Module Organiser: Dr Rubén Ruiz-Rufino  
Email: ruben.ruiz_rufino@kcl.ac.uk  
Office: Room S2.05 (DPE)  

Sessions:  
Time: 2-4pm. Tuesdays, Semester I  
Locations: Room S2.49, Strand Building  

OFFICE HOURS  
To book an appointment with me, please click on https://rubenruizrufino.youcanbook.me and you will see when I am free. You, then, can decide when and for how long you would like to meet with me. During this process, you will be asked to enter your email and the reason why you would like to see me. Please make sure that don’t forget to fill in this field since it will help me in preparing for your meeting. After completing the short form, you will receive an email confirming the appointment and I will get that date blocked in my calendar.

My office hours during this term are Tuesday from 4.15pm to 5.30pm and Wednesday from 12pm to 1pm. Appointments outside those hours should be first consulted with me by email. Also note that I have given you flexibility to decide the length of your appointment. This ranges from 10 minutes from 1 hour. Please, use this flexibility wisely and thinking about your fellow colleagues; if you book more time than what is needed, then other students may not be able to book with me.

KEATS  
I rely heavily on KEATS during the term. Important class announcements and updates are communicated via the Announcements Forum at KEATS. I also encourage online participation via the Class Forum. KEATS can be a useful tool to enhance your learning experience and I expect you to be an active participant.
RATIONALE AND AIMS

This module explores in some detail current dynamics of contemporary regimes. In particular it focuses on three related aspects: a) how states emerge and collapse; b) how political regimes are defined and measured and c) how political regimes use elections as devices to reduce conflict and increase stability. All these issues together provide students with an advanced understanding of how current political systems work.

These questions will be analysed using a completely empirical approach. It is expected that students are familiar with inferential statistics, regression as well as basic knowledge of game theory. In this regards, this module is an ideal opportunity for students who look for practical applications of what they learned in the modules “Game theory”, “Statistics for Political Science” or “Econometrics”.

This module is also quite demanding: the reading load is heavy and I expect participants not only to do the readings but, mostly, to think critically on them. Students will be required to read technical articles which contain statistics and some basic formal modelling. I expect a sophisticated discussion about the details of the different theories but also the method employed to test them.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This module has the following learning outcomes:

- Provide an in-depth analysis of the main existing debates on how to define political regimes.
- Understand the logic of state formation and state collapse in comparative perspective
- Introduce students to existing debates on varieties of autocracies and, in particular, electoral autocracies.
- Enable students to understand the relationship between elections and political stability.
- Introduce students to issues of electoral fraud and election monitoring.

By the end of this module students will be able to:

- Use major datasets like NELDA, POLITYIV, DD and Freedom House.
- Understand the logic of electoral fraud in democracies and autocracies
- Be familiar with the functioning of different autocratic regimes.
- Understand the mechanisms triggering civil wars as a proxy of state failure.
- Consolidate their quantitative training by engaging in technical discussion when analysing the different topics covered in the module.
SESSIONS

This module is not based on lectures and seminars. Instead, students and the module convenor will meet for about two hours to discuss the particular readings assigned to each session. The burden of the discussion is on the students and the module convenor will act as a discussion facilitator. Students are expected to do a 15-20 minutes critical presentation at the beginning of the session in order to open the discussion. This presentation will not be just limited to summarising the articles; instead what is expected is a critical discussion of the theory, data and method used in the different pieces. Each student will be asked to meet the module convenor the Wednesday before the session to discuss this presentation. The last 15-20 minutes of each session will be used by the module convenor to introduce the main ideas and problems for the following session.

KEY READINGS

All the readings assigned to each session are compulsory. These reading are mostly articles. However, there are a number of books that are highly recommended for this module.

- Clark, W.R, Golder M. and Golder S. 2013 “Principles of Comparative Politics” (2ed). Sage/QP Press. (This book is the best introduction to Comparative Politics that I know so far. I highly recommend you to get a copy of this textbook).

SUBMISSIONS OF ASSESSMENT

Please note the change of policy regarding late submission of coursework. According to the new regulation, work submitted within 24 hours of the deadline will be marked but the mark awarded will be no greater than the pass mark. Work submitted after the 24 hour deadline will receive a mark of zero; such a student may, at the discretion of the relevant Assessment Sub Board, be permitted to attempt the assessment again if the regulations for the programme permit such reassessment. You can find all relevant information at the undergraduate handbook, available online at: https://internal.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/stu/dpe/handbook/welcome.aspx
ASSESSMENT AND MODULE REQUIREMENTS

Students will be assessed on the basis of one 5000-word essay addressing an empirical question. The essay will be divided into two parts. The first part (40%) will contain the motivation and theoretical development of the research problem. This part includes a critical literature review used to justify the interest of the research question and also to support the need for a better theoretical development. This first part of the essay should also contain some tentative hypotheses resulting from the theoretical development. The second part of the essay (60%) should contain the empirical tests of the theory. This includes discussing the dataset, defining the relevant variables, the method used to test the hypotheses and the discussion of the main empirical findings. About the method, the essay should use regression analysis but other statistic techniques are also accepted. The essay should contain a concluding section. Students should submit this empirical part together with a revised version of the first part of the essay.

The essay will be graded considering the following parameters:
1. Relevance and justification of the research question.
2. Originality in the theoretical development.
3. Level of sophistication of the empirical analysis.

The first part of the essay is due on **Monday, 7th November 2016 before 5pm**. This first part should be about 2500-3000 words. The second (final) part of the essay is due on **Friday, 16th December 2016 before 5pm**. Students are encouraged and expected to discuss their research question with the module convenor. Note, however, that no assistance on how to do the empirical analysis will be provided. The module convenor will, however, provide general guidance on methodological issues.

The following guidelines are intended to give you a more precise idea about what I expect from your essay:

1. Identify a problem/question/puzzle for which you think a better answer can be provided considering the readings that you have done and the topics we have covered. Ideally your essay question should be something like: “Why X is not convincing in explaining Y?”, “How are X and Y really related?” and similar approaches.
2. Critically review the readings related to your question and highlight why and how those existing explanations can be improved. This improvement can be due to a) omitting a relevant variable or b) some methodological concern or c) something else.
3. Once you have identified the weaknesses of the existing literature, then, try to build your own explanation using the literature that you think back your argument. This literature may not be in the readings of the module but they will need to be related to them.
4. Develop your own hypotheses using your theoretical development. The hypotheses should describe the relationship between the dependent and the independent variable(s).
5. Collect your data and define your variables of interest in a clear way. Provide a numerical or graphic description of the main variables.
6. Select the best method to test your hypotheses and explain why such method is the most appropriate.
7. Run the different tests and assess the validity of your hypotheses.
8. Finish your essay with a concluding section discussing the relevant findings and how they help improve your problem.
READING LIST (N.B. All readings are required and compulsory)

Session 1: Introduction. Review of important concepts.
Content:
1. Rationale and Goals of the module
2. Logistic and organisation
3. Review of key concepts in comparative politics
4. Introduction of readings for session 2.

Session 2: State formation
Content:
1. How did modern states form?
2. Why did Empires collapse? Does it matter to be a big or small country?
3. Why some regions decide to secede?
Readings:

Session 3: Defining and measuring political regimes
Content:
1. Minimalist vs Normative views of democracy
2. Concepts of democracy and empirical research
3. Task: Explore the datasets FH, POLITYIV and DD and identify a) a country that is a democracy in all three datasets, b) a country that is a democracy in FH but not a democracy in DD, c) a country that is not a democracy in POLITYIV but is a democracy in FH.
Readings:
Session 4: State Failure

Content:
1. When does a state fail? What are the main mechanisms?
2. How is state failure defined and operationalised?
3. Why is civil war an indication of state failure? Why do civil wars occur?

Readings:

Session 5: Autocracy institutions and survival of dictators

Content:
1. Understand the different types of autocracies?
2. Why do autocracies decide to hold elections?
3. What mechanisms explain the survival of dictators?
4. Methodological issues

Readings:
Session 6: Elections as mechanism to solve conflicts

Content:
1. Do Elections solve conflicts? What about alternation in power?
2. Which conditions are needed to have competitive elections?
3. Explore the NELDA dataset.

Readings:
- Przeworski, Adam. 2014. "Acquiring the Habit of Changing Governments through Elections." *Comparative Political Studies*.

Session 7: Understanding electoral fraud

Content:
1. What is electoral fraud? Is fraud the same than manipulation? How is electoral fraud measured?
2. When is electoral fraud observed?
3. Why would an incumbent engage in electoral fraud?

Readings:
Session 8: The political consequences of electoral fraud

Content:
1. Does fraud hinder political competition?
2. When can electoral fraud be irrelevant?
3. Does electoral fraud always produce post-electoral violence?

Readings:

Session 9: Election Observation: causes and consequences

Content:
1. Are international monitors effective in preventing fraud?
2. Why incumbents decide to have their elections observed?
3. Have International election monitoring negative externalities?

Readings:

Session 10: Students presentations

In this session, students will do a small presentation (10mins) of the main findings of their essays.
# CALENDAR WITH RELEVANT DATES AND EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date (w/c)</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>27 SEP</td>
<td>$2.49</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>04 OCT</td>
<td>$2.49</td>
<td>State Formation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>11 OCT</td>
<td>$2.49</td>
<td>Regimes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>18 OCT</td>
<td>$2.49</td>
<td>States Failure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>25 OCT</td>
<td>$2.49</td>
<td>Autocracies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>READING WEEK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>31 OCT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Essay #1 due before 5pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>7 NOV</td>
<td>$2.49</td>
<td>Elections &amp; Conflict</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8 NOV</td>
<td>$2.49</td>
<td>Electoral Fraud (I)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>15 NOV</td>
<td>$2.49</td>
<td>Electoral Fraud (II)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>22 NOV</td>
<td>$2.49</td>
<td>Election Observation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>29 NOV</td>
<td>$2.49</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>6 DEC</td>
<td>$2.49</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>13 DEC</td>
<td>$2.49</td>
<td>Revision</td>
<td>Final essay due before 5pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 DEC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
USEFUL DATASETS

Below is a list of some of the main datasets that you may need to consider when writing your essay. I strongly recommend the use of the Quality of Government (QoG) dataset. This dataset compiles relevant variables from major datasets. You may also want to explore the ISA Dataset compendium which lists a quite extensive list of datasets on a variety of topics.

Always remember to use the codebook (when available) of the dataset to know how each variable is defined and operationalised.

- Bormann & Golder’s Dataset on Electoral Systems
  https://files.nyu.edu/mrg217/public/elections.html
- World Bank: World Development indicators (Ideal to add control variables)
- World Bank: World Governance Indicators
  http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home
- World Bank: Database of Political Institutions
- Quality of Government (The Quality of Government Institute)
  http://www.qog.pol.se/data/
- NELDA
  http://hyde.research.yale.edu/nelda/
- Judith Kelley’s Dataset on election monitoring
  http://sites.duke.edu/kelley/data/
- POLITY IV
  http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html
- DD Dataset (Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland 2010)
  https://sites.google.com/site/joseantoniocheibub/datasets/democracy-and-dictatorship-revisited
- Geddes, Wright and Frantz’s dataset on Autocracies
  http://sites.psu.edu/dictators/
- International Studies Association Dataset Compendium (Excellent page with links to all possible datasets you may need! N.B. Some links do not work but they are easily found in the web.)
  http://www.isadiscussion.com/view/0/datasets.html

OTHER USEFUL SITES

- Statistics in general with STATA applications
  http://statistics.ats.ucla.edu/stat/stata/
- STATA YouTube Channel
  https://www.youtube.com/user/statacorp
- STATA GRAPHS
  http://www.stata.com/support/faqs/graphics/gph/stata-graphs/
  http://statistics.ats.ucla.edu/stat/stata/library/GraphExamples/default.htm