



**Universiteit  
Leiden**  
The Netherlands

**Introduction to Comparative Politics, and Academic Skills 3  
Semester 2, Block 3, 2024-2025  
Catalogue number: 6441HICPAY**

Lecturer: Diana Dávila Gordillo, PhD

Office Hours: Mondays 15:00 to 16:00 (Office 6.25 Wijnhaven Building)

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Work group coordinator: Thomas Scarff – see [WG Syllabus here](#)

**Course Description**

The aim of this course is to provide students with an overview of key political institutions and processes in contemporary political systems, such as political parties and party systems, social movements, executive-legislative relations, electoral systems or bureaucracies. At the same time, the course also introduces students to some of the key concepts in political science, such as political culture, social capital, political participation, or electoral behavior. What are the functions of political parties, and how do parties organize? Is there a difference between the position of presidents in the United States and in France? How can we distinguish a social movement from an interest group? What is lobbying? Why is political participation important for political systems, and has it declined in recent years?

The focus throughout the course is on modern representative government, but the course also encourages students to understand the differences between democracies and non-democracies and to appreciate the role of institutions and political processes in authoritarian contexts. The course is not about one particular country or region. The examples of institutions and political processes are drawn from a wide range of empirical contexts, with the aim of introducing students to their patterns from an international comparative perspective. In that sense, the course also serves as an introduction to the comparative method and the discipline of comparative politics more generally.

The course also includes Academic Skills working groups that focus on improving students' ability to understand, summarize, and critically analyze empirical political science research by writing reviews of foundational texts in the field of comparative politics. As these texts bear on certain topics covered in the lectures, engaging with these texts during the workgroup sessions and through the assignments for the workgroups helps to deepen students' understanding and knowledge of these topics.

**Course objectives**

Objective 1: To introduce key political institutions and processes in contemporary political systems, with a particular focus on modern representative government.

Objective 2: To introduce some of the key political science concepts.

Objective 3: To introduce patterns of politics and institutions in comparative perspective.

Objective 4: To improve students' ability to understand, summarize, and critically analyse empirical research.

### **Mode of instruction**

- Plenary lectures and extra interactive sessions centered around the literature and student questions
- Academic Skills working groups
- Academic Skills Coordinator: T.E.C. Scarff MSc

*Exchange students take this course for 5 EC and do not follow the working groups*

### **Assessment method**

60% final exam (100% Multiple Choice questions); 2 hours.

EXAM DATE: March 25, 2025 – 13:00.

EXAM RESIT DATE: June 11, 2025 – 9:00

40% work group assignments and participation - [see details in the WG Syllabus here](#)

### **Required Textbook:**

**Comparative government and politics: an introduction (12th edition)** by Rod Hague, John McCormick, and Martin Harrop, Bloomsbury, 2022.

There are several previous editions of this excellent textbook. The program of the course, as well as its exam, are based on the text of the 2022 edition! The use of earlier versions of the book are NOT recommended.

Extra mandatory or suggested readings are listed in the overview of lectures and will be posted on Brightspace.

All required readings and other materials are due on the date they are assigned. This means: you should be reading all assigned material *before* class.

### **Lectures**

The lectures are designed to guide you through the literature and help you to understand and apply the key concepts and conceptual distinctions, illustrated by examples and some empirical trends. The lectures occasionally deviate from what is written in the textbook and it is therefore very important that you follow and carefully consider both sources and try to understand why there might be a difference. Some lectures also offer additional concepts or theories that are not directly in the textbook. *It is therefore important that you follow the lectures and not rely only on the textbook for your exam preparations.*

Lecture outlines (not the slides) will be published on the Brightspace shortly before each lecture. These outlines are meant to help you follow the lecture: you can print or

download them in advance and structure your notes according to the structure. Lecture slides will be posted after each lecture.

All lectures will be recorded. The recordings of each individual lecture will be available to you after the last review session prior to the exam in the web lectures catalogue on Brightspace.

Brightspace activities: you will find in Brightspace multiple extra activities (such as map quizzes and other activities). I encourage you to do the activities although they are not graded.

### **Review sessions**

There are two review sessions scheduled during the lecture program. These sessions are interactive and are meant to give you an opportunity to ask questions about the lectures and the literature. The first session will cover the first 4 weeks of class, and the second review session involves the entire course and will also serve as a preparation for the exam. Students will be asked to prepare and send their questions in advance via Brightspace and to do so according to these deadlines:

**Deadline for the first review session: February 25, 2025.**

**Deadline for the second review session: March 18, 2025.**

### **Attendance**

Attendance and punctuality are expected. The lectures are designed to be more effective when followed in person, so plan to be present for all lectures. If you arrive late to the lecture, do your best to enter the room quietly and settle down in the first available seat.

### **Office hours and communication:**

Walk-in office hours will take place every Monday after class from 15:00 to 16:00 (room 6.25). If the allocated times do not work for you, you can email me. [Here](#) are some tips and tricks for emailing your professors. If you are going to email me and my (long) last name seems too difficult to spell, you can address me as Dr. D.

### **Technology**

You may use your laptop in class to reference the readings or other class-related materials and to take notes. My personal advice to you is to take hand-written notes (with or without the aid of the lecture structure published for every class). Refrain from using your laptops, phones, or other devices for browsing, texting, or social media, as it is distracting not only to you but to students around you as well. Please be mindful and respectful.

### **House rules**

This class is a partnership between me as your lecturer and you as a student. I expect students to arrive to class prepared, meaning they have completed the readings and the necessary assignments. I also expect professional behaviour in class. Think of how you would behave at an important meeting. One arrives a few minutes early. One does not wander off, surf the web, explore social media, or text a friend.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **Week 1: Feb. 3 and Feb. 5**

#### **Session 1**

**First part:** : Introduction, the syllabus, non-graded assignments, and the final exam.

**Second part:** Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method



#### **Read the assigned text:**

McCormick, Hague & Harrop Chapters 1 “Government and Politics” and 2 “Making comparisons.”

#### **Session 2: States and Democratic Regimes - Guest lecturer: Prof. Dr.Petr Kopecky**



#### **Read the assigned text:**

- ⊕ McCormick, Hague & Harrop Chapter 3 “States and Nations.” and Chapter 5 “Democratic Rule”



Europe map (not graded) - Due by February 9.

### **Week 2: Feb. 10 and Feb. 12**

#### **Session 3: Authoritarianism, Non-Democratic and Hybrid Regimes**



#### **Read the assigned texts:**

- ⊕ McCormick, Hague & Harrop Chapter 6 “Authoritarian Rule”.
- ⊕ Lührmann, A., & Lindberg, S. I. (2019). A third wave of autocratization is here: What is new about it? *Democratization*, 26(7), 1095–1113.



Watch the posted video.



Be prepared to answer a question related to this reflection: *Authoritarian practices are becoming increasingly common even within democratic regimes. Do you think we are living in an authoritarian world?*

#### **Session 4: Political Participation and Political Culture**



#### **Read the assigned texts:**

- Ⓜ McCormick, Hague & Harrop Chapter 4 “Political Culture”, and Chapter 13 “Political Participation”

*Answer the following survey question (in Brightspace): What is your first political memory? And how do you participate in politics? Do you see a connection between these two?*



North America map (not graded) - Due by February 16.

### **Week 3: Feb. 17 and Feb. 19**

#### **Session 5: Elections and Electoral Systems**



##### **Read the assigned texts:**

- Ⓜ McCormick, Hague & Harrop Chapter 14 “Elections”
- Ⓜ Listen to the podcast: [Towards gender balance in the European elections: Electoral quotas – What can they achieve?](#)
- Ⓜ Read the brief: [Towards gender balance in the European elections Electoral quotas – What can they achieve?](#)
- Ⓜ Read: [When Do Quotas in Politics Work? Latin America Offers Lessons.](#)



Post in Brightspace a high-definition image of an election ballot from a country of your choice.

#### **Session 6: Electoral behavior**



##### **Read the assigned texts:**

- Ⓜ McCormick, Hague & Harrop Chapter 13 “Political Participation”
- Ⓜ Rekker, R. (2022). Young trendsetters: How young voters fuel electoral volatility. *Electoral Studies*, 75, 102425–13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2021.102425>



*Be prepared to answer the question: why do you vote? What helps you make up your mind for a candidate and/or a party?*



South America map (not graded) - Due by February 23.

### **Week 4: Feb. 24 and Feb. 26**

#### **Session 7: Political parties and party systems**




##### **Read the assigned texts:**

- Ⓜ McCormick, Hague & Harrop Chapter 15 “Political Parties”
- Ⓜ Mair, P. (2006). Ruling the void? The hollowing of Western democracy. *New Left Review*, 42 (November/December), 25-51.

❓ *Answer the following survey question (on Brightspace): Can we have a democracy without parties?*


### **Session 8: Review Session**

Review session: submit your questions using the Brightspace survey form before Feb. 25

 Africa map (not graded) - Due by March 2.


### **Week 5: March 3 and March 5**


#### **Session 9: Interest Groups and Social Movements**

 **Read the assigned texts:**

- Ⓜ McCormick, Hague & Harrop Chapter 16 “Interest Groups”
- Ⓜ Daby, Mariela and Moseley, Mason W. (2022). “Feminist Mobilization and the Abortion Debate in Latin America: Lessons from Argentina”. *Politics and Gender* 18: 359–393

Watch the three videos posted on Brightspace. One of these videos is in Spanish and YouTube could be used to create close-captions translations. If you can't use them and can't understand Spanish you don't need to watch it.

 **Session 10: The Executive**


 **Read the assigned texts:**

- Ⓜ McCormick, Hague & Harrop Chapter 8 “Executives”

 Asia map (not graded) - Due by March 9.

### **Week 6: March 10 and March 12**

#### **Session 11: The Legislature**

 **Read the assigned texts:**

- Ⓜ McCormick, Hague & Harrop Chapter 9 “Legislature”

## Session 12: Women in politics: barriers to political participation

### Read the assigned texts:

- Ⓜ Why Representation in Politics Actually Matters (the link is also posted in Brightspace) <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/why-representation-in-politics-matters>
- Ⓜ Blog post: I’m Speaking! Interruptions in Legislative Speeches and Women’s Strategic Behavior (the link is also posted in Brightspace) <https://jop.blogs.uni-hamburg.de/im-speaking-interruptions-in-legislative-speeches-and-womens-strategic-behavior/>
- Ⓜ Blog post: Women leaders in a world of crisis: five things to know (the link is also posted in Brightspace) <https://theloop.ecpr.eu/women-leaders-in-a-world-of-crisis-five-things-to-know/>
- Ⓜ Krook, M. L. (2017). Violence Against Women in Politics. *Journal of Democracy*, 28(1), 74–88. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2017.0007>


 World map (not graded) - Due by March 16.

## Week 7: March 17 and March 19

### Session 13: Bureaucracy and the Judiciary

### Read the assigned texts:

- Ⓜ McCormick, Hague & Harrop Chapter 10 “Bureaucracies” and Chapter 7 “Constitutions and Courts”

 Answer the following survey question: Share an experience you have had with bureaucratic *red tape*.

### Session 14: review session

Review session: submit your questions using the Brightspace survey form before March 18.

## Week 8: Final Exam:

**FINAL EXAM DATE: March 25, 2025 – 13:00 – 15:00**

**EXAM RESIT DATE: June 11, 2025 – 9:00 – 11:00**