

SPE 353: Comparative Political Behavior
Spring 2023
Professor Tanu Kumar
Tuesdays 9 AM- 11:50 AM

Many societies are marked by material scarcity. Citizens may struggle to make ends meet, and governments may not have sufficient resources to redistribute to them through welfare programs. Does this scarcity affect politics?

This course will explore how scarcity shapes political behavior in democratic societies. The first half of the course will focus on voting behavior. The second half will focus on other types of participation and context-specific topics, such as gender roles or conflict, that are particularly important to consider in places where scarcity is endemic.

Most of the readings will be drawn from studies conducted in countries in South Asia, Africa, or Latin America, but you may find that several insights apply to places in the United States (or other countries we may think of as "rich") as well. After all, poverty and inequality are present in almost every country on earth. For this reason, we can think of all democracies as developing democracies.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of how poverty and scarcity at the household level affect how people choose to vote and interact with others in society
2. Demonstrate knowledge of how poverty and scarcity at the government level affect how officials distribute resources to citizens
3. Explain how context-specific variables such as conflict, historical events, gender, urbanization, and policies shape behavior
4. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of different research methods used to answer questions related to political behavior in developing countries
5. Apply this knowledge to identify open questions and debates in both research and policy related to development and political behavior

This coursework is appropriate for Ph.D. students in the Department of Politics and Economics.

Important dates

1/17 Sign-ups for project pitches due
2/14 Virtual class
3/7 Midterm
3/21 Paper topic due
5/2 Presentations
5/8 Final paper due

Assignments

Readings and discussion

Every week, there will be anywhere between 2 and 4 required readings. It is expected that you complete these readings before the start of class. If you are running out of time, the paper introduction almost always provides a comprehensive summary. Beyond this, I encourage you to spend time with the theory and research design sections; all of the papers are innovative in one or both. Some weeks also have optional readings that you may find interesting or useful; these are not required.

Note that with the exception of book chapters and unpublished/forthcoming papers (which are on Canvas) you will need to find the assigned articles yourself online. Looking up the readings on Google Scholar or The Claremont Colleges library catalog will provide you with valuable research skills. Reach out to me if you are having trouble finding the readings. You can begin searching for articles at <https://library.claremont.edu>.

Participation in discussion is fundamental to this seminar-style class. I expect you to come prepared to answer discussion questions and pose several of your own.

Reading questions

Every class, you must submit **at least one** question for **every required reading** through Canvas. These questions may be big or small. They can be about something you didn't understand, a critique, or a research question.

Individual project pitches

One of the hardest parts of doing research is coming up with ideas. I have found that the best way to do so is to get used to pitching ideas early and often. Most ideas are not immediately tractable, but the more you come up with, the better your hit rate will be.

Pitching ideas and responding to your peers' ideas will be a weekly feature of this class. All students will sign up for **TWO** slots as pitch leaders here: <https://bit.ly/3GeGjPk>

Every class (in the third hour), each pitch leader will be responsible for proposing a research idea. The pitch should include:

- A research question related to the unit for the week. It can be an extension or alteration of the design used in one of the papers.
- Why this research question matters either from a policy perspective OR how answering this research question will make a contribution to the literature covered in the unit
- Where the proposed project would take place
- The needed data or research methodology for the proposed project. Assume money is no object and logistical hurdles are few

The pitches should be no more than 5-10 minutes. Do not agonize over them. The point is to generate ideas quickly.

Classmates are then responsible for discussing the proposed idea. **Please be courteous and constructive.** Think about how to make the proposal better, rather than a statement on why you don't like it. It is also helpful and important to highlight what you do like about the proposal.

Bottom line: be generous in your interpretation of ideas, colleagues, and issues. Always aim to see the best version of them and help them.

Midterm (group)

There will be no class during the March 7 week of class. The week will be devoted to an open-book take-home exam. This will consist of one essay question to which you are expected to write a 5 page double-spaced response. You may take as long as you require during the week.

You may work in groups of up to **three** on the midterm. Each group midterm should include a short attestation on each author's contribution. Midterms completed in groups will be held to higher standard.

Research proposals

The final assignment for this class will be 10-page double spaced project proposal. This proposal can, but does not have to be, related to one of the ideas you propose as a project pitch leader. Final papers should include

- A research question
- A literature review explaining the significance of the research idea
- A proposed methodology including either a plan for collecting data or pre-existing data sources that could be used to answer the question

As with the midterm, you may work in groups of up to **three**. Papers completed in groups will be held to higher standard.

Paper topics are due on 3/21.

The last class session will be devoted to workshopping your research ideas. You may either a) present your full proposal or b) share a draft proposal with the class one week before the workshop.

Grading Plan

<i>Class Element</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Participation	20%
Weekly questions	10%
Project Pitches	10%
Midterm	20%
Presentation	20%
Final paper	20%

Class schedule and readings

Part I: Political participation

1/17 Introduction

O'Neil, Patrick H. *Essentials of Comparative Politics*. W.W. Norton & Company. 2018. Chapter 10, "Developing Countries."

Mullainathan, Sendhil. "[The psychological lives of the poor](#)." Approximately 50 minutes.

1/24 Resource constraints

Dasgupta, Aditya, and Devesh Kapur. "The political economy of bureaucratic overload: Evidence from rural development officials in India." *American Political Science Review*, 2020.

Denny, Elaine K. "Crisis, resilience, and civic engagement: Pandemic-era census completion." *Perspectives on Politics*, 2022.

Schaub, Max. "Acute financial hardship and voter turnout: Theory and evidence from the sequence of bank working days." *American Political Science Review* (2021): 1-17.

1/31 Clientelism and patronage

Scott, James C. "Corruption, machine politics, and political change." *American Political Science Review*, 1969.

Brusco, Valeria, Marcelo Nazareno, and Susan C. Stokes. "Vote buying in Argentina." *Latin American Research Review*, 2004.

Pages 10-12, 24-25 *only* in Kitschelt, Herbert, and Steven I. Wilkinson. "Citizen-politician linkages: an introduction." in *Patrons, clients, and policies: Patterns of democratic accountability and political competition*. Cambridge University Press. 2007.

Auerbach, Adam Michael, and Tariq Thachil. "How clients select brokers: Competition and choice in India's slums." *American Political Science Review*, 2018.

2/7 Ethnicity and voting

Chandra, Kanchan. "Counting heads: a theory of voter and elite behavior in patronage democracies." in *Patrons, clients, and policies: Patterns of democratic accountability and political competition*. Cambridge University Press. 2007.

Dunning, Thad, and Lauren Harrison. "Cross-cutting cleavages and ethnic voting: An experimental study of cousinage in Mali." *American Political Science Review*, 2010.

Malik, Mashail. "Discrimination and defiant pride: How the demand for dignity creates slack for poor governance." Working paper, 2020.

Optional: Ichino, Nahomi, and Noah L. Nathan. "Crossing the line: Local ethnic geography and voting in Ghana." *American Political Science Review*, 2013.

2/14 Ideology

Introduction and Conclusion *only* in Meltzer, Allan H., and Scott F. Richard. "A rational theory of the size of government." *Journal of Political Economy*, 1981.

Alesina, Alberto, and Paola Giuliano. "Preferences for redistribution." *Handbook of social economics*. Vol. 1. North-Holland, 2011.

Dix, Robert H. "Cleavage structures and party systems in Latin America." *Comparative Politics*, 1989.

"State formation and ideological conflict in multi-ethnic societies" in Chhibber, Pradeep K., and Rahul Verma. *Ideology and identity: The changing party systems of India*. Oxford University Press, 2018.

2/21 Other dimensions of representation

Poertner, Mathias. "Does political representation increase participation? Evidence from party candidate lotteries in Mexico." Forthcoming, *American Political Science Review*.

Pages 1-32 *only* of "Introduction" in Thachil, Tariq. *Elite parties, poor voters*. Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Poertner, Mathias. "The organizational voter: Support for new parties in young democracies." *American Journal of Political Science*, 2021.

Suryanarayan, Pavithra. "When do the poor vote for the right wing and why: Status hierarchy and vote choice in the Indian states." *Comparative Political Studies*, 2019.

2/28 Civic participation

Kruks-Wisner, Gabrielle. "The pursuit of social welfare: Citizen claim-making in rural India." *World Politics*, 2018.

Paller, Jeffrey W. "Dignified public expression: A new logic of political accountability." *Comparative Politics*, 2019.

Atwell, Paul and Noah Nathan. "Channels for influence or maps of behavior? A field experiment on social networks and cooperation." *American Journal of Political Science*, 2021.

Parthasarathy, Ramya, Vijayendra Rao, and Nethra Palaniswamy. "Deliberative democracy in an unequal world: A text-as-data study of South India's village assemblies." *American Political Science Review*, 2019.

3/7 Midterm

3/14 Spring Break

Part II: Context-specific behavior

3/21 Policy Feedback

Hunter, Wendy, and Natasha Borges Sugiyama. "Transforming subjects into citizens: insights from Brazil's Bolsa Familia." *Perspectives on Politics*, 2014.

Kumar, Tanu. "Home-price subsidies increase local-level political participation in urban India." *Journal of Politics*, 2022.

Miguel, Edward. "Tribe or nation? Nation building and public goods in Kenya versus Tanzania." *World Politics*, 2004.

3/28 Migration and urban politics

Montgomery, Mark R. "The urban transformation of the developing world." *Science*, 2008.

Kramon, Eric, Joan Hamory, Sarah Baird, and Edward Miguel. "Deepening or diminishing ethnic divides? The impact of urban migration in Kenya." *American Journal of Political Science*, 2021.

Gaikwad, Nikhar, Kolby Hanson, and Aliz Tóth. "How Overseas Opportunities Shape Political Preferences: A Field Experiment on International Migration," Working Paper, 2019.

Thachil, Tariq. "Do rural migrants divide ethnically in the city? Evidence from an ethnographic experiment in India." *American Journal of Political Science*, 2017.

4/14 Conflict

Varshney, Ashutosh. "Nationalism, ethnic conflict, and rationality." *Perspectives on Politics*, 2003.

Tezcür, Güneş Murat. "Ordinary people, extraordinary risks: Participation in an ethnic rebellion." *American Political Science Review*, 2016.

Varshney, Ashutosh. "Ethnic conflict and civil society: India and beyond." *World Politics*, 2001.

Blattman, Christopher, and Jeannie Annan. "Can employment reduce lawlessness and rebellion? A field experiment with high-risk men in a fragile state." *American Political Science Review*, 2016.

4/11 Historical legacies

Lupu, Noam, and Leonid Peisakhin. "The legacy of political violence across generations." *American Journal of Political Science*, 2017.

Nunn, Nathan, and Léonard Wantchékon. "The slave trade and the origins of mistrust in Africa." *American Economic Review*, 2011.

Bellows, John, and Edward Miguel. "War and local collective action in Sierra Leone." *Journal of Public Economics*, 2009.

4/18 Gender

Khan, Sarah. "Count me out: Women's unexpressed preferences in Pakistan." Working paper, 2021.

Desposato, Scott, and Barbara Norrander. "The gender gap in Latin America: Contextual and individual influences on gender and political participation." *British Journal of Political Science*, 2009.

Cheema, Ali, Sarah Khan, Shandan Khan Mohmand, and Asad Liaqat. "Canvassing the gatekeepers: A field experiment to increase women's voter turnout in Pakistan." *American Political Science Review*, 2022.

4/25 Misinformation

Ali, Ayesha, and Ihsan Ayyub Qazi. "Digital Literacy and Vulnerability to Misinformation: Evidence from Facebook Users in Pakistan." *Journal of Quantitative Description: Digital Media*, 2022.

Badrinathan, Sumitra. "Educative interventions to combat misinformation: Evidence from a field experiment in India." *American Political Science Review*, 2021.

Gottlieb, Jessica, Claire L. Adida, and Richard Moussa. "Reducing Misinformation in a Polarized Context: Experimental Evidence from Côte d'Ivoire." Working Paper, 2022.

5/2 Presentations

5/8 Papers due

Expectations and Logistics

Please read the items on the schedule prior to class. Your participation is essential to a successful experience for all.

Please submit assignments through Canvas. Assignments submitted in any other way will not be graded.

Late assignments will typically incur a half grade letter penalty per day unless you have a reasonable excuse.

You can expect feedback on your assignments in 14 days.

University Resources for Students

Access to university resources and policies can be found in Canvas using the left navigation menu.

Final Grades

Your grade will be calculated using the following scale. Grades with plus or minus designations are at the professor's discretion.

<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>Grade Point</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Learning Outcome</i>
A	4.0	Complete mastery of course material and additional insight beyond course material	Insightful
B	3.0	Complete mastery of course material	Proficient
C	2.0	Gaps in mastery of course material; not at level expected by the program	Developing
U	0.0	Unsatisfactory	Ineffective

In exceptional circumstances (e.g., illness) that prevent a student from completing assigned coursework, and provided that the student's work to date is satisfactory, the instructor may assign an I (Incomplete) grade along with a date for successful submission of course assignments and requirements.

Continual matriculation at CGU requires a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 in all coursework taken at CGU. Students may not have more than two incompletes at one time.

CGU policies on grades, including incomplete grades, registration and enrollment can be found on the Registrar's webpage: <http://www.cgu.edu/registrar>.