

PSC 503:
Theoretical and methodological issues in comparative politics

Fall 2009
Wednesday 9 AM –11:50 AM
Office hours: Monday, Friday 11 AM – 12:45 PM; Wednesday, 12 -12:30 PM

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Course Description

This course is designed to make graduate students familiar with some of the major issues, debates, and challenges facing the discipline of comparative politics. It will provide an overview of some of the major theoretical and methodological approaches to comparative politics. The course draws empirical examples from a wide range of countries, but will mostly focus on theoretical debates. The first seminar will be devoted to the review of major methodological issues in comparative politics. The rest of the course will be organized thematically. We will attempt to survey central topics in comparative political research through the vehicle of prominent books that had significant impact on the development of the discipline. Because the most influential work in comparative politics is traditionally published as books, it will be a heavy reading course.

Requirements

Weakly Reaction Paper. Every week each student will write a one page reaction paper to that week's readings. These reaction papers should be emailed to everyone in the class no later than 5:00PM on the evening before the class session. Do not summarize. The point of these reactions papers is to raise a question or discussion topic for us to think about during the seminar. Suggestion: It is better to make one good point than to make several superficial points. (15% of grade)

Short Critique. Once during the course, each student will write a five page paper discussing one of the important works we are covering. It will be due on the date in which it is to be discussed in class. The student will be responsible for presenting his short critique in class. Assignments will be allocated during the first class. (20% of grade)

Research Paper. All course participants will be required to produce a 20-page research paper. This may be an extension of the 5-page critique. Although it is not required to produce a paper of publishable quality, the final product should have all the essential ingredients of a scholarly work, including a statement of a research question, a literature review (not to be limited to the course readings), hypotheses that draw from the literature, and a description of methods and evidence needed to evaluate the hypotheses. If the paper addresses an empirical puzzle, an actual empirical test of the hypotheses is not required, although you should specify research design best suitable to address the puzzle. Paper topics must be chosen and an abstract of the paper will be submitted on Wednesday, November 4. (50% of grade)

Participation. This is a foundational course in comparative politics and is designed as a heavy reading course. It is important to do the assigned readings in timely fashion. I will not lecture; therefore, the quality of the course is dependent on your active participation and constructive discussions. Vigorous classroom participation will be essential. If you do not participate voluntarily I reserve the right to call on you to give us a short summary of the reading assignments. Always complete the readings before coming to class and if possible bring the readings to each class session. (15% of grade)

Readings

The following books are recommended for purchase. The book by Cox will be available through the university bookstore. The rest of this list may be purchased from Amazon and other retailers.

1. Robert Putnam. *Making Democracy Work* (Princeton University Press, 1993). ISBN: 0691037388
2. Barrington Moore. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Beacon Press, 1966). ISBN: 0807050733

3. Adam Przeworski, Michael Alvarez, José Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi. *Democracy and Development* (Cambridge University Press, 2000). ISBN: 0521793793
4. Margaret Levi. *Of Rule and Revenue*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). ISBN: 0520067509
5. Gary Cox. *Making Votes Count*. (Cambridge University Press, 2008). ISBN: 0521585279
6. Boix, Carles. *Democracy and Redistribution* (Cambridge University Press, 2003). ISBN 0521532671
7. Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities*. (Verso Publishing, 2006). ISBN: 1844670864
8. Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (Harper Collins Publishers, 1997). ISBN 0060417501
9. Bates, Robert. 1981. *Markets and States in Tropical Africa*. (University of California Press, 2005). ISBN 0520244931

All course readings should be available through the university library. Books are placed on 2-hour course reserve list. Items marked with asterisk (*) are available on-line.

Academic Honesty

No cheating and no plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation). Please familiarize yourself with the university policy on plagiarism available at:

<http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/asl/guides/plagiarism.html>

Special Needs

Students with special needs should bring their needs to my attention in the first weeks of classes. I will make every effort to assist students with special needs. Students dealing with stress-related problems should visit the Counseling Center, 120 Richmond Quad, or the Office of Disability Services, 25 Capen.

COURSE SCHEDULE

September 2: Introduction

September 9: Comparative Politics and Comparative Method

Barbara Geddes. 2003. *Paradigms and Sand Castle* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press), 1-27.

Mark I. Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman, "Research Traditions and Theory in Comparative Politics: An Introduction," in Mark Irving Lichback and Alan S. Zuckerman, *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture and Structure* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

*David Laitin, *et al*, "Review Symposium: The Qualitative-Quantitative Disputation," *American Political Science Review (APSR)*, 89, #2, June 1995, pp. 454-481.

David Collier, "The Comparative Method: Two Decades of Change," in Dankwart Rustow and Kenneth Paul Erickson, *Comparative Political Dynamics* (New York: Harper Collins, 1990), pp. 7-31.

Recommended:

*"The Role of Theory in Comparative Politics: A Symposium," contributions by Kohli, Evans, Katzenstein, Przeworski and Kohli, *World Politics*, 48, October 1995, pp. 1-21.

*Arend Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," in *American Political Science Review (APSR)*, 65, 1971, pp. 682-693.

September 16: Markets and Society

*North, Douglass, John Joseph Wallis, & Barry R. Weingast. 2006. *A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History*, <http://www.nber.org/papers/w12795>

*Polanyi, Karl. 1944. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Boston: Beacon Press), 3-134. E-Book

Recommended:

*Lindblom, Charles. 1982. "The Market as Prison" *Journal of Politics* 44:2 (May), 324-36.

September 23: The State

Margaret Levi. *Of Rule and Revenue*, pp. 1-144, 175-84.

Charles Tilly. War Making and State Making as an Organized Crime, in *Bringing the State Back In*. pp. 169-191.

Recommended:

*Theda Skocpol. Bringing The State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research, in *Bringing the State Back In*. pp. 3-43.

September 30: Interests and Institutions

Bates, Robert. *Markets and States in Tropical Africa*.

October 7: State-Society Relations

Putnam, Robert. 1993. *Making Democracy Work*.

Evans, Peter. 1992. "The State as Problem and Solution: Predation, Embedded Autonomy, and Structural Change," in Stephan Haggard and Robert Kaufman, eds., *The Politics of Economic Adjustment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), pp. 139-181.

October 14: Political Regimes: Bourgeois Revolution and Democracy

Moore, Barrington. 1966. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Do not read chapters on Japan or India.

Recommended:

*Luebbert, Gregory. 1987. "Social Foundations of Political Order in Interwar Europe" *World Politics* 39:4 (July), pp. 449-478.

October 21: Modernization and Political Development

Adam Przeworski, Michael Alvarez, José Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi. *Democracy and Development*.

*Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1959. "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and

Political Legitimacy” *American Political Science Review* 53:1 (March), pp. 69-105.

October 28: Class Conflict and Democratic Survival

Boix, Carles. 2003. *Democracy and Redistribution*. Skip Chapter 4.

Przeworski Adam & John Sprague. 1986. *Paper Stones: A History of Electoral Socialism*. Ch. 1-3.

November 4: Authoritarianism and the Problem of Order

O’Donnell, Guillermo. 1973. *Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism* (Berkeley: Institute for International Studies). pp. 1-111.

*Levitsky, Steven & Lucan A. Way. 2002. “The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism” *Journal of Democracy* 13:2 (April), pp. 51-65.

Huntington, Samuel. 1968. *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), pp. 1-92.

November 11: Parties and Democratic Politics

Downs, Anthony. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*.

Lipset, Seymour Martin and Stein Rokkan. 1967. *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives* (New York: The Free Press), pp. 1-64.

Research Paper Abstracts are Due in Class

November 18: Electoral Rules

Cox, Gary. *Making Votes Count*.

Recommended:

*Lijphart, Arendt. 1991. “The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws, 1945-85” *APSR* 84, pp. 481-96.

Duverger, Maurice. 2003. “Duverger’s Law: Forty Years Later” in Grofman, Bernard & Lijphart, Arend, eds., *Electoral Laws and their Political Consequences* (New York: Agathon Press), pp. 69-84.

*Boix, Carles. 1999. “Setting the Rules of the Game: The Choice of Electoral Systems in Advanced Democracies” *American Political Science Review* 93:3 (September), pp. 609-624.

*Riker, William H. 1982. “The Two-Party System and Duverger’s Law: An Essay on the History of Political Science” *APSR* 76 (December) 753-766.

November 25:

Culture and Political Identity

Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities*.

Recommended:

Crothers, Lane & Lockhart, Charles. 200. *Culture and Politics: A Reader* (Palgrave Macmillan), pp. 1-70.

December 2 and 9: Presentations

Research papers are due by 5 pm, Wednesday, December 16th