

PS 240: INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Summer 2007

Instructor Information

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Course Overview

Political science 240 introduces students to the methods and concepts of comparative politics. Unlike many introductory courses on comparative politics, this class does not simply acquaint students with the political systems of an endless series of foreign countries, but rather attempts to demonstrate how political scientists use comparative political analysis to organize data and to inform and persuade other scholars and policymakers. Therefore, this course is organized around a small number of ‘big’ questions in comparative politics such as why some countries have democratized while others haven’t, why some democracies seem to work better than others, and why some countries are wealthy while others remain destitute. Thus, although this class will expose you to the politics of countries around the globe, the focus of the course is on understanding, criticizing, and producing abstract arguments about political institutions and behavior.

Requirements

Reading

The following required textbooks are available for purchase at the University bookstore:

- Bates, Robert. 2001. *Prosperity and Violence: The Political Economy of Development*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Shively, W.P. 2004. *Political Science: Introduction to Comparative Politics*. McGraw-Hill. (Referred to as PS in the schedule).
- Putnam, Robert. 1993. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

All other readings are available on the course’s website, located at <http://compass-pilot.uiuc.edu>. I will make each week’s readings available by Friday of the preceding week. You are expected to read all of the assigned material.

Reading Questions

Most weeks (5 out of 8), every student will submit a *thoughtful* one-paragraph question on one day’s worth of reading. Questions are due at midnight the day before the class the reading is assigned for and will help to facilitate class discussion. Both the day selection process and

question submission are handled by Compass. Your question should seek to clarify some complicated or confusing aspect of the reading, examine argument(s) made by an author, and/or discuss relationships between the reading and larger debates in comparative politics. Each question is worth 5% of your total grade, for a total of 25%.

Paper

A single seven page paper will account for 25% of your final grade and is due on July 26, at the beginning of class. In the paper you will identify features of the system of governance in a real state that you believe produce sub-optimal or undesirable consequences, describe a set of institutional changes designed to alleviate the problem, and defend your suggestions. I will provide a more detailed description of this assignment in the first few weeks of class.

Exams

The midterm and final exams will each count for 25% of your total grade. Each exam will contain a mixture of multiple choice and short answer/essay questions. The final exam is non-cumulative and each exam covers about half of the course material.

Class Policies

Make-Up Exams and Assignments

I will allow make-up exams only in extreme circumstances and only by prior arrangement or given a valid excuse from the Dean of Students. I will not accept late reading questions or term papers.

Grades

I use a flat grade scale: A=94–100, A-=90–93, B+=87–89, B=84–86, B-=80–83, . . . , F=59 or lower. If you have a complaint about an exam or paper grade you must type a formal appeal describing the problem. Your appeal should clearly explain why you believe that your original work correctly answered the exam question or paper prompt and make a cogent argument for improving your grade. Attach a copy of the original exam or paper to your appeal.

Course Schedule

1 Introduction

Tuesday, June 12

- No reading

2 Studying Comparative Politics

Wednesday, June 13

- PS, pp. 1–13
- Shively (1998), pp. 12–26

Thursday, June 14

- Shively (1998), pp. 71–93
- Lijphart (1971)

3 Why Do Countries' Party Systems Vary?

Tuesday, June 19

- PS, pp. 14–35
- PS, pp. 37–40
- Gallagher, Laver & Mair (2001), pp. 171–201

Wednesday, June 20

- Lijphart (1984), pp. 150–168
- Betz (1994), pp. 1–35

Thursday, June 21

- Lijphart (1984), pp. 127–149
- Shull (1999), pp. 11–30
- Chhibber & Petrocik (1989)

4 Why Do Some Democracies Work Better than Others 1?

Tuesday, June 26

- PS, pp. 43–47
- Shugart & Mainwaring (1997)

Wednesday, June 27

- PS, pp. 318–375 (Brazil)

Thursday, June 28

- Cheibub (2006)
- Samuels (2002)

5 Why Do Some Democracies Work Better than Others 2?**Tuesday, July 3**

- Putnam (1993), pp. 1–82

Wednesday, July 4

- No class

Thursday, July 5

- Putnam (1993), pp. 83–120, 163–185

Tuesday, July 10

- Midterm Exam

6 Who's in Charge of Economic Policy?**Wednesday, July 11**

- PS, pp. 51-54
- PS, pp.254–317 (Japan)

Thursday, July 12

- Ramseyer & Rosenbluth (1993), pp. 1–58, 99–141

7 Why Have Some Countries Democratized while Others Haven't?**Tuesday, July 17**

- Huntington (1991), pp. 3–31, 280–317
- PS, pp. 128–197 (Russia)

Wednesday, July 18

- Bates (2001), all

Thursday, July 19

- No class

8 Why Are Some Countries' Economies Healthier than Others'?

Tuesday, July 24

- PS, pp. 60–77
- Katzenstein (1985), pp. 17–38

Wednesday, July 25

- PS, pp. 56–58
- Thelen (1993)

Thursday, July 26

- PS, pp. 78–128 (Germany)
- Paper Due

9 Why Do Countries Experience Ethnic Violence?

Tuesday, July 31

- Posner (2004)
- Fearon & Laitin (2003)

Wednesday, August 1

- PS, 198–253 (South Africa)

Thursday, August 2

- Conclusions

Final Exam: 8-10 AM on Friday, August 3

References

- Bates, Robert H. 2001. *Prosperity and Violence: The Political Economy of Development*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Betz, Hans-Georg. 1994. *Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe*. New York: St. Martins Press.
- Cheibub, Jose Antonio. 2006. "Presidentialism, Electoral Identifiability, and Budget Balances in Democratic Systems." *American Political Science Review* 100(3):353–368.

- Chhibber, Pradeep K. & John R. Petrocik. 1989. "The Puzzle of Indian Politics: Social Cleavages and the Indian Party System." *British Journal of Political Science* 19(2):191–210.
- Fearon, James D. & David D. Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 97(1):75–90.
- Gallagher, Michale, Michael Laver & Peter Mair. 2001. *Representative Government in Modern Europe*. 3rd ed. Boston: McGraw Hill.
- Huntington, Samuel P. 1991. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Katzenstein, Peter J. 1985. *Small States in World Markets: Industrial Policy in Europe*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Lijphart, Arend. 1971. "Comparative Politics and Comparative Method." *American Political Science Review* 65:682–695.
- Lijphart, Arend. 1984. *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Posner, Daniel N. 2004. "Regime Change and Ethnic Cleavages in Africa." http://www.polisci.ucla.edu/faculty/posner/pdfs/regime_change.pdf.
- Putnam, Robert D. 1993. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Ramseyer, J. Mark & Frances McCall Rosenbluth. 1993. *Japan's Political Marketplace*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Samuels, David. 2002. Progressive Ambition, Federalism, and Pork-Barreling in Brazil. In *Legislative Politics in Latin America*, ed. Scott Morgenstern & Benito Nacif. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press pp. 315–340.
- Shively, W.P. 1998. *The Craft of Political Research*. 4th ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
- Shugart, Matthew Soberg & Scott Mainwaring. 1997. Presidentialism and Democracy in Latin America: Rethinking the Terms of the Debate. In *Presidentialism and Democracy in Latin America*, ed. Scott Mainwaring & Matthew Soberg Shugart. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press pp. 12–54.
- Shull, Tad. 1999. *Redefining Red and Green: Ideology and Strategy in European Political Ecology*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Thelen, Kathleen. 1993. "West European Labor in Transition: Sweden and Germany Compared." *World Politics* 46(1):23–49.