What is Comparative Politics?
Comparative politics is a subfield of political science.
Three definitions of comparative politics:

1. The study of political phenomena in every country except the one in which the student resides.
Three definitions of comparative politics:

1. The study of political phenomena in every country except the one in which the student resides.

2. The study of political phenomena through the *comparative method*.
Three definitions of comparative politics:

1. The study of political phenomena in every country except the one in which the student resides.

2. The study of political phenomena through the comparative method.

3. The study of political phenomena that are predominantly within country relationships.
Students in the United States may wonder where American politics fits into this description. In most political science departments in the United States, American politics is considered a separate subfield. Does the fact that American politics focuses predominantly on politics within the United States mean that it should be considered part of comparative politics? This is a question that, for some reason, generates quite heated debate among political scientists.

Historically, a second traditional definition of comparative politics has been that it is the study of politics in every country except the one in which the student resides. Thus, according to this definition, comparative politics is the study of what economists often like to call "the rest of the world." This definition, however, seems rather silly to us because it means that the study first was what governments can and should do to encourage stable economic growth. In other words, what, if anything, can governments do to protect their citizens from the devastating consequences of market instability? The second was how to design electoral institutions in such a way as to reduce the likelihood that political extremists who oppose democracy, like the Nazi Party in Germany's Weimar Republic, might be elected. Both of these topics remain central to the field of comparative politics today.
Traditional Approach

“It’s week 10, so it must be Mexico.”

Britain, France, China, Russia, India, Mexico, and Nigeria
Our Approach

- Problem oriented
- Strategic
- Scientific
- Methods
Causes and Consequences of Democracy

Who is he?
Causes and Consequences of Democracy

Mohamed Bouazizi, 3/29/84-1/4/11

Arab Spring

- Tunisia, click here
- Egypt, click here
- Egypt, click here. WARNING
Spring of Nations 1848

- Protests challenging dynasties that had ruled for decades across Europe.

- Wave of euphoria that government was finally going to be put under the control of the people.
Spring of Nations 1848

- Protests challenging dynasties that had ruled for decades across Europe.

- Wave of euphoria that government was finally going to be put under the control of the people.

- These revolts were followed by reaction.
Objective

Regime change and political reform occur in complex and context-dependent ways.

Understanding political change is difficult, but it is not impossible.
Objective

Introduce you to the body of knowledge about the sources of political change.

Provide you with a set of tools and comparative framework for understanding contemporary developments.