class preparation

In preparation for class, read the texts thoughtfully and engage with their core argument. Take notes while reading and try to identify questions in advance: Why do the authors argue as they do? How do they raise and substantiate their claims? How does their line of argumentation relate to earlier readings and discussions in class?

Class attendance

Turn off phones during class time. Attendance at all classes is expected, as regular attendance is essential to the success of this course. There will be an attendance sheet for every session. Each absence beyond two sessions (of 90 minutes) without leave of absence from the seminar leader will lead to the subtraction of 1 point from the overall final grade. Late arrival counts as

an absence. If you miss more than 30 percent of the sessions (i.e. 9 absences) you cannot pass the class.

Assignments, Grade Breakdown and Essay Deadlines

Oral

- **Classroom Participation** (2 x 15%) **30%** (of total grade)
This seminar involves thoughtful and active participation in class discussions and working groups. This includes a persistent reflection on current events related to the course's core themes. The classroom is a protected space and you should feel free to voice your arguments and comments in a respectful way. Please do not hesitate to address the seminar leader if you feel that this is not the case.
- **Case Study Presentation** **15%**
All individual students will present their case study (which also is the focus of the final paper) and line of argumentation in a professional presentation during weeks 12 and 13. Presentations will be **no longer than 12 minutes** (time is strictly limited) and will focus on the puzzle, research question, and main line of argumentation/potential conclusions. Visualizations (e.g. power point) are optional but not mandatory. The **Q&A period** for each presenter will be 10-15 minutes. Students presenting should be prepared to answer questions relating to their project's theme.

Written

All assignments must be submitted in print, please use Times New Roman pt 12, 1.5-spaced

- **Abstract** (500 words, due March 25) **5 %**
Consider this to be your elevator pitch—or your book cover blurb. What is your case and the main puzzle? What is the main question you seek to address in your research? What are the hypotheses (and potential lines of argumentation)?
- **Extended Introduction** (1 000 words, due April 22) **10 %**
The introduction frames the puzzle and research question in more depth. It embeds them in existing literature and presents the (tentative) main line of argumentation in broad strokes. What have other authors argued about your theme? What are your hypotheses? Which material will you look at to make your case? Make sure to use American Psychological Association ([APA](#)) citation style for your bibliography and in-text citation.
- **Final Essay** (3 500 words, due May 13) **30 %**
The final essay will consist of an introduction, main body (that develops and substantiates your argument), and a conclusion (as well as a bibliography). Use paragraphs and subheadings to clearly structure your text.
- **Written answers to 5 questions** (5 x 2) **10 %**
Throughout the semester, students will be asked to answer five essay questions of their choice at the end of the chapters to be read in the book edited by Caramani. Each comprehensive, clear response will be between 150 and 300 words and may be submitted in hard copy or emailed.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers and Academic Integrity

Late submission will be downgraded by 5 points, and by an additional 2 points per extra day. After four weeks of the deadline the essay cannot receive a grade of higher than C. A week thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Schedule

Week/ Beginning	Wednesday	Friday
I. COMPARATIVE POLITICS		
Week 1 Jan 31	<p>Preliminaries</p> <p>Calhoun, <i>Comparative Government and Comparative Politics</i></p>	<p>What is Comparative Politics?</p> <p>Caramani, "Introduction" (pp. 1–18 in Caramani) & Sartori, "Compare, Why and How"</p>
Week 2 Feb 7	<p>Approaches</p> <p>Peters, "Approaches in Comparative Politics" (chap. 2 in Caramani) & Lichbach, "Thinking and Working in the Midst of Things" (read only pp. 18–26)</p>	<p>Research Design</p> <p>Ryan, "The Comparative Method" & Lichbach, "Thinking and Working" (pp. 26–46)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">***FINDING A PUZZLE***</p>
II. STATE INSTITUTIONS AND DEMOCRACY		
Week 3 Feb 14	<p>The Modern State</p> <p>Poggi, "The Nation-State" (chap. 4 in Caramani) Watch Theda Skocpol on states and societies</p>	<p>Democracy</p> <p>Pérez-Liñan, "Democracies" (chap. 5 in Caramani) & Kauffman, "Democratization"</p>
Week 4 Feb 21	<p>Separation of Powers</p> <p>Newton and Van Deth, "Constitutions" & "Presidential and Parliamentary Government"</p>	<p>Democratic Means</p> <p>Gallagher, "Elections and Referendums" (chap. 10 in Caramani)</p>
Week 5 Feb 28	<p>Decentralization of Democracy</p> <p>Hooghe, Marks and Schakel, "Multilevel Governance" (chap. 11 in Caramani)</p>	<p>Authoritarian Rule</p> <p>Lindstaedt, "Authoritarian Regimes" (chap. 6 in Caramani)</p>
III. NATIONS, DIVERSITY AND THE STATE		
Week 6 March 7	<p>Theories of Nationalism</p> <p>Smith, "Ethno-Symbolism" & Conversi, "Mapping the Field"</p>	<p>Why Nations Still Matter</p> <p>Calhoun, <i>Nations Matter</i> (Introduction, chap. 1–2) Watch Benedict Anderson on nationalism</p>

Week 7
March 14 **Regional Identities and the State**
Bickerton & Gagnon, “Regions” (chap. 15 in Caramani)

Language Minorities and the State
Sonntag and Cardinal, “State Traditions and Language Regimes” & Carbonneau et al., “A Multidisciplinary Approach to Cultural Security”

Week 8
March 21 **Indigenous Peoples and the State**
Armitage, *Policy of Aboriginal Assimilation* (Preface, chap. 1) & Trudel, “The Reunification of Canada’s Indigenous Nations”

*****PEER REVIEW SESSION*****

Bring 500-words abstract in print.

IV. DEMOCRATIC ACTORS AND DISCOURSES

Week 9
March 28 **Political Organizations**
Katz, “Political Parties” (chap. 12 in Caramani)

The Mobilization of Civil Society
Rucht, “Social Movements” (chap. 16 in Caramani)
Watch [Wet’suwet’en mobilization against pipeline](#)

Week 10
April 4 **The Organization of Private Interests**
Erne, “Interest Groups” (chap. 14 in Caramani)

Media and Democracy
Esser and Pfetsch, “Political Communication” (chap. 19 in Caramani)

Spring Break (April 11-17)

Week 11
April 18 **Democratic Discourses**
Welzel and Inglehart, “Political Culture” (chap. 17 in Caramani)

Populism
Müller, *What is Populism?*

Submit 1 000-word introduction.

V. COLLOQUIUM WEEKS: CASE PRESENTATIONS

	1:	1:
Week 12	2:	2:
April 25	3:	3:
	4:	4:

	1:	1:
Week 13	2:	2:
May 2	3:	3:
	4:	4:

VI. 21ST CENTURY’S CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRACY

Week 14
May 9 **Globalization**
Sørensen, “Globalization and the Nation-State” (chap. 24 in Caramani)

Illiberalism
Weinman and Vormann, “From a Politics of No Alternative to a Politics of Fear”

Submit 3 500-word essay.