

GOVT 530: Seminar in Comparative Politics

Fall Semester

August 25 - December 17, 2008

Tuesdays, 7:20-10:00pm, Thompson Hall 108

Professor: Eric McGlinchey

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Office Hours: T, R 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm or by appointment

Course Description:

This course provides a comprehensive introduction to the literature and methodology of comparative politics. Students will explore leading approaches to comparative politics: quantitative and qualitative analysis, state formation, new institutionalism, rational choice, political culture, regime change, social mobilization, nationalism, states and markets and states and society. Student analysis of readings through written précis and weekly seminar discussions will build a strong foundation for advanced coursework in political science and a ready toolkit for designing and conducting independent research in academic and applied fields.

Course Objectives:

By the close of this course students will be able to:

- Concisely summarize and evaluate the research questions and causalities of 20+ seminal articles and books in the comparative politics field
- Critique applications of the comparative method and employ the comparative method in independent research
- Critically assess the role case selection has in theory development and hypothesis testing
- Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative approaches to political science and apply *both* approaches in a 15 page research paper
- Assess the role structure and agency have in political change
- Identify intersections and differences among state and society, rational choice, new institutionalism, political economy and political culture approaches to political science

Course Readings

1. Course Packet—These readings are denoted in the reading list by two asterisks, **. All of these readings are available through Blackboard.
2. The following books are on 2 hour reserve:
 - Jeffrey Herbst. *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton, 2000).
 - Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, (University of Oklahoma, 1991).

- Nancy Bermeo, *Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times: The Citizenry and the Breakdown of Democracy* (Princeton, 2003).
- Jeff Goodwin. *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).
- George Tsebelis, *Veto Players: How Political Institutions Work* (Princeton, 2002).
- Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Harvard 1971).
- Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 1998).
- Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Verso, 1991).
- Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work* (Princeton, 1994).
- Robert Bates, *Markets and States in Tropical Africa* (University of California, 1984).

Course Requirements:

1. Students are required to attend all classes.
2. Students are expected to have completed the assigned readings prior to class and to be prepared for seminar discussion.
3. Students will complete **one mid-term exam**
4. All students are required to write a final **15 page research paper**. We will discuss this paper in greater detail in class. Students should note the following deadlines for research and writing:
 - i. Research question submitted through Blackboard by 5pm, Tuesday October 14
 - ii. Papers submitted through Blackboard by 9pm, Tuesday December 9
5. All students are required to write 4 précis of **no more** than 500 words each.
 - Précis should critically analyze one the week's readings and will be graded on students' clarity of writing and understanding of central issues. Students should pay particular attention to:
 - i. The author's central argument—what is the *question, outcome* or *puzzle* the author is directly or indirectly addressing?
 - ii. What variables does the author cite as the *cause* behind the outcome he or she is investigating?
 - iii. What *empirical evidence* does the author provide to support his or her argument?
 - iv. How does the article relate to the literature more broadly?
 - v. What are some of the potential shortcomings of the author's argument?
 - Brief student presentations of the précis (5 minutes) will serve as the starting point for seminar discussion
 - Précis are to be submitted through Blackboard by 9 am, Monday (the day before class). Précis will be posted to the Blackboard homepage and will serve as guides for our critical analysis of the readings.
 - Students are required to submit a minimum of one précis for each of the following time periods:
 - i. (Weeks 2-4)
 - ii. (Weeks 5-7)

- iii. (Weeks 9-11)
- iv. (Weeks 12-14)

**Make-up exams and paper extensions will be given only if students have proper documentation. In place of an email, please see me during office hours to discuss missed/late work. If you anticipate you will have a conflict due to travel, please inform me within the first three weeks of class.

**This syllabus may change as the semester progresses.

Honor Code:

Most of the written work for this class will be submitted electronically through Blackboard. Essays may be processed through on-line databases so as to access the originality of work.

The George Mason University Honor Code states: “Cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing of academic work and related materials constitute Honor Code violations. To maintain an academic community according to these standards, students and faculty must report all alleged violations to the Honor Committee.” Students are encouraged to read the full Honor Code in the 2008-9 University Catalog (http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/pdfs/catalog_0809.pdf) and to remain vigilant against any violation of the Code in their own work. Any cases of academic dishonesty in this course will be pursued according to the guidelines detailed in the University Catalog.

Please do see me if you have any questions regarding the honor code.

Special Needs:

Please address any special needs or special accommodations with me at the beginning of the semester or as soon as you become aware of your needs. Those seeking accommodations based on disabilities should contact the Disability Resource Center (703) 993-2474, or the Equity Office (703) 993-8730.

Grading

Seminar Discussion	60
Mid-term	100
Written Précis	120
Oral Presentation of Précis	80
Research Paper	140
Total	500 points

Grading Scale:

A+: 490-500	A: 460-489	A-: 450-459
B+: 440-449	B: 410-439	B-: 400-409
C+: 390-399	C: 360-389	C-: 350-359
D+: 340-349	D: 310-339	D-: 300-309
F: 299 and below		

Schedule:

Week 1	August 26	
Week 2	September 2	} Précis 1 due (select either wk. 2, wk. 3 or wk. 4) in Blackboard by 9am, Monday before seminar
Week 3	September 9	
Week 4	September 16	
Week 5	September 23	
Week 6	September 30	} Précis 2 due (select either wk. 5, wk. 6 or wk. 7) in Blackboard by 9am, Monday before seminar
Week 7	October 7	
	October 14	} ** GMU Tuesday classes do not meet this week ** Submit research question through Blackboard by 5pm ** Study for October 21 midterm
Week 8	October 21	} October 21 Midterm
Week 9	October 28	} ** Précis 3 due (select either wk. 9, wk. 10 or wk.11) in Blackboard by 9am, Monday before seminar ** Paper outline & bibliography due by 9am, Monday, Nov. 10
Week 10	November 4	
Week 11	November 11	
Week 12	November 18	} Précis 4 due (select either wk. 12, wk. 13 or wk.14) in Blackboard by 9am, Monday before seminar
Week 13	November 25	
Week 14	December 2	
	December 9	} Final Paper Due

Week 1, August 26—Introduction to Comparative Politics Theory

1. Atul Kohli et al, "The Role of Theory in Comparative Politics: A Symposium." *World Politics*, Vol. 48 (October 1995), pp. 1-49.**
2. Ulla G. Foehr, "Media Multitasking Among American Youth: Prevalence, Predictors And Pairings," (Kaiser Family Foundation, December 2006).**

Week 2, September 2—Methods and Causality in Comparative Politics

1. James Mahoney, "Qualitative Methods and Comparative Politics," *Comparative Political Studies* 40:2 (February 2007), pp. 122-144.**
2. Paul Pierson, "The Costs of Marginalization: Qualitative Methods in the Study of American Politics," *Comparative Political Studies* 2007 40:2 (February 2007), pp 146-169.**
3. Helen V. Milner, "Rationalizing Politics: The Emerging Synthesis of International, American and Comparative Politics," *International Organization* 52:4 (Autumn 1998), pp. 759-786. **
4. Paul Pierson, "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics," *American Political Science Review* 94:2 (2000), pp. 251-67.**

Week 3, September 9—The State

1. Charles Tilly, "War and State Power," *Middle East Report*, No. 171, (Jul. - Aug., 1991), pp. 38-40.**
2. Jeffrey Herbst. *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.
3. Mancur Olson, "The Criminal Metaphor," pp. 1-24 in *Power and Prosperity: Outgrowing Communist and Capitalist Dictatorships*, 2000.**

Week 4, September 16— Transitions and Democratization

1. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, (University of Oklahoma, 1991), pp. 3-108.
2. Mark Tessler. "Islam and Democracy in the Middle East: The Impact of Religious Orientations on Attitudes Toward Democracy in Four Arab Countries." *Comparative Politics* 34 (April 2002), pp. 337-354.**
3. Barbara Geddes, "What Do We Know About Democratization After 20 Years?" *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2, pp. 115-44.**

Week 5, September 23—Transitions and Authoritarianism

1. Nancy Bermeo, *Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times: The Citizenry and the Breakdown of Democracy* (Princeton, 2003).
2. Special Edition: "Elections without Democracy," *Journal of Democracy*, 13:2 (April 2002)**
 - Larry Diamond, "Thinking About Hybrid Regimes"
 - Andreas Schedler, "The Menu of Manipulation"

Week 6, September 30—Revolutions and Violent Change

1. Jeff Goodwin. *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), Chapters 1,2, 9 and skim one of the following: Part 2, Part 3, or Part 4, pp. 3-64, 289-306, and your choice.
2. Timur Kuran, "Now out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989," *World Politics*, 1 (October 1991), pp. 7-48.**

Week 7, October 7—Institutions and Rational Choice

1. Kenneth A. Shepsle, "Studying Institutions: Some Lessons from the Rational Choice Approach," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 1, 2 (April 1989), 131-147.**
2. George Tsebelis, *Veto Players: How Political Institutions Work* (Princeton, 2002).

****October 14th – GMU Tuesday classes do not meet this week****

Week 8, October 21—In Class Midterm

Week 9, October 28—Historical Institutionalism and Path Dependency

1. Kathleen Thelen, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1999), pp. 369-404.**
2. T.L. Karl, *The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petro-States* (Berkeley: Univ. Calif. Press, 1997).** → Available through GMU library as EBook

Week 10, November 4—Collective Action

1. Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Harvard 1971) chs, 1-2.
2. Herbert Kitschelt, "Political Opportunity Structure and Political Protest," *British Journal of Political Science* 16:1 (1986): 57-85.**
3. Susanne Lohmann, "The Dynamics of Informational Cascades: The Monday Demonstrations in Leipzig, East Germany, 1989-91," *World Politics* 47 (October 1994).**

Week 11, November 11—Social Movements

1. Sidney Tarrow. *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. Cambridge University Press, 1998.
2. Charles King, "The Micropolitics of Social Violence," *World Politics* 56:3 (April 2004), pp. 431-455.**

Week 12, November 18— Nationalism and Identity

1. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Verso, 1991).
2. James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin. "Explaining Interethnic Cooperation," *American Political Science Review* 90:4 (December 1996), pp. 715-735.**

Week 13, November 25— Political Culture

1. Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work* (Princeton, 1994).
2. Sheri Berman, "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic," *World Politics* 49:3 (April 1997), pp. 401-429.**

Week 14, December 2— States and Markets

1. Robert Bates, *Markets and States in Tropical Africa* (University of California, 1984).
2. G. Bingham Powell and Guy D. Whitten, "A Cross-National Analysis of Economic Voting," *American Journal of Political Science* 37:2 (May 1993), pp. 391-414**