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**course time:** Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 11:00-11:50

**classroom:** Sadler 115

**office hours:** Mondays 10-10:50am, Wednesdays 2:00-3:00pm, Fridays 10-10:50am  
(drop by or sign up [here](#)), or by appointment

**office:** Scharbauer 2007F

**e-mail:** [michael.strausz AT tcu.edu](mailto:michael.strausz@tcu.edu)

**response time:** I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours during the week, and within 48 hours during weekends and holidays.

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### **Final Paper Due Date**

For non-degree candidates (i.e., everyone except graduating seniors), final papers are due on **Friday, May 12 at 11:00am**. For degree candidates (graduating seniors), final papers are due on **Monday, May 8 at 11:00am**.

### **Course Description**

Not that long ago, people all over the world labored in the same way that their parents did and lived in communities that they rarely left. Most people did not go to school or learn to read. People had limited awareness of what was happening in the next town over, let alone elsewhere in the world.

Today, however, the world looks very different. We work jobs that we choose for ourselves and that might be quite different from the jobs that our parents had. Most countries aspire to universal public education and literacy. Even those of us that rarely leave our towns are aware that there are many other countries and continents in the world. We often consider ourselves as citizens of “nations,” rather than just our local villages.

What happened? How did human societies transform so rapidly and completely? In the first unit of this class, we will look at two different sets of answers to these questions about the origins of modern societies: one from Karl Marx and another from Max Weber. In subsequent units, we will address other major questions from comparative politics on themes including types of governments, identity and politics, political economy, civil society, political violence, protest movements, and public opinion.

### **Learning Objectives**

After taking this class you will be able to:

1. Effectively analyze issues relating to comparative politics, including issues relating to states, nations, societies, regime-types, political identities, and development
2. Critically and thoughtfully evaluate claims made by others about issues relating to comparative politics
3. Communicate clearly and effectively in writing about comparative politics
4. Speak confidently and clearly before an audience of your peers

5. Critically and carefully read challenging texts about comparative politics

### **Required Texts / Materials**

You are not required to purchase any textbooks for this class; all of the reading is available online. However, I encourage you to purchase a copy of the following two books:

[Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels' \*The Communist Manifesto\*](#)  
[Max Weber's \*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism\*](#)

Both books are available for free online, so you are not required to own them, but they are classics that are nice to have around for reference, and you should be able to buy them at any bookstore or online for prices starting at about \$3 each.

We will be using this textbook, which you will be able to access for free online: [Introduction to Comparative Government and Politics by Bozonelos et al.](#) I will provide links to relevant portions in D2L and on the syllabus schedule (below).

All other required readings are available on the course's D2L page. I encourage you to print up that day's reading and bring it to class. If you have run out of free prints from TCU and/or don't have another way to print, please come to my office!

### **Course Policies and Requirements**

#### **Assignments**

Reading discussion questions (5% of final grade): Every day with an assigned reading, students are required to post a discussion question about the reading on the relevant threaded discussion on D2L. Discussion questions are due at 9am on the morning that we discuss that reading. Late discussion questions will receive no credit.

Satisfactory discussion questions will earn you a 100 for that day. A discussion question is satisfactory when it demonstrates that you have done the reading and thought about it a bit. Satisfactory questions might be about the overall theme of the reading, about a specific example or quote from the reading, about the implications of the findings and/or methods, etc. Anything is on the table, as long as it is thoughtful, based on the reading, and demonstrates have thought critically about the issues raised by the reading and the course. If you find yourself struggling to understand the reading, you are always welcome to come to my office hours or make an appointment!

If discussion questions suggest that many of you are not doing the assigned reading, I will give pop quizzes on the readings that will be averaged into this grade. On some days, you may have short homework or in-class assignments that will be averaged into this grade.

You can skip up to two days of posting questions without penalty, but after that, late submission of questions and failure to submit questions at all will result in a grade of zero for that day.

Current events postings (5% of final grade): One of the purposes of this class is to develop informed opinions about current events in comparative politics. In addition to the course readings, I expect you to regularly (at least three times per week) read over the [British Broadcasting Corporation \(BBC\)'s coverage of world news](#). Moreover, at least six times over the course of the semester, I expect you to write a short (one paragraph) post on the news discussion boards on D2L that does three things:

- 1) Includes a hyperlink to a recent, credible news story about an issue in comparative politics (if someone else has already linked to a particular story, choose another one).
- 2) Briefly (in 2-4 sentences) summarizes the key elements of the story.
- 3) Briefly (in 2-4 sentences) links the story to something that we have discussed or read about in class.

You are also welcome to make observations and/or ask discussion questions or clarifying questions about the news posting, and to post responses to the articles that your classmates post.

Current events postings are due by 9am on the day of class. You can post as many times as you want, but only one posting of a new article per student per week will be counted for credit. I encourage all of you to read one another's postings and reply to them!

For each day that a student fills out an appropriate current event posting, that student will get full credit (a 100).

In-class reflections (5% of final grade): At the end of each class session, students will have a few minutes to write one to three sentences on one of these questions:

1. What is something that you learned today?
2. What is the muddiest point for you from today's class?
3. What is something that we touched on today that you want to learn more about?

If students miss a class, they should log in to D2L before the next class to give a brief explanation of why they missed class. These explanations might include "I was sick," "my sister got married," "I was having some family issues," etc. I respect your privacy, so I do not need details in your explanations (no need to tell me about what kind of illness or doctor's appointment, for example).

For each day that a student fills out an appropriate reflection on the class or explanation for why they missed class, that student will get full credit (a 100). Failure to complete a day's prompt will result in a grade of 0 for that day.

Team debate performance (5% of final grade): Each student will participate in a single class period-length debate about a comparative politics topic. All students will be assigned to a team. These debates will require you to do a bit of outside research. A

specific assignment along with team assignments and a grading rubric will be distributed early in the semester.

Individual debate reflection paper (10% of final grade): After participating in the debate, each student will have to write a short paper about how the experience of preparing for and participating in the debate shaped their thinking on the topic. This will be due about a week after students participate in a debate. A specific assignment along with due dates and a grading rubric will be distributed early in the semester.

In-class exams (15% and 25% of final grade): You will have in-class exams on Friday, **March 3** and Wednesday, **April 12**. These exams will combine short answer questions, longer essays, and possibly multiple-choice questions. The first exam is worth 15% of your final grade, and the second exam is worth 25% of your final grade. The second exam is cumulative, meaning that it covers the material for the first exam again. I will distribute a review sheet before each exam.

Final Paper (30% of final grade): Instead of a final exam, students will be required to write a final paper. This will require you to combine analysis of class materials with some research that you will do on your own. A more specific assignment will be distributed shortly after the second in-class exam. For non-degree candidates (i.e., everyone except graduating seniors), final papers are due on **Friday, May 12 at 11:00am**. For degree candidates (graduating seniors), final papers are due on Monday, May 8 at 11:00am.

### Grading

Grades are determined on a 100-point scale as follows:

A: 93.45 and above	B: 82.45-86.44	C: 72.45-76.44	D: 62.45-66.44
A-: 89.45-93.44	B-: 79.45-82.44	C-: 69.45-72.44	D-: 59.45-62.44
B+: 86.45-89.44	C+: 76.45-79.44	D+: 66.45-69.44	F: 59.44 and below

### Grade Breakdown

Assignment	Percentage of final grade
Reading discussion questions	5%
Current events postings	5%
In-class reflections	5%
Team debate performance	5%
Individual debate reflection paper	10%
First exam (March 3)	15%
Second exam (April 12)	25%
Final paper	30%

If you feel that you have been graded unfairly on any course assignment, please wait 24 hours after the assignment is returned and then contact me with a typed statement about why you believe you were graded unfairly. This statement must provide

substantive reasons why you believe that you were graded unfairly. The appeal process must be started one week after the material was returned.

### **Extra Credit**

If I decide to establish extra credit opportunities, the specifics will be announced in class, posted on D2L, and/or emailed out to all students enrolled in the class. So, come to class, check D2L, and check your TCU email regularly.

### **Late Work**

In general, late assignments lose 10 points (out of 100) per 24 hours late. So, if a paper is due at 2:00pm on Tuesday and you turn it in at 3:00, you will lose 10 points. And if you turn it in after 2:00pm on Wednesday, you will lose 20 points, (and after 2:00 on Thursday, you will lose 30 points... etc.). However, if you miss or are late in submitting any assignment because of an Official University Absence, an illness, or a personal or family emergency, please communicate with me as soon as you can we can discuss rescheduling your work. You don't have to tell me the nature of the illness or emergency; just let me know that you are dealing with an illness or an emergency and we can discuss an alternate deadline for your work.

### **Office Hours**

I encourage students to take advantage of my [office hours](#) in order to ask questions about the course materials or to chat about issues related to the course or political science more generally. While you are free to drop by without an appointment, if you want to make sure that I will be available right when you drop by, please feel free to sign up for an appointment here: <https://calendly.com/michael-strausz/10min>. That link gives you a choice of either an in-person meeting or a Zoom meeting; please feel free to select whichever is more convenient for you. If I am not able to hold in-person office hours at any point, I will email the class and temporarily move office hours to Zoom. If you have classes or other obligations during my office hours and would like to meet with me, please email me to make an appointment.

### **PowerPoint Slides**

Most days in class I will have PowerPoint slides that have three purposes:

1. The slides are meant to help you organize your notes, by showing you what we are discussing and when.
2. The slides might include quotes and/or questions that we will discuss in class.
3. The slides might include photographs, maps, animations, and other types of images to help illuminate class concepts.

The slides are not a transcript of everything that I plan to say in class; they are meant to help you take notes. You will be able to download slides before class (I will have them online a few minutes before class starts) and they will stay up for the whole semester. If you miss a class, you should download the slides, but you should also borrow notes from a classmate. Once you have looked over the notes that you borrowed, feel free to ask me about any points you want clarification on.

## **Technology Policy**

Students wishing to use computers, tablets, or smartphones to take notes in class are requested to use those devices only for class related purposes. I know how tempting it can be to use an electronic device for Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Ravelry (the knitting social networking site), Instagram, TikTok, games, and other fun distractions, but if I catch a student doing so, that student will no longer be permitted to bring his or her electronic device to class. Remember that your primary responsibility at TCU is to learn. If you don't trust yourself to avoid online distractions, I encourage you to take notes with a pen or pencil. If I catch you using an electronic device for non-class related purposes during class, you will lose permission to use that device in class for the rest of the semester. Students wishing to make audio recordings of classes are required to see me to discuss acceptable use of those recordings and to sign a contract indicating that you will use those recordings responsibly. In the absence of written permission, you are not permitted to make audio or video recordings of classes.

## **TCU Policies**

This course will be conducted in accordance with all relevant TCU policies. For specific language, please see the syllabus appendix on the course's D2L site. The syllabus appendix includes the following policies: Academic Misconduct, Anti-Discrimination and Title IX Information, TCU Policy for Religious Observations & Holidays, and Student Access and Accommodation.

## **Daily Schedule**

- 18-Jan *Introduction*  
No assigned reading
- 20-Jan *Why study comparative politics?*  
[Bozonelos et al. chapter 1](#)

## **Unit 1: Theories of Comparative Politics**

What are the major forces that shape society? Where did modern societies come from? How does religion shape our world? Is the world heading for some kind of revolution, or are we trapped in an "iron cage" of modern capitalism?

- 23-Jan *Tradition and modernity*  
Marx & Engels, opening statement and Chapters I and II.
- 25-Jan *Marx's explanation*  
Finish Marx & Engels.
- 27-Jan **CLASS IS CANCELLED**
- 30-Jan *Religion and modernity*  
Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Part I, Chapters 1 & 2.

- 1-Feb *Weber's explanation*  
Weber, Part I, Chapter 3 through the end of Part II, Chapter 4A.
- 3-Feb *Marx, Weber, and grand theories*  
Finish Weber.
- 6-Feb First debate  
No assigned reading.

### **Unit 2: States and regime-types**

Where did modern states come from? How did they transform societies? What are the major types of regimes in the world today? What factors can explain which kinds of countries end up with which kinds of governments? What impact does the type of government have on the society that it governs?

- 8-Feb *Modern states*  
[Bozonelos et al. chapter 3.](#)
- 10-Feb *States and surnames*  
Scott, James C. 1998. "Cities, People, and Language." In *Seeing Like A State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- 13-Feb *Democracies*  
[Bozonelos et al. chapter 4.](#)
- 15-Feb *Perils of presidentialism*  
Stepan, Alfred, and Cindy Skach. 1994. "Presidentialism and Parliamentarism in Comparative Perspective." In *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, edited by Juan J. Linz and Arturo Valenzuela. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 119-136.
- 17-Feb *Duverger exercise*  
No assigned reading.
- 20-Feb Second debate  
No assigned reading.
- 22-Feb *Why did the Weimar Republic die?*  
Berman, Sheri. 1997. "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic." *World Politics* 49 (3):401-429.
- 24-Feb **CLASS IS CANCELLED**

- 27-Feb *A patrimonial wave or a populist wave?*  
Hanson, Stephen E, and Jeffrey S Kopstein. 2022. "Understanding the Global Patrimonial Wave." *Perspectives on Politics* 20 (1):237-249.
- 1-Mar *Governance and non-democracies*  
[Bozonelos et al. chapter 5.](#)
- 3-Mar First exam

### Unit 3: Identity and politics

What are the various identity categories that shape our lives and the lives of people all over the world? How do categories like nationalism, gender, and religion shape the way that people think and act politically?

- 6-Mar *Identity and politics*  
[Bozonelos et al. chapter 6.](#)
- 8-Mar *"What women want" in comparative perspective*  
Steel, Gill. 2022. "Women, Men, and Party Choice." In *What Women Want: Gender and Voting in Britain, Japan and the United States*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- 10-Mar **CLASS IS CANCELLED**
- 13-Mar-17-Mar SPRING BREAK
- 20-Mar *Nationalism, religion, and class*  
[Bozonelos et al. chapter 7.](#)
- 22-Mar *Imagined communities*  
Anderson, Benedict R. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, pp. 9-46.
- 24-Mar *Religion and politics in the Muslim World*  
Bellin, Eva. 2004. "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective." *Comparative Politics* 36 (2):139-157.

### Unit 4: Comparative political economy

Why have some states developed their economies so much faster than others? How do regime types influence economies? How does a country's colonial legacy influence its economic situation?

- 27-Mar *Introduction to comparative political economy*  
[Bozonelos et al. chapter 8.](#)



- 29-Mar *Japan's economic miracle*  
Johnson, Chalmers. 1982. "The Japanese 'Miracle.'" *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- 31-Mar *How does yesterday's colonial history influence today's economic development?*  
Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson. 2001. "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation." *American Economics Review* 91 (5):1369-1401.
- 3-Apr *Development and democracy*  
Treisman, Daniel. 2020. "Economic Development and Democracy: Predispositions and Triggers." *Annual Review of Political Science* 23:241-257.
- 5-Apr *Economic opportunity and exit from authoritarianism*  
Horz, Carlo M, and Moritz Marbach. 2022. "Economic Opportunities, Emigration and Exit Prisoners." *British Journal of Political Science*:21-40.
- 7-Apr GOOD FRIDAY HOLIDAY
- 10-Apr *What we now know*  
No assigned reading.
- 12-Apr Second exam

### **Unit 5: Politics from the bottom-up**

How do ordinary people engage with politics? What are the factors that shape public opinion on political issues? Under what circumstances do people choose to protest, and what are some of the factors that lead to political violence?

- 14-Apr *Collective action and social movements*  
[Bozonelos et al. chapter 9.](#)
- 17-Apr *Black lives in the US and France*  
Beaman, Jean, and Jennifer Fredette. 2022. "The US/France contrast frame and black lives matter in France." *Perspectives on Politics*:1-16.
- 19-Apr *Bowling alone together*  
Putnam, Robert D. 1995. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." *Journal of Democracy* 6 (1):65-78.
- 21-Apr Third debate  
No assigned reading.

- 24-Apr *Comparative public opinion*  
[Bozonelos et al. chapter 10.](#)
- 26-Apr *Political violence*  
[Bozonelos et al. chapter 11.](#)
- 28-Apr *Identity and violence*  
Sen, Amartya. 2006. "The Illusion of Violence." In *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny. 1st ed, Issues of our time*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co.
- 1-May *Challenges and questions in comparative politics*  
[Bozonelos et al. chapter 12.](#)
- 3-May *Wrapping it all up*  
No assigned reading.
- 12-May Final paper due at 11:00am (for graduating seniors, it is due on Monday, May 8 at 11:00am).