

POLI 511A: Comparative Government and Politics
University of British Columbia, Department of Political Science, Term 2 2013-14
<http://www.faculty.arts.ubc.ca/bnyblade/poli511.html>

Version 2.0 Final Start-of-Term Version

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Description

This course is designed to: (1) assist doctoral students prepare to write the comprehensive field examination in comparative politics; (2) provide doctoral students with a sense of the breadth of the field, its intellectual history, and the frontiers of knowledge; (3) equip research-oriented students with the background necessary to assess the state of the art in comparative politics as a precursor to developing their own theses or thesis proposals; (4) provide doctoral students with the background necessary to teach comparative politics. Master's students are welcome, but the workload and academic requirements are commensurate with the needs of doctoral students.

Comparative politics is a broad, evolving, and dynamic field of study, with ancient roots. The course examines current scholarship in light of the evolution of the field, and in relation to knowledge in other disciplines. This year the course will meet every other week (see the instructor's web page for details) and the major topics will be: research approaches in comparative politics, collective action, the state, democratization, institutional change and varieties of democratic institutions. Research will be discussed for both substantive findings and methodological contributions. Students will read some of the great books produced by the field in recent decades, as well as cutting-edge work from the journal literature. The course has a programmatic intent: it is designed to encourage reflection on where research comparative politics as a field should move in the future.

Expectations

This is an intensive seminar in which the participants are expected to work hard both in the classroom and beyond. A successful seminar rests on the active participation of its members, and students are expected to come to class prepared and ready to engage with the material and their classmates at a high level.

Assignments and Assessment

1. Class participation (20%). The success of a seminar depends on the active participation of all students in weekly discussions. Quality of participation is important, as is evidence that the required readings have been absorbed, analyzed and used in the discussion.
2. Three Discussion Question Response Papers (30%). Each student will be responsible for writing three short papers (each one about 6-8 pages double-spaced) spread across the term. This assignment should be treated as practice for the comparative politics comprehensive examinations. The authors will lead off the discussion in class for that week, and will circulate their papers prior to class.
3. Research trend report and presentation (25%). In the final class of the semester, students will present an 8-10 page report on the development of the scholarly literature surrounding a question in comparative politics that is of particular interest to the student. Students will meet individually with the instructor

twice during the term in preparation for this report. In the first meeting we will agree upon the question the student will focus on, and in the second we will discuss the student's initial outline and thoughts. The report and presentation will explain the nature and significance of the core research question, address how scholars have previously approached answering it (theoretically, empirically, methodologically), how the answers/approaches have changed over time, and identify avenues for future research.

4. Final take-home exam (25%). This will be a mock comprehensive exam.

Discussion Papers

Writing clearly and in a compelling fashion is a crucial skill, one that all of us can improve through practice and feedback. As such, the emphasis is on providing greater opportunities for feedback and improvement of the essays. Students will write three discussion papers (6-8 pages each), choosing from a series of discussion questions provided at the end of this syllabus. They will choose one question from Weeks 1 and 3, one from Weeks 5 and 7, and one from weeks 9 and 11.

Except for Week 1 discussion papers, students will be expected to post on the course blog their draft discussion papers by noon Monday of the week in which the question is assigned. The students who choose to write that week will begin the seminar each week by presenting a very brief (3-4 minute) overview of their draft discussion paper, which will be followed by class discussion. Students will also receive feedback from the instructor on the draft and will revise their discussion paper and submit it formally for a mark by noon the following Monday. The only exception to this pattern will be that Week 1 and Week 3 discussion and questions will both occur in Week 3 classes, and thus every student will both write and present a draft discussion paper for Week 3.

Research trend report and presentation

The final class of the semester will be devoted to student presentation and discussion of their draft reports on the development of the scholarly literature surrounding a question in comparative politics that is of particular interest to the student. Students will meet individually with the instructor twice during the term in preparation for this report. The first meetings will occur during Week 5, at which we will discuss and agree upon the question the student will focus on. The second meetings will occur during Week 9 and we will discuss the student's initial notes, argument and outline. Students will be expected to have a draft report posted to the blog by Monday of Week 13. The report and the subsequent presentation in Week 13's class will explain the nature and significance of the core research question, address how scholars have previously approached answering it (theoretically, empirically, methodologically), and how the answers/approaches have changed over time, and identify avenues for future research. The goal of this assignment is for students to develop their ability to synthetically review the development of research on a key question in comparative politics, and build from that review of past research to identify areas in which future research is warranted. The final draft of the research trend report will be due by noon on the first Monday following Week 13.

Take-home Mock Comprehensive Examination

During the final examination period, the instructor will arrange for a take-home examination to be done in the style of a UBC comparative politics PhD qualifying examination. Students will need to make arrangements to be able to access the exam questions via the internet at the specified time, and will submit the examination electronically four hours later. The date and time of the examination will be specified at a later date.

Readings

Week 1: Tuesday, January 7th (2-5). Comparative Methods I (Overview)

Required Reading

- Collier, David. 1993, "The Comparative Method." In Ada Finifter, ed., *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II*.
- Adcock, Robert, and David Collier. 2001. "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research," *The American Political Science Review*, 95 (3):529-546.
- Herrera, Yoshiko, and Devesh Kapur. "Improving Data Quality: Actors, Incentives and Capabilities," *Political Analysis*, Volume 15, Issue 4, pp. 365 – 386.
- Green, Donald P., and Alan S. Gerber. 2003. "The Underprovision of Experiments in Political Science," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 589 (1):94-112.

Related Reading (CP Core)

- Collier, David. 1991. "The Comparative Method: Two Decades of Change." In Dankwart Rustow and Kenneth Paul Erickson, *Comparative Political Dynamics: Global Research Perspectives*, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 7-31.
- De La O, Anna and Leonard Wantchekon. "Experimental Research on Democracy and Development." In James N. Druckman, Donald P. Green, James H. Kuklinski, and Arthur Lupia (eds.) *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- King, Gary, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Mill, John Stuart. 1868. *A System of Logic*. London: Longmans, pp. 425-448, 482-489 [page numbers refer to the specific edition in POLI 571A course pack].
- Przeworski, Adam, and Henry Teune. 1970. *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*. New York: Wiley-Interscience. pp. 17-30.

Week 1: Thursday, January 9th (9-12). Comparative Methods II (Case Studies)

Required Reading

- George, Alexander and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, Chapter 1
- Lieberson, Stanley. 1991. "Small N's and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Case Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases." *Social Forces* 70(2), 307-320.
- Seawright, Jason, and John Gerring. 2008. "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research," *Political Research Quarterly* 61 (2):294-308.

Related Reading (CP Core)

- Brady, Henry E. and David Collier. **2010**. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield. Chapters:
"Sources of Leverage in Causal Inference: Toward an Alternative View of Methodology"
"Process Tracing and Causal Inference"
"Design Based Inference: Beyond the Pitfalls of Regression Analysis?"
From **2004** edition of Collier and Brady:
"Tools for Qualitative Research"
"Claiming too Much: Warnings about Selection Bias."
- Hall, Peter A. 2003. "Aligning Ontology and Methodology in Comparative Politics." In *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer (eds.). New York: Cambridge University Press, 373-404.

Week 3: Tuesday, January 21st (2-5). Collective Action I (Background)

- From Ruggiero, Vincenzo and Nicola Montagna (eds.) 2008. *Social Movements: A Reader*. New York: Routledge.
Chapter 15: Logic of Collective Action (Mancur Olsen)
Chapter 20: Power in Movement (Sidney Tarrow)
- Miller, Gary J. 1992. *Managerial Dilemmas: The Political Economy of Hierarchy*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Pages 1-18.
- Moe, T. 1990. "Political Institutions: The Neglected Side of the Story." *JLEO* 6: 213-53
- North, Douglass C. and Barry R. Weingast. 1989. "Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutional Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth-Century England." *The Journal of Economic History*, 49(4), 803-832.
- Ostrom, Elinor. 2006. "Collective Action Theory," *Oxford Handbook of Political Science*. 45 ms. pages

Week 3: Thursday, January 23rd (9-12). Collective Action II (Culture and Context)

- Almond, Gabriel A. and Sidney Verba. 1963. *The Civic Culture*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co. Ch. 1
- Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso. Chapters 1-3.
- Heinrich, Natalie and Joseph. 2007. *Why Humans Cooperate: A Cultural and Evolutionary Explanation*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapters 1-2, 10.
- Putnam, Robert. 1993. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chs. 1 & 4
- Scott, James. 2008. "Everyday Forms of Resistance," *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies*, 33-62.
- Wedeen, Lisa. 2002. "Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science." *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 96, no. 4: 713-728.

Week 5: Thursday, February 4th (2-5). The State I (Approaches)

- Evans, Peter, et al. (eds.). 1985. *Bringing the State Back In*, New York: Cambridge University Press. Ch.1 (Skocpol). Ch. 5 (Tilly). Ch. 9 (Laitin). Ch. 11 (Evans, Rueschmeyer, Skocpol).
- Krasner, Stephen "Approaches to the State: Alternative Conceptions and Historical Dynamics" *Comparative Politics*, 16(2), 223-246.
- Levi, Margaret. 2002. "The State of the Study of the State" In Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner, *Political Science: State of the Discipline*, New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 33-55.

Week 5: Thursday, February 4th (9-12). The State II (Rise of the State)

- Herbst, Jeffrey. 2000. *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Introduction and Part 1.
- Spruyt, Hendrik. 1996. *The Sovereign State and Its Competitors*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Introduction, Chs. 1-3, 8-9.
- Tilly, Charles. 1990. *Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 990-1990*. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell. Chs. 1-3

Week 7: Tuesday, February 25th (2-5). Regime Change I (Classics)

- Huntington, Samuel. 1968. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Chs. 1 and 5.
- Moore, Barrington Jr. 1966. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Boston: Beacon. Part III.

- Skocpol, Theda. 1979. *States and Social Revolutions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 1
- Przeworski, Adam and Fernando Limongi. 1997. "Modernization: Theory and Facts," *World Politics*, 49(2), 155-83.
- Huber, Evelyne, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and John D. Stephens. 1993. "The Impact of Economic Development on Democracy," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 7(3), 71-85.

Week 7: Thursday, February 27th (9-12). Regime Change II (Recent Debates)

- Acemoglu, Daron and James Robinson. 2006. *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chs. 1-3, 11.
- Ansell, Benjamin and David Samuels. 2010. "Inequality and Democratization: A Contractarian Approach." *Comparative Political Studies* 43(12): 1543-74.
- Haggard, Stephan and Robert R. Kaufman. 2012. "Inequality and Regime Change: Democratic Transitions and the Stability of Democratic Rule." *American Political Science Review*, 106, 495-516.
- O'Donnell, Guillermo. 2010. *Democracy, Agency, and the State: Theory with Comparative Intent*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapters 1-3, 11

Week 9: Tuesday, March 11th (2-5). Endogenous Institutions

- Hall, Peter and Rosemary C.R. Taylor. 1996. "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms," *Political Studies*, 44, 936-957.
- Helmke, Gretchen and Steven Levitsky. 2004. "Informal Institutions and Comparative Politics: A Research Agenda," *Perspectives on Politics* 2(4), 725-40.
- Pierson, Paul. 2004. *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Introduction, Ch. 3, Conclusion.
- Schmidt, Vivien. 2008. "Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse," *Annual Review of Political Science*. 11, 303-326.
- Shepsle, Kenneth. 2008. "Old Questions and New Answers about Institutions: The Riker Objection Revisited." In Donald A. Ritchie and Barry R. Weingast (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Political Economy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Thelen, Kathleen. 2003. "How Institutions Evolve: Insights from Comparative Historical Analysis." In Mahoney, James and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 208-240
- Also Recommended:* Thelen, Kathleen. 1999. "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2, 369-404.

Week 9: Thursday, March 13th (9-12). Democratic Institutions and their Consequences

- Hammond, Thomas H. and Christopher K. Butler. 2003. Some Complex Answers to the Simple Question 'Do Institutions Matter?': Policy Choice and Policy Change in Presidential and Parliamentary Systems. *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 15: 145-200.
- Lijphart, Arend. 1999. "Democratic Political Systems: Types, Cases, Causes, and Consequences." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 1(1): 33-48.
- Linz, Juan. 1990. "The Perils of Presidentialism," *Journal of Democracy*, 1, 51-69.
- Shugart, Matthew Soberg and John M. Carey. 1992. *Presidents and Assemblies: Constitutional Design and Electoral Dynamics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chs. 1-3, 13.
- Strom, Kaare. 2000. "Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies," *European Journal of Political Research* 37(3), 261-289.
- Tsebelis, George. 1995. "Decision Making in Political Systems: Veto Players in Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, Multicameralism and Multipartyism," *British Journal of Political Science*. 25(3), 289-325.

Week 11: Tuesday, March 25th (2-5). Voters and Parties

Cox, Gary. 1997. *Making Votes Count: Strategic Coordination in the World's Electoral System*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chs. 1-4, 15.

Duch, Raymond and Randall Stevenson. 2008. *The Economic Vote: How Political and Economic Institutions Condition Election Results*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1-3 and Conclusion.

Grofman, Bernard. 2004. "Downs and Two-Party Convergence," *Annual Review of Political Science* 7: 25-46.

Kitschelt, Herbert and Steven Wilkinson. 2007. "Citizen-Politician Linkages: An Introduction" Chapter 1 in Kitschelt and Wilkinson, eds., *Patrons, Clients and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition*, p. 1-49.

Lipset, Seymour Martin & Stein Rokkan. 1967. "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction." In: Seymour Martin Lipset & Stein Rokkan (eds.). *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-national Perspectives*. New York: Free Press, 1967. 1-64.

Mair, Peter, Wolfgang Müller and Fritz Plasser. 2004. "Introduction: Electoral Challenges and Party Responses." Chapter 1 in Mair, Müller and Plasser, eds., *Political Parties and Electoral Change: Party Responses to Electoral Markets*, 1-19.

Week 11: Thursday, March 27th (9-12). Political Economy

Readings TBD. Either Varieties of Capitalism or Political Economy of Development (based on student interests).

Week 13: Tuesday, April 8th (2-5). Student Reports

Student Presentations: come to class having read draft reports.

Discussion Questions

Week 1

- Comparative politics as a subfield has traditionally been pluralistic methodologically, but debates over the various methodological approaches have been extensive and seem to be unending. Why can't we all get along? Are the methodological debates intractable? (When) are they valuable?
- "Different methods for different questions" is a common recommendation by scholars of comparative politics, even if in reality most scholars tend to favor particular methods in their own work. Do you agree with this recommendation? If so, write up a primer as to what sort of questions are best answered with different sorts of research methods. If not, make an argument as to what methods are generally better or worse.
- "Multiple research methods should be combined for most research in comparative politics" is another common recommendation. Do you agree? When and how can various research methods be fruitfully combined? What are the challenges in doing so?

Week 3

- What is the basic collective action dilemma? Does it come in different varieties? What are important political examples or consequences of this? What are the major mechanisms of overcoming it?
- Collective action problems are often linked to the under-provision of public goods and the under-representation of certain interests in political processes. What do the various mechanisms that groups use to overcome collective action problems suggest about the potential for robust, fair interest representation?
- What is the link between political culture and collective action? To what extent is it more useful to conceptualize and operationalize political culture collectively rather than individually? How does this matter for understanding comparative politics?

Week 5

- What is the state? Compare at least three conceptualizations of the state and make an argument as to your preferred understanding of the concept. How might conceptual differences in understanding the state affect scholarship in comparative politics?
- To what extent can we explain variation in state ‘strength’ or ‘capacity’ today based on theories of state formation? (Note: carefully define your terminology).
- Some scholars have argued that the state should be central to the study of comparative politics, whereas others have suggested that collective action is central. Take a stand in this debate, making arguments based on both the conceptual merits and implications for the field.

Week 7

- What are the basic types of political regimes in comparative politics? What is the best explanation for present-day variation in regime type across the globe?
- Is there a relationship between inequality and democratization? (Note: it is probably a good idea to be specific about the types of inequality you are assessing).
- To what extent can/should the literature on the rise of the state be used to inform our understanding of contemporary democratization?

Week 9

- Political institutions are endogenous—they are the result of choice made by people. Does this matter for assessing the impact of political institutions on political outcomes? How can/should we go about accounting for this in assessing and researching the effects of institutions?
- Specific political institutions arise under particular historical circumstances and operate in particular contexts. Does this matter for assessing the impact of political institutions on political outcomes? How can/should we go about accounting for this in assessing and researching the effects of institutions?
- Some scholars have argued that scholars of comparative political institutions have focused excessively on the formal rules for (s)electing leaders (pres vs. parl, electoral systems). Do you agree? What other sorts of institutions should scholars focus on? What is the path forward in the study of comparative democratic institutions?

Week 11

TBD

Legalese

Classroom and Online Conduct. Students are responsible for helping create a positive atmosphere and are expected to treat each other with respect. Students should expect a certain degree of disagreement, criticism of arguments and debate in this class—debate is a central part of the academic enterprise. However, disagreement should be respectful, thoughtful and not personally directed.

Plagiarism. Students should be aware of their responsibilities in regards to academic integrity as they apply to this and all other courses they take here at UBC. For more information, check out the VP Academic website (<http://www.vpacademic.ubc.ca/integrity/>). All assignments will be submitted electronically and the instructor reserves the right to analyze the assignments using plagiarism-detecting tools.

Late Assignments. Deadlines will be strictly enforced, although students facing unavoidable hardships or other difficulties are encouraged to contact the instructor before the due date. Unexcused late assignments will receive a 10 percentage point penalty if they are submitted within 48 hours of the deadline. After that no unexcused late assignments will be accepted.

Course Requirements and Changes. The instructor reserves the right to amend this course syllabus, including, but not limited to, changing readings and assignment requirements or deadlines. Changes to the course syllabus will be announced in class and posted online, with appropriate advance notice wherever possible.