

COMPARATIVE POLITICS FIELD CURRICULUM

The Comparative Politics (CP) subfield examines the theory and practice of politics across and within countries and regions. It encompasses the study of political institutions such as executives, legislatures, and courts; patterns of political behavior including voting, protest, and participation; and central questions related to regime type, democratization, authoritarianism, political economy, identity, inequality, and state–society relations. By analyzing variation and similarity across cases, comparative politics seeks to explain how political systems function and change in diverse contexts.

Beyond its substantive breadth, comparative politics is distinguished by its theoretical and methodological pluralism. Common approaches span a wide analytical spectrum, ranging from formal theory and political economy models to historical and institutional analysis; from field and survey experiments to ethnographic research; and from in-depth qualitative case studies to cross-national, large-N statistical analyses. Developing a strong command of these theoretical perspectives and methodological tools is therefore essential for engaging the comparative politics literature and producing rigorous original research.

UC Irvine's five-course Comparative Politics curriculum introduces students to these substantive areas and methodological approaches, with the primary goal of preparing doctoral students to conduct sophisticated, original research in comparative politics. Although the requirements are intentionally flexible, students are encouraged to approach them strategically rather than incidentally, designing a course of study that aligns with their substantive interests, regional or thematic focus, and long-term research agenda.

To add CP as a field, students should meet the following two requirements:

1. Take the following **TWO** foundational courses:
Field Seminar in CP
Research Design
2. Take at least **THREE** elective courses from the IR subfield.

African Politics
Citizenship Politics
Dictatorship and Democracy
Immigration and Citizenship
Introduction to Voting Theory
Nations and Nationalism
Political Economy of Development

Political Violence
Politics of Gender & Development
Politics of Migration
State Formation
Survey Research Design
Weak States

The Comparative Politics Field Coordinator will answer any questions, resolve disputes, and/or grant waivers as needed.