

**COMPARATIVE POLITICS:
POLICY-MAKING PROCESSES
POL 140E**

**Department of Political Science
University of California, Davis**

Winter 2017

Monday and Wednesday, 2:10 to 4:00 p.m. in CHEM 179.

Final exam: Wed. Mar.22 at 3:30pm

Professor Matthew Shugart

Office hours: Monday, 12:10 to 1:20, Kerr Hall 682

I also generally will be available for consultations immediately after class

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OVERVIEW

This course is intended to help the student understand how policy gets made in a wide variety of political systems. It is an advanced upper-division course. Students without previous coursework in political science, covering either US political institutions or comparative politics (i.e. the domestic politics of other countries), should talk to the professor about whether this course is a good fit or not. The course includes a substantial amount of reading from multiple sources and several writing assignments, including a term paper.

This course teaches tools for analyzing the logic of how policy decisions are made, why decision-makers choose the policies they choose, and to whom they have to answer for the choices they make. The course merges two main streams. In the first stream, we will be systematically comparing US and other countries' democratic institutions, using as the main text a book of which I am co-author. The readings from this book will be supplemented by other required readings, as explained elsewhere in the syllabus. The second theme is about how policy problems are identified and what "public policy" and "good policy" mean. The main goal of the course will be to put the concepts from the two streams together and arrive at a better understanding of why governments make the policies they do, and how both policy processes and democracy can be improved—in the US and elsewhere.

There are several required writing assignments. In addition, students are expected to do the day's reading before coming to class, and to have read the material sufficiently attentively as to be able to ask and respond to questions. **Grades in my courses are strongly conditioned on attendance and participation.** If you are the type of student who does not attend his or her classes very often, yet expects to pass the course, please don't take this course.

REQUIRED READING MATERIALS

You should buy or otherwise obtain copies of the following books:

Steven L. Taylor, Matthew S. Shugart, Arend Lijphart, and Bernard Grofman. *A Different Democracy: American Government in a Thirty-One Country Perspective*. Yale University Press, 2014.

B. Guy Peters, *Advanced Introduction to Public Policy*. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2015.

Additional readings: Unless otherwise noted, other readings will be provided on line.

ASSESSMENT AND COURSE RULES

Disclaimer: This syllabus is a general outline and not a contract from which you can claim rights. It is subject to change, and any announcements made in class about changes trump this document. It is every student's responsibility to keep up to date about any changes; it is not the professor's or TA's role to update students who might have missed a class.

Class meetings combine lecture, discussion, and other learning activities. I expect you to be in your seat when class starts. Lectures typically cover material that the readings do not, and you are responsible for (read: "will be graded on") all material covered in the course.

You are expected to come to class, every class (exceptions only if you are truly ill; do not come and share with all of us your disease!). If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed. I do not answer questions of the sort, "what did I miss?" or "did I miss anything important?" In fact, the latter is insulting to me as well as to your classmates who did show up. *Of course you did!* (There is no need to let me or a TA know when you are going to miss class for some good reason. In fact, please don't email us to let us know unless it is really, really important for us to know.)

I will use presentation slides some days. These sometimes will contain information not in the readings, and when they do, I will post those slides within a couple of days following the class meeting. I will *not* post slides that contain summaries of the material or outlines of the lecture/discussion. Such information is your responsibility. Taking notes is a useful life skill, so please use the course as an opportunity to hone your skills.

You are not allowed to take photos in class unless you have my explicit permission. The same restriction applies to audio or video recordings.

Participation is required. It means both being here and actually, well, participating. You may be able to pass the class by being here almost every day even if you never say anything. But such minimal participation will be a significant drag on your final course grade. If you are both absent a lot, and rarely contribute to discussion, you should have no expectations of having earned a passing grade. (Note that contrary to common opinion, a *D* is a "passing" grade, but I hope you aspire to better.)

Email. Important announcements will be sent via email, to your official UC Davis address via Canvas. You should look for announcements at that email account daily, even though most days there will be nothing sent. Not checking your email is not an excuse for not knowing an announcement has been made. As for emailing your professor or TA, this is fine, but please be sure first that your question is not answered in the syllabus or on Canvas, and use professional courtesy in crafting your message. If a question requires a detailed response, you are far better coming to office hours to ask it.

Policy on laptops/tablets/phones: Studies confirm that students who take notes by hand retain more information over time. It is also far less distracting to others when there is not constant typing going on. Besides, learning how to temporarily disconnect is good practice for professional life. ***Thus electronic devices must be put away for the duration of a class session*** (unless there is some approved exercise for which the computer, tablet, or other device is needed). I am willing to allow for the fact that some individuals do prefer (or even benefit from) taking notes on a computer or tablet. This will be allowed, but under strict conditions: (1) You will need to read some summaries of research on device vs. paper note-taking and explain why your case is an exception to the norm; (2) If approved, you will sit in one designated area of the classroom; (3) You will turn off the wifi/cellular data function; (4) You consent to being monitored by your TA to ensure that you are not using the computer (tablet, etc.) for a purpose other than note-taking for this class.

Getting to know you. Please bring a **dark/bold/big name tag** to put on your desk for at least the first few weeks.

Extra credit photo – due by the end of class on Wednesday of week two (Bonus 1%): Please bring 2 copies (2 pieces of paper, 1 copy on each piece of paper) of a picture of you to your TA.

- Hard copy (8.5 X 11 size paper) only. If you want to tape/paste a picture onto a 8.5 X 11 piece of paper, that is fine as long as what you look like is clearly visible from the picture.
- Black & white photo (or even photocopy) is fine.
- The photo should be one that clearly indicates what you look like. No sunglasses in the picture.
- Please make sure all information (legibly written) is presented on the same side of the page as the photo. Please include your name, the pronunciation of your name, the quarter and class, and your TA's name. If more than one person is in the picture, indicate which one you are. (Better yet: use a different photo.)
- If the course has two TA's, you will be assigned a specific one and you should put that TA's name on the sheet with the photo.
- Late copies not accepted; pictures that do not follow the above instructions will lose at least 1/2 of a point.
- Unless you turn in a picture, I cannot guarantee that you will receive the (positive) participation grade that you deserve.

ASSIGNMENTS

The following are the assignments (explained in more detail elsewhere), with their percentages values:

One short essay on a case study in policy making	15
One in-class examination (during finals week)	20
Term paper research requirement (with the following components)	
Preliminary statement of topic	5
Elaboration of the characteristics of the policy problem	10
Final Policy Analysis Paper	30
Participation	20

Your grade in this course depends on your having turned in each assignment on time and attending/participating regularly.

Research paper. Everyone must complete a research paper. Note that there are interim assignments along the way (an initial topic selection, and a lengthier write-up of the policy problem); see dates on the schedule below.

For your paper, you will choose a policy in some country included in the DD book *other than the United States*, and offer an explanation of how the country's policy-making process shaped the outcome. It should be a policy that was sufficiently contentious that there exists a public record of the process (via news media, academic articles or books, etc.). You will be required to demonstrate very early in the quarter not only that you have a topic, but also that there are source materials for you in English or another language that you are able to read. (Note: under special circumstances, you may be given the green light to do a case from a country not in the DD book. However, the burden of proof on you—to show that you have both a viable policy case and can figure out the country's institutional structure—will be high. You also may do a US policy case if you can propose—and I accept—a *comparative* component as well.) Additional advice on selecting a topic and approaching this assignment will be offered in various class sessions and/or in announcements at the Canvas site.

The paper should be 8-12 pages, double spaced, with a clear thesis about the impact of the country's policy-making process on the policy decision (or a failed attempt at policy change), and documentation to reference materials. You must build upon the concepts provided in your DD and PP books and also cite a *bare minimum of five additional sources, at least three of which must be by political scientists*, published in peer-reviewed journals or by reputable presses. (Further details on these criteria will be provided.)

Alternative research track. For those interested in going into greater depth on a special topic regarding one country's political institutions or policy, I will be glad to structure an "independent research" track. This would excuse you from *some* of the requirements defined in the syllabus. In replacement, you would turn in various "installments" on your specialized research project instead. This track means you do a more ambitious and demanding final project than the standard Policy Analysis Paper. Details will be provided early in the quarter.

Missing Assignments. If you know in advance that you will miss an assignment deadline, you may submit a partially completed assignment early—and then appeal for an extension. What if you don't know in advance? "Purchase some insurance," I like to say. That is, buy yourself some time by preparing for contingencies; don't wait till the night before it is due to begin to work on an assignment. I am not very sympathetic to those who fail to plan ahead. Life is complicated; make it less so by managing your time efficiently. Even if your work is not complete because something unexpected interfered, submitting what you have accomplished prior to the emergency is better than failing. Extensions will be granted only under **extreme** circumstances, and at my sole discretion.

The **final examination** will be held on Wed. Mar. 22 at 3:30pm . Details on the format of the examination will be provided in the last week of the course.

NOTE: If you have a University-certified disability that requires accommodation on exams or other course activities, it is imperative that you make this known in plenty of time for accommodations to be arranged.

Schedule

Note: if deviation from the schedule becomes necessary, it will be announced via the Canvas site

Readings from the Taylor-Shugart-Lijphart-Grofman book will be noted as "**DD**", followed by the chapter or page number(s). When it is in the Peters book, it will be noted as "**PP**", followed by chapter number or pages.

Unless otherwise noted, any "boxed text" or appendices in any given DD chapter are part of the *required* reading.

Where additional readings or resources are listed, they, too, are *required*. These are accessible either at Web links on this syllabus or as files that will have been posted to the "Files" tab of the course Canvas site. Not all of them are currently indicated on the syllabus, but you will be informed of them in advance. Details will be explained in class.

Week 1

Jan. 9. How do democracies vary? **DD1** Intro

Jan. 11. What is public policy? **PP1** and up to p.17 in Ch. 2; also study tables in **DD** conclusion (Ch. 10)

Week 2

Jan. 16 is a **holiday**.

Jan. 18. What is "good public policy"

Listen to podcasts on BBC 'My Perfect Country' and discuss (and begin thinking about paper topic)

Week 3

Jan. 23. **DD2 & DD3** Constitutions and “Political Engineering”

Submit one paragraph statement of intent on your policy analysis project

You will need to submit *before the start of class* a statement indicating the policy decision and country, and showing a list of sources you have consulted that prove there is material available in a language you can read.

Jan 25. **DD4** Federalism

Additional reading for an example of federal politics in action: “Don’t balance federal budget on our backs, Ontario and Quebec warn,” *Globe & Mail*, Mar 5, 2012

Week 4

Jan. 30. Policy problems: **PP**, rest of chapter 2.

Feb. 1. **DD5** Electoral systems I (save the appendices for reading before the next session)

Watch this video (6.5 mins): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7tWHJfhiyo>

Week 5

Feb. 6. **DD5** Electoral systems I; read appendices in this chapter and get started on **DD6** Parties and Party Systems

Feb 8. **DD6** Parties and Party Systems (continued)

Exercise: Take the “test” at Political Compass, <http://www.politicalcompass.org>

Compare your results to parties in several countries that are linked on the left sidebar of the Political Compass website. Does the result surprise you? Note: You are not required to reveal your results. This is a private learning exercise.

Week 6

Feb. 13. Collective action. Olson and other reading selections (posted to Canvas).

Feb. 15. How policy is made: Agendas and constraints. **PP3-4** and pages 90-96 & 178-80

Week 7

Feb. 20 is a **holiday**

Feb. 22. **DD7** Legislatures

Week 8

Feb. 27. **DD8** Executives

The part on text Box 8.2 on New Zealand will wait till we look at that country in depth in a later session

Additional reading: to be supplied, recent case(s) of coalition politics

Mar. 1. NZ1: Case study of policy-making under a “pure” Westminster majoritarian system

Week 9

Mar. 6 NZ2: Case study of how policy-making differs in New Zealand since the adoption of MMP

SHORT ESSAY due at start of class.

(same topic for everyone). It will be based on a prompt that will be posted a week or so in advance at the course Canvas site.

Mar. 8 Japan case study in inter-cameral differences and an election called over a policy issue

Readings will be posted at Canvas

Week 10

Mar. 13 **DD9** (selections; info to be provided) and two case studies (to be posted at the Canvas site):

1. Mexico case study (presidentialism, federalism, and judicial review)
2. India case study (federalism, parliamentarism, and coalition governments)

Mar. 15. Conclusion: **DD10** & **PP** pages 178-80

Research paper due date will be announced; the exam date is Wed. Mar.22 at 3:30pm