PS 503 - PRO-SEMINAR: APPROACHES TO COMPARATIVE POLITICAL ANALYSIS
Fall 2014

Professor Kelemen

Time: Monday 9:00-11:40 Hickman Hall, Room 313
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Office Hours: Center for European Studies, Wednesday 10-12

Course Description and Objectives:
This course provides doctoral students with an advanced introduction to the study of comparative politics. The course has two basic objectives: to acquaint students with several key substantive areas of research in the field of comparative politics and to introduce the major theoretical and methodological debates that animate the field. The course will provide students with intellectual tools that will improve their ability to analyze some of the most pressing political problems around the world today.

Comparative politics is both a subfield of the discipline of political science and an approach to the study of politics. As a subfield, comparative politics has an incredibly wide scope – with comparativists studying topics as diverse as the origins of the state, democratization, the dynamics of competitive authoritarianism, revolution, economic development, the welfare state, economic and social regulation, collective action, interest group representation, the impact of various democratic institutions on the effectiveness of government, executive-legislative relations, processes of judicialization, elections, parties, party systems, ethnicity, civil war, and the role of ideas in politics (to name but a few) – in countries around the world. As an approach to the study of politics, comparative politics embraces – unsurprisingly – comparison! These comparisons take many forms, some small-N and qualitative, some large-N and quantitative. While there are ongoing methodological debates about the merits and limitations of various approaches, in a broad sense comparativists share a commitment to learning about politics through comparison.

As this course is designed to provide graduate students with a baseline knowledge of debates in the subfield, the requirements are different from those that would apply in a research seminar. There is less emphasis on independent research and far more emphasis on extensive reading of foundational and important recent works in the field. Students should go beyond the required readings, and read from the recommended readings as much as possible.

REQUIREMENTS

Requirements include: (a) active participation in class discussions (20% of the final grade); (b) five 1000-1200 word reaction papers, based on the required readings for a particular week. These papers should be posted on the course’s website by 5:00 pm on the Sunday before the class meets (30%); (c) and a take-home final examination (50%).

Additionally, each member of the seminar will act as discussion facilitator for one class meeting. The facilitator's principal duty is to present commentaries on the weekly readings (10-15 minute presentation) intended to raise questions and offer a critical assessment of the readings. A mere summary of the readings is not appropriate for this purpose.
BOOKS

Required


Highly Recommended


SCHEDULE

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SESSION 1 (Sept 8)  
INTRODUCTION

SESSION 2 (Sept 15)  
COMPARISON AND CAUSAL INFERENCE

Questions:
- Is comparative politics a method, a sub-field, or something else?
- Is a science of comparative politics possible?
- What is a cause?
- What is causal inference?

Required
- Mackie, JL. *Causes and Conditions*. *American Philosophical Quarterly* 1965
- Mill, “Two Methods of Comparison” from *A System of Logic*
• Brady and Collier, Rethinking Social Inquiry, Volume 2, Chapters 1-5, 7.
• Mahoney, James, “After KKV: The New Methodology of Qualitative Research,” World Politics 62:1 (January 2010).
• Mahoney, James, and Gary Goertz, “A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research,” Political Analysis 14:3 (Summer 2006): 227-249.
• Slater, Dan and Daniel Ziblatt. 2013. The Enduring Indespensibility of Controlled Comparison. Comparative Political Studies. 46, 10: 1301-1327.

Recommended:
• Coppedge, Michael. Thickening Thin Concepts and Theories: Combining Large N and Small in Comparative Politics. Comparative Politics, 1999

SESSION 3 (Sept 22)  THE STATE

Questions:
• What is the state?
• Does it make sense to distinguish between strong and weak states?
• What factors explain the formation and ongoing dominance of the state as a form of political organization?
• Why did scholars need to ‘bring the state back in’? Where had it gone?

Required
• Chapter 7 (by Migdal) in Lichbach & Zuckerman.
• Chapter 9 (by Spruyt) in Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics
• Ertman, Thomas. The Birth of the Leviathan. Cambridge University Press, Chapter 1, 7.
Recommended:

- Fukuyama, Francis. 2011. The Origins of Political Order (Farrar, Strauss, Giroux)
- Nettl, Peter. The State as a Conceptual Variable. World Politics, 20: 559-592
SESSION 4 (Sept 29) REGIME TYPES: DEMOCRACY AND AUTHORITARIANISM

Questions

- How should scholars define democracy?
- How can democracy be measured and how can democracies be identified in the real world?
- Is it more useful to think of regimes as being on a continuum or as being distinct types?
- How should scholars define authoritarianism?

Required

- Dahl, Robert, Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), chs. 1 (pp. 1-16), 3-7 (pp. 33-123).

Recommended

SESSION 5 (Oct 6)  DEMOCRATIZATION

Questions:

- What are the most important factors explaining why non-democratic regimes transition to democracy?
- What factors explain the survival of democracy (as opposed to its breakdown)?
- Are there “preconditions” for democracy, or can democracy emerge in any background conditions?
- Does the level of inequality in a society affect the likelihood of democratization?

Required


Recommended:

- Capoccia, Giovanni and Daniel Ziblatt, “The Historic Turn in Democratization Studies: A New Research Program and Evidence from Europe,” Comparative Political Studies
- Fish, M. Steven. Islam and Authoritarianism World Politics - Volume 55, Number 1, October 2002, pp. 4-37


SESSION 6 (Oct 13) REBELLION AND REVOLUTION

Questions:

- What role do international factors play in revolution?
- How do scholars define ‘revolution’? In what ways is the meaning of the concept contested? What problems does this present for scholarship on revolutions?
- Have large-N studies of revolutions yielded generalizable findings about the causes of revolutions?

Required

- Skocpol, Theda, *States and Social Revolutions*. Cambridge, 1981, pp. 3-43.

Recommended:


SESSION 7 (Nov 20) POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DEVELOPMENT

Questions:

- What role do political institutions play in underpinning economic development? Can differences in political institutions explain why some nations are rich and others poor?
Why do politicians sometimes pursue policies that undermine economic development?

Required

Recommended:


**SESSION 8 (Oct 27) POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ADVANCED DEMOCRACIES**
Questions:
- What factors explain differences in the scale of (and the approach to) redistribution in various advanced economies?
- How do ‘generous’ welfare states compete in a global economy?
- How do liberal market economies differ from social market economies?
- What impact do political institutions have on the degree of distribution in a democracy?

Required:
- Lichbach and Zuckerman, Chapter 13 by Rodden
- Lichbach and Zuckerman, Chapter 14 by Mares
- Lichbach and Zuckerman, Chapter 8 by Blyth
- Iverson, T. and T.R. Cusack, The causes of welfare state expansion: deindustrialization or globalization?
- Swank, D. Globalisation, domestic politics, and welfare state retrenchment in capitalist democracies, Social Policy and Society, 2005

Recommended:
• Przeworski, Adam, Capitalism and Social Democracy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
• Rueda, David and Jonas Pontusson. 2000. Wage Inequality and Varieties of Capitalism World Politics - Volume 52, Number 3, pp. 350-383
• Swank, Global Capital, Political Institutions and Policy Change in Developed Welfare States (CUP 2002).

On the welfare state:
• Mares, Isabela. The Politics of Social Risk: Business and welfare State Development. Cambridge University Press
• Przeworski, Adam and Michael Wallerstein. 1982. The Structure of Class Conflict in Democratic Capitalist Societies. APSR 72.
Globalization and National Institutions


Session 9 (Nov 3) Executive, Legislative and Judicial Institutions

Questions:
- What are the main differences between majoritarian and consensus democracies?
- How do Parliamentary and Presidential government differ in terms of democratic accountability?
- Is parliamentary government conducive to better political outcomes than presidential government?
- How can a democracy maintain an independent judiciary? Why is this important?
- Is politics in democracies around the world being judicialized? Why?

Readings:

Recommended:
  The Federalist Papers

On Presidentialism v. Parliamentarism

On judicial institutions:


• Shapiro, Martin and Alec Stone, eds. Special Issue: The New Constitutional Politics of Europe. *Comparative Political Studies*, 26.


On Delegation and control of the bureaucracy:


SESSION 10 (Nov 10) PARTIES, PARTY SYSTEMS AND ELECTIONS

Questions:
- What factors explain the emergence (or transformation) of electoral systems?
- What are the most important consequences of electoral systems?
- Why do politicians form parties?

Readings:

Recommended:
SESSION 11 (Nov 17)  COLLECTIVE ACTION, CONTENTIOUS POLITICS & INTEREST INTERMEDIATION

Questions:
- Why do diffuse interests have more difficulty engaging in collective action than concentrated interests?
- How does corporatism differ from pluralism?
- How do political opportunity structures influence patterns of mobilization and interest group activity?

Readings:
- Lichbach and Zuckerman, Chapter by McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly.

Recommended:
- Almond, Gabriel. 1983 Corporatism, Pluralism and Professional Memory. World Politics.
- Dahl, Robert. 1978. Pluralism Revisited, Comparative Politics,
• McAdam, Doug, John McCarthy and Mayer Zald. Eds. 2004., Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures and Cultural Framings. Cambridge University Press.
• McAdam, Doug, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly, The Dynamics of Contention (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Session 12 (Nov 24) ETHNICITY AND NATIONALISM

Questions:
• Fearon and Laitin argue that cooperation, not conflict, characterizes most ethnically diverse societies. Is their argument convincing? Explain why or why not.
• Discuss how various conceptualizations of culture employed in studies of nationalism and ethnicity may influence research findings.
• According to Gellner, what explained the rise of nationalism?
• What insights, if any, does political science offer in explaining why people would fight and die on behalf of ‘collective identities’?

Readings:
• Chapter by Kanchan Chandra in Lichbach and Zuckerman

Recommended:
• Brubaker, Rogers, Nationalism Reframed. Cambridge UP, 1996.
• Darden, Keith. 2007. The great divide: literacy, nationalism and the Communist Collapse. World Politics.


• Hechter, Michael “Nationalism and Rationality,” *Studies in Comparative International Development* 35/1 (Spring 2000): 3-19


• Jankowski, James and Israel Gershoni, *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East* (Columbia, 1997).


• Laitin, David, “Hegemony and Religious Conflict,” in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich


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Session 13 (Dec 1)  CULTURE AND IDEAS AS CAUSES

Questions:
- What does it mean to speak of ideas or culture as a ‘cause’ of political phenomena?
- Through what processes do ideas affect politics?
- Are there cultural preconditions for capitalism? For democracy?
- Upton Sinclair said, “It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his job depends on not understanding it.” Do actors’ interests shape their ideas or do ideas shape actors’ understandings of their self-interests?

Required:
- Parsons, Craig. *Showing Ideas as Causes: The Origins of the European Union*.
- Lichbach and Zuckerman, Chapter by Ross.

Recommended:
University Press, Chapter 1, 3.


**Session 14 (Dec 8) MAPPING THE FIELD**

**Required:**

- Parsons, Craig. 2007. *How to Map Arguments in Political Science*. Oxford University Press.
- Lichbach and Zuckerman, Chapters 1-3.

**Recommended:**

- Geddes, Barbara (2003), ‘Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics