

PLS 140 INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

School of Sciences and Humanities, Nazarbayev University

Spring 2023

Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:00 – 13:15 Room 5103

Professor Alexei Trochev

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Depending on the class size and student interests, this course outline is subject to change.
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Welcome to the field of Comparative Politics! In this course we will explore competing theories and arguments that explain political dynamics in modern societies, including democratization and autocratization, social movements, political violence, etc. In addition, we will learn to employ the comparative method. To achieve this we will study theories, use case studies, examine real-world data and explore important political developments in different regions of the world, including Central Asia. We will pay attention to various modes of governance, different political institutions, emerging non-state actors, and broader social and economic mechanisms, which determine who gets what, when, how, and with what consequences.

Course Format

Our classes will be a combination of lecture and discussion format. As you can see from the course schedule below, almost every week will be centered on the research questions. I will usually spend some time at the beginning of class discussing the specific research questions and issues under consideration. The latter part of the class will be devoted to the discussion of assigned book chapters and articles. Depending on the class size, we will use in-class exercises to apply what we have learned to ensure we understand the concepts and ideas presented in the lectures and course readings.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. It is your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet, but you may not sign the attendance sheet for another student as this can be deemed forgery and will warrant disciplinary procedures. More than two unexcused absences will result in a 5% deduction of the total course grade. Missing the class without prior permission from the instructor or without a written excuse (for example, official doctor's note) will be deemed an unexcused absence. Absences due to valid reasons must be negotiated with the instructor prior to missing class. Students who arrive late, leave early, or are disruptive in class will be counted absent.

Class policies

- Mobile phones must be turned off during all class sessions.
- All assignments should be submitted in class or online. Do not submit assignments via email. Do not submit hand written assignments unless I ask you to do so.

- All written assignments must use Times New Roman font, size 12. Page margins must be 1 inch.
- No late assignments will be accepted.
- I reserve the right to change this syllabus, including adding or subtracting readings, changing due dates, etc. but will give students ample warning in writing (via email, in class etc.)
- While you are welcome to email anytime about any issue you may be having in the class, please use proper email etiquette. Please start your email with “Dear Professor Trochev”. I will not answer emails that use an improper salutation.
- I will also not answer emails that can be answered by looking at the syllabus.
- Do not expect me to answer your emails right away. It usually takes me at least 24 hours to answer emails.

Required Readings

Stephen Orvis and Carol Ann Drogus, *Introducing Comparative Politics: Concepts and Cases in Context*. 5th edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage/CQ Press, 2020.

Additional required readings will be posted on the Moodle’s course website.

Completing Perusall tasks after each reading but before class (15%)

You must read assigned texts (about 70 pages for each class) prior to each class. each reading –you must complete no more than 2 Perusall tasks per week. These Perusall tasks must be completed on Moodle before each class. You will be asked about these tasks during every class. If you do not complete these tasks, you will not earn a high grade in this class. Paraphrasing from others and pouring water in these tasks are not allowed. Remember: there are no stupid questions in this course. In fact, the essence of political science research is to be skeptical about well-established truths and asking questions. As we will learn in this course, asking and sharpening your questions is as important as addressing them.

Writing Assignments

1. You will write three in-class tests (m/c and short essay questions) on the dates listed in the course schedule below.
2. You will prepare a presentation in the group of 5 students and deliver it at the end of the semester. To support your presentation, you will prepare an Annotated Bibliography and a 2-page Action Memo.

Student Team Presentations (10%) and an Action Memo (15%)

Students will be divided into 16 teams of 5 students that will debate on four different subjects. Teams will be formed during the semester and will make presentations during the last two weeks of the semester. Each team will prepare at least 10 slides (not counting the title slide and bibliography) and send them to the professor before the day of the presentation. The goal of each team is to defend a particular position against the other team. During your presentation, you will have to contribute to your team’s position by articulating one empirical point in its support (2-3 minute individual presentation). You

will elaborate this empirical point in the 2-pages-long Action Memo with Annotated Bibliography, that you will submit on or before April 25.

Grading

Perusall task completion = 15%
3 in-class tests 20% = 60%
1 Student Team presentation 10% = 10%
Action memo (due April 24, 23:59) 15%
TOTAL 100%

Grading scale

A	95-100%;	A-	90-94		
B+	85-89;	B	80-84;	B-	75-79
C+	70-74;	C	65-69;	C-	60-64
D	55-59;	D-	50-54		
F	0-49				

D is the lowest passing grade if you do not plan to major in PSIR.

C- is the lowest passing grade if you plan to major in PSIR.

C is the lowest passing grade if you plan to use this course grade to declare a PSIR major.

To declare a PSIR major, you must pass two of these following courses with a grade of "C" or above by the end of Spring 2023 semester: 1. PLS120 Introduction to Political Theory 2. PLS140 Introduction to Comparative Politics 3. PLS150 Introduction to International Relations In addition, you MUST satisfy the GPA requirement of a minimum of 2.75 after two academic semesters. Having met these requirements, students are ranked according to the sum of their differential between their grades in the two above-mentioned courses with the average grade in each course, and top 80 of them are allowed to declare their major in Political Science and International Relations. If a student has taken the three above-mentioned courses, only the two highest grades will be used for the ranking. Students who are tied at the 80th position will be separated by their overall GPA. If a tie persists after this stage, all students concerned will be allowed to declare their major in Political Science and International Relations. For example: if a student received 90% in PLS140, which had an average grade of 70, and 90% in PLS150, which had an average grade of 60, the sum of their differential would be $90/70 + 90/60 = 2.786$, and this score would be entered in the ranking.

Learning Outcomes

Students will show:

1. the knowledge of the major scientific explanations of political behavior (e.g., rational choice, cultural, structural, and institutional), an understanding of major concepts used in the study of comparative politics (e.g., states, regimes, nations, governments, markets, legitimacy, policy, and identity), and the ability to apply them in practice.
2. an understanding of global diversity, using comparative analysis, as expressed in at least two different political communities.

- the capacity to evaluate different forms of empirical evidence used in political science, including qualitative and quantitative data, to develop evidence-based arguments about political phenomena and apply this framework to defend the validity of their own arguments about politics.

Nazarbayev University Graduate Attributes

By taking this course students will have an opportunity to develop the NU Graduate Attributes:

NU Graduate Attributes	Course Learning Outcomes
Possess an in-depth and sophisticated understanding of their domain of study	1,2,3
Be intellectually agile, curious, creative and open-minded	1,2,3
Be thoughtful decision makers who know how to involve others	3
Be entrepreneurial, self-propelling and able to create new opportunities	3
Be fluent and nuanced communicators across languages and cultures	2,3
Be cultured and tolerant citizens of the world	2,3
Demonstrate high personal integrity	1,2,3
Be prepared to take a leading role in the development of their country	3

Warnings against Plagiarism and Cheating

Both plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated and punished according to the procedures of “Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures of Nazarbayev University.” If you are not sure about whether your actions constitute one or both of these practices, please talk to me about them. Under this Student Code, plagiarism “is intentionally or carelessly presenting the work of another as one’s own. It includes submitting an assignment purporting to be the student’s original work that has wholly or in part been created by another person. It also includes the presentation of the work, ideas, representations, or words of another person without customary and proper acknowledgement of sources. Plagiarism occurs when a person:

- Directly copies one or more sentences of another person’s written work without proper citation. If another writer’s words are used, you must place quotation marks around the quoted material and include a footnote or other indication of the source of the quotation. This includes cut and paste from the internet or other electronic sources;
- Changes words but copies the sentence structure of a source without giving credit to the original source, or closely paraphrases one or more paragraphs without acknowledgement of the source of the ideas, or uses graphs, figures, drawings, charts or other visual/audio materials without acknowledging the source or the permission of the author;

- Submits false or altered information in any academic exercise. This may include making up data for an experiment, altering data, citing nonexistent articles, contriving sources, etc.;
- Turns in all or part of assignment done by another student and claims it as their own;
- Uses a paper writing service, has another student write a paper, or uses a foreign language translation and submits it as their own original work.

Cheating harms the very fiber of the University community. Honest students are put at a disadvantage due to the unfairness of the act and the potential that the grading structure of the class may be altered to their disadvantage. A student who cheats does not receive a real education, robbing themselves of the experience of how to learn. This is the focus of any university education. Cheating also damages the reputation of the University as well as the fabric of society. Finally, cheating damages the ethics of the individual, teaching them a wrong approach to life that will not be sustainable in their future careers. Cheating occurs when a person:

- Gains or provides unauthorized access to examination materials.
- Uses notes, mobile phone, books, calculator or other materials/devices during an examination without the permission of the instructor.
- Copies from another student's exam sheet with or without their permission or allows a student to copy from their exam sheet.
- Obstructs or interferes with another student's efforts in an academic exercise.
- States a dishonest reason in a request for an extension for an exam or paper.
- Continues to write even when time is up during an exam.
- Talks during an examination period.
- Asks another student take an examination or quiz.
- Any other action that gives a student an unfair advantage during an examination period or on any assignment being graded for credit."

Course Schedule with Readings – exact dates and readings will be changing depending on the progress

Textbook chapters are available via access codes from the NU library. Additional readings are on the Moodle course webpage.

January 10. Introduction and Overview of the Course

January 12. What Is and Why Study Comparative Politics?

- Textbook, Chapter 1

January 17. What Are Modern States?

- Textbook, Chapter 2.

January 19. How and Why Are States Made, Remade, and Unmade?

- Charles TILLY. (1985). "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In*, pp. 169–187.

- Georg SØRENSEN. (2001). War and State-Making: Why Doesn't it Work in the Third World? *Security Dialogue*, 32(3), pp. 341–354.
- Viktoria AKCHURINA. (2019). “The Incomplete State: Re-conceptualizing State and Society Relations in Central Asia,” in Rico Isaacs and Alexandro Friggerio, eds., *Theorizing Central Asian Politics*, pp. 263-284.

January 24. What Are Political Regimes, and How Do They Emerge, Work or Fail?

- Textbook, Chapter 3.

January 26. How Are Political Regimes Related to Political Legitimacy?

- Sherri BERMAN, (1997), “Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic,” *World Politics*, 49(3), pp. 408–426. EXCERPT
- Sofya du BOULAY and Rico ISAACS (2019). “Legitimacy and Legitimation in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan,” in Rico Isaacs and Alexandro Friggerio, eds., *Theorizing Central Asian Politics*, pp.17-41.

January 31. What Are Political Identities?

- Textbook, Chapter 4.

February 2. Test 1

February 7. How Are Democracies Governed?

- Textbook, Chapter 5.

February 9. How Do Political Parties and Elections Work in Democracies?

- Textbook, Chapter 6.

February 14. How Are Autocracies Governed?

- Textbook, Chapter 8.

February 16. How Are Post-Soviet Autocracies Governed?

- Assel TUTUMLU. (2019). “Governmentalization of the Kazakhstani State: Between Governmentality and Neopatrimonial Capitalism,” in Rico Isaacs and Alexandro Friggerio, eds., *Theorizing Central Asian Politics*, pp.43-64.
- Vladimir GEL'MAN. (2019). *Politics of Bad Governance in Contemporary Russia*, pp. 1-52.

February 21. What Causes Contentious Politics and with What Consequences?

- Textbook, Chapter 7.

February 23. Civil Wars and Color Revolutions

- Stathis KALYVAS. (2018). “Jihadi Rebels in Civil War.” *Daedalus*, 147(1), pp. 36–47
- Nurseit NIYAZBEKOV. (2018). “Is Kazakhstan Immune to Color Revolutions? The Social Movements Perspective.” *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, 26(3), pp. 401-425.

February 28. How and Why Do Political Regimes Change?

- Textbook, Chapter 9.

March 2.

- Henry HALE. (2019). “How Should We Now Conceptualize Protest, Diffusion, and Regime Change?” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 63(10), pp. 2402-2415.
- Adele del SORDI and Alexander LIBMAN. (2020). “Kazakhstan: A Possible Future Authoritarian Gravity Center?” In Marianne Kneuer & Thomas Demmelhuber, eds., *Authoritarian Gravity Centers*, pp. 138-171.

March 7. Test 2

March 9. Why Do Some States Prosper While Others Don’t?

- Textbook, Chapter 10.

March 14. Which Capitalism and Developmental State Exist in Central Asia?

- Fred BLOCK. (2019). “Problems with the Concept of Capitalism in the Social Sciences.” *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 51(5), pp. 1166-1177.
- Andrzej BOLESTA. (2022). “From Socialism to Capitalism with Communist Characteristics: The Building of a Post-Socialist Developmental State in Central Asia.” *Post-Communist Economies*, 34(1), pp. 71-98.

March 16. What Are the Politics of Development and Its Mechanisms?

- Textbook, Chapter 11.

March 28. How Does Oil Matter in Politics?

- Benjamin SMITH & David WALDNER. (2021). *Rethinking the Resource Curse*.

March 30. How Does Authoritarian Neoliberalism Work?

- Ernesto GALLO. (2022). “Three Varieties of Authoritarian Neoliberalism: Rule by the Experts, the People, the Leader.” *Competition & Change*, 26(5), pp. 554-574.
- Balihar SANGHERA & Elmira SATYBALDIEVA. (2020). “The Other Road to Serfdom: The Rise of the Rentier Class in Post-Soviet Economies.” *Social Science Information*, 59(3), pp. 505-536.

April 4. How and Why Do States Fix Market Failures?

- Textbook, Chapter 12.

April 6. Test 3.

April 11 - 20. Student Presentations.