

POST 30: Introduction to Comparative Politics

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:15-2:30pm

Fall 2016

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Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday: 2:30pm-3:45pm

What's happening in the world seems hard to comprehend, but political science begs to differ. This course provides a broad overview of the subfield of comparative politics by focusing on, and putting into broader context, important substantive questions facing the world from violence to elections to the kinds of political parties that emerge in different contexts. The course is organized around four substantive themes. First, why can some countries depend on the state to enforce order and encourage development while others cannot? Second, under what conditions should we expect democracies to emerge and endure? Third, what different institutional forms do democratic government take and why does this matter? Fourth, what are the different patterns of representation and accountability, and problems that can undermine this, in the developing world? To understand these conceptual questions, we will consider a range of cases from South Asia, Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and Europe.

Course Objectives: As required by the College, you will find a list of course objectives on the last page of this syllabus.

REQUIREMENTS

(1) Lecture and Discussion Section Attendance and Participation (20%)

You are expected to attend all lectures and to read the required readings in advance of each lecture. In order to do well in this course, you must attend and actively participate in class. You must also fully participate in all class activities. You will not be penalized for 1 absence but will lose points after that.

(2) Partner Activity: Comparative Newspaper Short Paper/Presentation (10%)

For this activity you will be asked to make a comparison using news stories. One student in each pair will be asked to find news stories from the past 5 years on a particular event or situation in a particular country. The other student in each pair will find news stories on a comparable event/situation in another country. Then you will make a comparative assessment of what these two examples have in common, what is different, and what might plausibly explain their occurrence and differences between them. The events should link in some way to the themes of the class that week. Your comparison will be summarized in a joint 3-page paper and short presentation (5-8 minutes).

(3) Country Case Study Presentations (15%)

Each student will complete a presentation that applies a class session theme to a real world case in one country. The purpose of the presentation is to use a political science argument to understand the situation in your case (current or from the past) that interest you. You will pick an argument and explore whether that argument explains your specific case through a careful application of the argument to evidence from your case.

The presentation should last 10-12 minutes. I will ask you to propose a country and a ranking of preferences for three class sessions by email by week 3. Presentations will take place on Thursdays from weeks 4 to 13. You will be required to submit a one-page memo with your research question (requirements outlined in the assignment handout) no less than one week before the date of your presentation.

(4) In-class Midterm Exam (25%)

The Midterm will include a combination of identification questions and short essay questions. It will include material presented both in the required readings and in the lectures. This will be a closed-book exam, and you will have a full class period to complete it.

(5) Critical Reading Worksheet (5%)

There is a critical reading worksheet at the end of this syllabus. Although I encourage you to complete the worksheet for all academic readings, students will be assigned to complete this worksheet for required readings for two class sessions. You will be asked to summarize the article in 2-3 minutes in class. I will assign class sessions to students at random by Week 2.

Note: you will not be assigned the same class session for this assignment as the one for your presentation.

(6) Take-Home Final (25%)

The final exam (8-10 pages) will be a take-home essay that asks you to draw on course material. You will be asked to address one of two essay prompts. Final exam essay prompts will be handed out at final class meeting and due at 5pm on the day of the scheduled final exam, which is set by the registrar.

*All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course.

Classroom Etiquette

To make sure that we have a hospitable learning environment, I ask students to follow three simple rules:

- 1) Turn your cell phones off when you enter the class room (and refrain from chat platforms— gchat, WhatsApp, etc— on your laptops).
- 2) Respect your fellow classmates. Debate is welcome but disagree respectfully by engaging ideas rather.
- 3) Coffee/beverages are fine but food is not permitted in class since it can distract your classmates.

***As goes without saying, it will not be possible to pass this course if I find any evidence of plagiarism/cheating of any kind for any assignment. At minimum, this will result in a zero for that assignment and will be referred to the Dean without exceptions. If you do the work, and think a lot about the material, you'll be fine.

READINGS:

The following book(s) are required:

Samuels, David, ed. 2013. *Case Studies in Comparative Politics*. Upper Saddle River, NJ Pearson Publishers.

These will be made available through library reserves and are available for purchase at the Bookstore.

All other readings are can be downloaded from the course page on Sakai.

This course requires you to carefully read all assigned readings before class. Make sure you not only understand the basic argument, but give yourself time to think critically about the readings before class so you will be prepared to participate in discussion. I also encourage you to complete the reading worksheet linked below for each journal article or book excerpt.

Critical Reading:

I provide advice on critical reading and a valuable worksheet (Developed by Prof. Kanchan Chandra, NYU) at the end of this syllabus. I suggest completing the worksheet as you go through assigned readings throughout the course. You are required to complete the worksheet twice. Also, all students will complete the worksheet for a class activity on Tilly in class session 3.

Course Schedule

Session 1: Course Introduction (8/30)

NO CLASS DUE TO A CONFERENCE: (9/1)

Session 2: What is Comparative Politics (and how should we study politics)? (9/6)

Samuels, Case Studies in Comparative Politics, chapter 1.

PART 1: STATES, ORDER, AND VIOLENCE

Sessions 3: State Formation (9/8)

Tilly, Charles. 1985. War Making as Organized Crime. In P. Evans, D. Rueschemeyer and T. Skocpol (Eds). *Bringing the State Back In*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

*Complete the reading worksheet for Tilly. We will go through it as a class.

Weber, Eugene. *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 3-8, 23-29, 45-49, 67-70, 167-76.

Session 4: What's the Difference Between Strong and Weak States? (9/13)

Weber, Max. 1978. "Bureaucracy" in *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Pgs. 956-963.

Herbst, Jeffrey. 2000. *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, Chapters 1.

Menkhaus, Ken. 2007. "Governance Without Government in Somalia: Spoilers, state building, and the politics of coping." *International Security*, 31 (3) 74-106.

Session 5: Compensating for the (Indian) State: Criminals and Middlemen (9/15)

Vaishnav, Milan. Forthcoming. *When Crime Pays*, Chapter 5.

Krishna, Anirudh. 2007. "Politics in the Middle: Mediating relationships between the citizens and the state in rural North India." *Patrons, Clients, and Policies: Patterns of democratic accountability and political competition*, 141-158.

Recommended: Berenschot, Ward. 2011. "On the Usefulness of Goondas in Indian Politics: 'Moneypower' and 'Musclepower' in a Gujarati Locality." *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 34(2), 255-275.

Optional: Pritchett, Lant. 2009. "A Review of Edward Luce's *In Spite of the Gods: The Strange Rise of Modern India*." *Journal of Economic Literature*, 47(3) 771-780. [This provides a general analysis of state capacity in India]

Sessions 6: Political Violence at the Macro-Level: Civil Wars (9/20)

Kalyvas, Stathis. 2001. "New" and "Old" Civil Wars: A valid distinction? *World politics*, 54(01), 99-118.

Fearon, James and David Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review*, 97(1) 75-90.

"The Iraqi Army Was Crumbling Long Before Its Collapse." *New York Times*. <available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/13/world/middleeast/american-intelligence-officials-said-iraqi-military-had-been-in-decline.html>>

Session 7: Political Violence at the Micro-Level: Civil Wars (9/22)

Kalyvas, Stathis. 1999. "Wanton and Senseless? The Logic of Massacres in Algeria." *Rationality and Society*, 11 (3), 243-285.

Weinstein, Jeremy. *Inside Rebellion*, Selection.

Session 8: The Logic of Violence: Riots and Terrorism (9/27)

Wilkinson, Steven. 2002. "Putting Gujarat in Perspective." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1579-1583.

Pape, Robert. 2003. "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism." *American Political Science Review*, 97(3) 343-361.

**Recommended (for midterm review):* Samuels, David. 2012. "Political Violence" in *Comparative Politics*. Pearson: Boston, 257-284. [This reading is a good overview of all the violence topics we will discuss].

NO CLASS DUE TO A WORKSHOP in WASHINGTON DC: 9/29

PART II: POLITICAL REGIMES - DEMOCRACY AND DICTATORSHIP

Session 9: What is Democracy? (10/4)

Dahl, Robert. 1971. *Polyarchy*. New Haven: Yale University Press: Chapter 1.

Levitsky, Steven and Luciane Way. 2002. "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism." *Journal of democracy*, 13(2), 51-65.

Session 10: Why Are Some Countries Democratic? Modernization Theory (10/6)

Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1963. *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*. New York: Doubleday Press: Chapter 2.

Inglehart, Ronald and Christian Welzel. 2009. "How Development Leads to Democracy: What We Know about Modernization." *Foreign Affairs* (March/April) 33-48.

And these short analyses from blogs/magazines:

Anderson, Lisa. 2011. "Demystifying the Arab Spring: Parsing the Differences Between Tunisia, Egypt and Libya." *Foreign Affairs*, 90 (3) 2-7.

Brownless, Jason. "Why Turkey's Authoritarian Descent Shakes Up Democratic Theory." Monkey Cage. <available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/03/23/why-turkeys-authoritarian-descent-shakes-up-democratic-theory/>>

Session 11: What Makes Democracies Endure? (10/11)

Linz, Juan and Alfred Stepan. 1996. "Toward Consolidated Democracies." *Journal of Democracy*, 7 (2) 14-33.

Varshney, Ashutosh. 1998. "Why Democracy Survives." *Journal of Democracy*, 9 (3) 36-50.

Session 12: Variety of Autocracies [MAKE-UP SESSION TBD]

Principles, Ch 10, Varieties of Dictatorship, 349-384.

McGregor, Richard. 2010. *The Party: The secret world of China's communist rulers*. Penguin UK. Chapter 1.

Movie Excerpt: *Last Kind of Scotland*.

Session 13: In-Class Midterm (10/13)

Fall Break: No class 10/18

PART III: POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS IN DEMOCRACIES

Session 14: The Institution of Elections: Is the System Rigged? (10/20)

Hasen, Richard. 2012. "Voting Wars: From Florida 2000 to the Next Election Meltdown." In *The Voting Wars: From Florida 2000 to the Next Election Meltdown*. Yale University Press [skim].

Lehoucq, Fabrice. 2003. "Electoral Fraud: Causes, Types, and Consequences." *Annual Review of Political Science*, 6: 233-56.

Sridharan, E. and Milan Vaishnav. *Election Commission of India*. Presented at the Conference on Building an Indian State in the 21st Century.

Session 15: Why Do People Vote Part I? (10/25)

Downs, Anthony. *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1957), Chapter 2.

Schuessler, Alexander. "Expressive Voting," *Rationality and Society* 12:1 (2000): 87-119.

Kasara, Kimuli and Pavithra Suryanarayan. Forthcoming Blog Post on turnout among rich and poor voters around the world.

Session 16: Why Do People Vote Part II? (10/27)

Gerber, Alan, Donald P. Green, and Christopher W. Larimer. 2008. Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment. *American Political Science Review* 102 (1) 33-48.

Ahuja, Amit and Pradeep Chhibber. 2012. "Why the Poor Vote in India: 'If I Don't Vote, I Am Dead to the State.'" *Studies in comparative international development*, 47(4) 389-410.

Session 17: Why Parties? (11/1)

Aldrich, John. 1995. *Why Parties?* Chapter 2.

Mainwaring, Scott and Timothy Scully, eds. 1995. *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America*. Introduction.

Cases: U.S., India, Brazil

Session 18: Varieties of Political Parties: Populist Parties in Europe (11/3)

Hall, Peter. 2016. "The Roots of Brexit." *Foreign Affairs*.

Mudde, Cas. 2007. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe* (Vol. 22, No. 8). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Selection.

Session 19: Varieties of Parties: Clientelistic and Ethnic Parties (11/8)

Kitschelt, Herbert and Steven Wilkinson. 2007. "Citizen-Politician Linkages: An Introduction" in Herbert Kitschelt and Steven Wilkinson eds. *Patrons, Clients, and Policies*. New York: Cambridge University Press: Chapter 1.

Chandra, Kanchan. 2000. "The Transformation of Ethnic Politics in India: The Decline of the Congress Party and the Rise of the Bahujan Samaj Party." *Journal of Asian Studies*, 59(1): 26-61.

Session 20: Constitutional Design: Presidentialism vs. Parliamentarism (11/10)

Stepan, Alfred and Cindy Skach. 1993. "Constitutional Frameworks and Democratic Consolidation: Parliamentarism versus presidentialism." *World Politics*, 46(1) 1-22.

Principles, Ch. 12, Parliamentary, Presidential, and Semi-Presidential Democracies.

Session 21: Federalism (11/15)

Bermeo, Nancy. 2002. "The Import of Institutions: A New Look at Federalism." *Journal of Democracy*, 13, 2 (April): 96-110.

Ahuja, Amit and Ashutosh Varshney. "Antecedent Nationhood, Subsequent Statehood: Explaining the relative success of Indian federalism." *Sustainable Peace: Power and Democracy After Civil War*. Ed. Philip G. Roeder and Donald Rothchild. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005.

PART IV: REPRESENTATION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND GOVERNANCE

Sessions 22-23: Redistributive Politics and the Welfare State (11/17, 11/22)

Mares, Isabela, and Matthew Carnes. 2009. "The Welfare State in Global Perspective." In Susan Stokes and Carles Boix (Eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Alesina, Alberto, and Edward Glaeser. 2004. *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe: A World of Difference*. New York: Oxford University Press: Chapter 6.

Díaz-Cayeros, Alberto, and Beatriz Magaloni. 2009. Aiding Latin America's Poor. *Journal of Democracy* 20 (4): 36-49.

NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING 11/24

Session 24: Democratic Accountability and Corruption (11/29)

Ferraz, Claudio, and Fred Finan. 2011. "Exposing Corrupt Politicians". *J-Pal Policy Briefcase*.

Case: Brazil

NO CLASS 12/1 DUE TO A CONFERENCE

Session 25: Social Movements and Democratic Responsiveness

*Jenkin, Rob and James Manor. Forthcoming. Selection.

Session 26: Final Review and Course Conclusion (12/8)

Goals/Objectives of the Course (intended outcomes):

1. Students will come to understand major debates underlying comparative politics.
2. Students will engage in effective written expression.
3. Students will learn about the politics of different cultures across the globe.
4. Students will learn to analyze complex political phenomena through careful engagement with theory and evidence

Reading Skills:

As you manage the reading for this and other courses, you are likely to find, if you have not already, that there is no correlation between effort and outcome. It is entirely possible to spend several hours reading something without “getting it.” And it is equally possible to spend less than a half-hour reading something else and getting to the heart of the argument. You will have to devise for yourselves ways to read efficiently. These are some devices that may help:

1. Figure out what the heart of an argument is before you read deeply: skim, read the abstracts, the jacket blurbs, often short reviews published elsewhere. When you know where the center of gravity is, you read more efficiently.
2. Read actively: do not simply soak up the reading for what the author wants to tell you, but approach it with questions, and try to answer them for yourself as you make your way through.
3. Use other peoples’ skills: you do not have to do all the work yourself. It is not “cheating” if you talk through the argument with someone else before or after you delve in, or look at reviews for explication, or form reading groups where you can discuss the argument with each other.
4. Write in order to read. The response papers for this class and the (non-graded) worksheet attached should help.
5. Use diagrams if necessary: often, the structure of an argument can be most clearly expressed if you “draw” it, using arrows and lines, than by trying to understand it in words.
6. Organize your notes in a way that makes retention and information retrieval possible: you could use index cards, annotated bibliographies, database programmes like Filemaker Pro etc. These rules may be obvious to some and not to others. Basically do whatever works for you. But be self-conscious about the reading process as a skill that has to be learned and not necessarily as an ability that either comes naturally or does not.

Reading Worksheet

For each book, chapter, or article assigned in this course, you should fill out the following (non-graded) worksheet. Many of these points can be addressed in a sentence or two (e.g. Questions 1 and 2; in some cases answers will not need even to be full sentences (e.g., Question); and in some cases the answers may overlap. These worksheets should be retained: they will be useful for future reference.

1. State the central question that the reading addresses.
2. State the central argument(s) defended in the paper in response to this question.
3. What type of reasoning or evidence is used to support these arguments? If it is an analytical paper, what is the logic that undergirds the argument? If an empirical paper, what type of data is employed? Are there other data sources that you think might be more appropriate?
4. Do you find the claims of the reading convincing? What do you see as the main gaps that need to be filled?
5. Why (if at all) is the reading interesting?
6. Do you agree with the main claims? What are your hesitations? (This may simply involve restatement of previous points.)
7. Identify one or two implicit premises or background assumptions in the paper that you think are especially controversial or objectionable.
8. In light of your answers to the previous questions, write an abstract for the article of no more than 100 words. (Feel free to repeat formulations given in response to earlier questions.)
9. When you have done this for individual readings, take some time to think about the various readings you have been assigned in relation to each other. See if you can write or imagine a summary table for all the readings taken together which compares and contrasts them.