

PS 5040-101
COMPARATIVE POLITICS
Fall 2008

Instructor Information

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Course Content and Objectives

Through a combination of readings, commentary, and discussions, this course introduces students to the key theories, approaches, and issues in comparative politics. I have designed the class with three objectives in mind. The first is to increase your knowledge of theories and approaches to comparative politics. The second goal is to debate and deliberate over aspects of contemporary comparative politics. The final objective is to familiarize you with main sub-fields within comparative politics.

Assigned Texts

The following are required for the course:

Essential Readings in Comparative Politics, 2nd Edition. Patrick O'Neil & Ronald Rogowski, editors. W. W. Norton & Company (2006)

Imagined Communities. Benedict Anderson. Verso; Revised edition (1991)

Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation. Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan The Johns Hopkins University Press (1996)

Democracy and Development. Adam Przeworski. Cambridge University Press (2000)

Markets and States in Tropical Africa, 2nd Edition, Robert Bates. University of California Press. (2005)

States and Social Revolutions. Theda Skocpol. Cambridge University Press (1979)

Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure. Mark Lichbach and Alan Zuckerman, eds. Cambridge University Press (1997)

Grades/Assignments

Exam

The course will have **one final exam** worth 100 points. It will count toward 20% of your final grade. You will be given the exam during the scheduled time for final exams.

Weekly Reading Critique Assignment

Each week you must write a critical review for ***each*** of that week's readings/chapters. Be sure to write one for each reading assigned. That means each reading in the Essential Readings should be analyzed separately, as should each chapter in the Lichbach & Zuckerman book.

Chapter/readings reviews should include:

1. A brief summary of the main/key thesis;
2. an assessment of the main contributions/positive aspects;
3. a critique of its limitations or flaws; and
4. two questions raised by the reading that you would like the class to discuss.

For **books**, your reviews should include the following:

1. Summary of the book's thesis;
2. assessment of its argument (theoretical perspective, utilization of evidence);
3. ideas or issues which you found ambiguous, poorly developed, or unclear;
4. ideas or issues you found exciting, well developed, or intriguing; and,
5. two or more questions about the book that you would like discussed during the seminar.

You should submit your critique to the professor 3 hours before class (i.e., by 3:00 pm on Thursday). This should be done via the class AsULearn page. Submissions after 3:00 pm will not be permitted. You should bring a copy of the review to class to use as a reference during the discussion. I will read these talking points and grade them: outstanding - (A), satisfactory - (B), unsatisfactory - (C). The weekly literature reviews count for 30% of your overall grade.

Critical Analysis Paper

Twenty-five percent of your final grade will be determined by a critical analysis paper due on the last day of class. The paper should be typed and between 18-22 pages in length. You will need to select a substantive topic in field of comparative politics you find intriguing/ interesting (democratization, social movements, regime change, policy reform, etc). Then, you need to select four books (or 2 journal articles to substitute for one book) on the issue. Each book/journal article must use a different approach/theoretical orientation/method of analysis. You will be required to: (1) summarize each piece of literature; (2) assess the findings/conclusions of each piece of literature; (3) compare and contrast the differing approaches/theories utilized by the authors; (4) evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches; and (5) argue persuasive for one of the approaches.

Oral Presentations

Each student will make short oral presentations on the weekly readings throughout the semester. Oral presentations should be **ANALYTICAL AND CRITICAL IN STYLE**; **they are not intended to be descriptive summaries of the readings.** It is assumed that everyone has already read the material, so there is no need to provide more than a cursory overview of the reading. Instead, presentations should focus on:

- (1) the major issues or debates raised in the readings;

- (2) identification of the most important contributions of the work in question (i.e., what is new or innovative in its approach or argument?);
- (3) *comparison and contrast with other readings or approaches (i.e., locate the work within the broader literature)*;
- (4) identification of the main limitations or weaknesses of the work (i.e., present your critique).
- (5) conclusion with one or more specific questions that can be used to stimulate classroom discussion.

In order to compare and contrast the readings to other readings, you need to read additional material on the topic. Use of International Political Science Abstracts, PAISarchive, JSTOR and other databases is suggested to be able to identify the most influential and useful additional readings for the presentation.

A handout that identifies important related (or contradictory) readings should be turned in to the professor by presenters; copies of it will be shared with all seminar members (to be saved as reference material for comprehensive exams). Every student will do present on 4 articles OR 1 book and 1 article. Students will select which books/readings they will be responsible for at the beginning of the semester.

Participation

The final 10% of your grade will be based on class attendance and participation. This is a seminar class. *Learning takes place through the exchange of ideas within the classroom as well as reading assigned material.* As a learning experience, the seminar will depend heavily on the quality of class participation and student interaction. It is essential that members of the seminar attend all sessions, participate actively in classroom discussions, and complete all required readings prior to class. **In this graduate seminar, passive participation (“just being there”) will not suffice for a passing grade in participation.** I will randomly select students to comment on the readings, others’ assessment of it, and their own critique. Furthermore, I will request that students link class topics to current events: what is going on in the world today that reflects, confirms, and/or contradicts the commentary found in the readings.

Summary of Assignments

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Final Exam	=	20% (12/11/08)
Weekly Reviews	=	30% (thru out the semester)
Oral Presentations	=	20% (as assigned)
Critical Analysis Paper	=	20% (12/04/08)
Participation	=	<u>10%</u> (thru out the semester)
Total	=	100%

GRADE SCALE

95-100 = A
90-94 = A-
87-89 = B+
84-86 = B
80-83 = B-

77-79 = C+
74-76 = C
70-73 = C-
Below 70 = F

Cheating/Plagiarism Policies

I will abide by the University's Academic Integrity Code. Cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers or otherwise engaging in academic dishonesty will, at a minimum, lead to a grade of "F" for this course and possible expulsion (depending on the severity of the violation).

Late Assignments

I will not accept late assignments.

WEEKLY SEMINAR TOPICS

<u>Week #1</u> Aug 28	Syllabus
<u>Week #2</u> Sept 4	Approaches to Comparative Politics
<u>Week #3</u> Sept 11	Approaches to Comparative Politics
<u>Week #4</u> Sept 18	The State – <i>BEGIN ORAL PRESENTATIONS</i>
<u>Week #5</u> Sept 25	Nationalism
<u>Week #6</u> Oct 2	Non-Democratic Regimes
<u>Week #7</u> Oct 9	Democracy
<u>Week #8</u> Oct 16	NO CLASS
<u>Week #9</u> Oct 23	Democratization
<u>Week #10</u> Oct 30	Political Economy
<u>Week #11</u> Nov 6	Political Economy
<u>Week #12</u> Nov 13	Development
<u>Week #13</u> Nov 20	Political Violence & Revolution
<u>Week #14</u> Nov 27	NO CLASS
<u>Week #15</u> Dec 4	NO CLASS - paper due electronically via ASULearn

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READINGS

Readings are to be completed prior to class. Your reading critique must be submitted to the professor by **3:00 pm the day of class.**

Week #1

Aug 28 Syllabus

Week #2

Sept 4 Approaches to Comparative Studies

Reading:

Lichbach & Zuckerman- Part I and II (Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4)

Week #3

Sept 11 Approaches to Comparative Studies

Reading:

Chapter 1, O'Neil & Rogowski, Essential Readings in Comparative Politics (Essential Readings)
Lichbach & Zuckerman- Part IV (Chapters 9 and 10)

Week #4

Sept 18 The State

Reading:

Essential Readings, Chapter 2.
Lichbach & Zuckerman- Chapters 8

Week #5

Sept 25 Nationalism

Reading:

Imagined Communities, Benedict Anderson.
Essential Readings, Chapter 3

Week #6

Oct 2 Non-Democratic Regimes

Reading:

Essential Readings, Chapter 5 & 8

Week #7

Oct 9 Democracy

Reading:

Essential Readings, Chapter 6-7
Lichbach & Zuckerman, Chapter 5

Week #8

Oct 16 **NO CLASS**

Week #9

Oct 23 Democratization

Reading:

Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation, Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan

Week #10

Oct 30 Political Economy

Reading:

Essential Readings, Chapters 4

Lichbach & Zuckerman, Chapter 7

Week #11

Nov 6 Political Economy

Reading:

Democracy and Development. Adam Przeworski.

Week #12

Nov 13 Development

Reading:

Markets and States in Tropical Africa Robert Bates.

Essential Readings, Chapter 9

Week #13

Nov 20 Political Violence & Revolutions

Reading:

Essential Readings, Chapter 11

States and Social Revolutions. Theda Skocpol

Lichbach & Zuckerman, Chapter 6

Week #14

Nov 27 No Class

Week #15

Dec 4 **CRITICAL ASSESSMENT PAPER DUE (VIA ASULEARN)**

Final Exam

Thursday, December 11th at 6:00 pm