Introduction to Comparative Politics (PSC 001)

Lectures: Tuesday/Thursday
2:20-3:10 p.m.
1957 E Street
Room 213

Emmanuel Teitelbaum
Assistant Professor
Department of Political Science
2115 G Street
Monroe, 411

‘Office’ Hours: ‘Peripatetic’, Tuesday 3:30-4:30 in GW Fitness Center (3rd floor mezzanine); or ‘Bohemian’, 3:30-4:30 Thursday at Juan Valdez on 19th and F

Why are some countries more democratic than others? Why are some countries wealthy and others poor? What causes civil wars? Why are women’s interests more adequately represented in some countries than others? These are some of the questions addressed by scholars working in the field of comparative politics, which is defined by its focus on questions that can be answered through cross-national comparison. In this course, we will explore the field through a survey of six central issue areas: state building; political regimes (dictatorship and democracy); ethnicity and nationalism; political ecology; political economy; and the politics of gender. Through critical reflection on these timely topics, you will learn a) how political scientists harness comparison to answer questions about important political outcomes and b) something about the politics of countries in various regions around the world.

Requirements

1) Midterm examination (20%)
2) Exercises (30%)
3) Final exam (30%)
4) Class Participation (20%)

Required Reading

Students will typically be required to read between 60 and 75 pages per week. This includes readings from the course textbook, political science articles and book chapters that will be posted on the course website.

The course textbook, *The Essentials of Comparative Politics* (2nd edition) is available for purchase at the campus bookstore.

Midterm

The midterm exam will test your knowledge of materials presented in lecture up to the eighth week of classes and will consist of a combination of multiple choice, true or false, fill-in-the-blank, identifications and short answer questions.

Exercises

A series of exercises will deepen your understanding of analytical techniques commonly used to develop and test hypotheses in comparative politics. You will complete a total of six such exercises, each worth five percentage points of your total score.
Final exam

The final exam will test the breadth of your knowledge of materials presented in lecture and will consist of a combination of multiple choice, true or false, fill-in-the-blank, identifications and short answer questions. The final exam will be comprehensive.

Class participation

For each section, you will be required to respond to a series of discussion questions posted by your TA. You will also be required to prepare a written response to at least one of these questions, which will be forwarded to you the week before your section meets. Your class participation will be evaluated based on a) your attendance; b) your written responses to the discussion questions and, most importantly, c) the volume and quality of your oral participation in section. See the 'grading policy' section below for more details on how we will calculate your class participation score.

Grading policy

Grading standards and curves

The TAs in this course will adhere to a policy of blind grading. Blind grading is the best way to ensure that an instructor’s preconceptions and biases regarding particular students do not become a factor in the process of evaluating a student’s written work. To facilitate blind grading, students will be required to write their name and GW student ID number on the back inside cover of blue books (rather than the front outside cover) and on a separate cover sheet attached behind the last page of their term papers.

Exercises will be graded according to guidelines provided by the instructor with substantial discretion exercised by your TA.

Exams will be graded according to an answer key provided by the instructor. If the median exam score is a B- or higher, exam scores will not be curved. If the median exam score is below a B-, the exam will be curved according to a standard normal distribution, defining the mean score as a B- (a ‘B- curve’). I will provide more details should it become necessary to grade on a curve.

Each week, your class participation will be graded on a five point scale as follows. You will receive one point for attending section each week. You will receive one point for submitting substantial responses to one of the discussion questions assigned for section each week. Finally, you will receive between one and three points for the quality of your participation each week, as assessed by your TA. The three component scores will be tallied for your section grade that week. So, for example, if you attend section (one point), turn in your response to a discussion question (one point) and exhibit good participation (2 points), you will receive a score of ‘4’ for the week. If you attend section (one point), turn in your responses (one point), but do not participate very much (one point), you will receive a score of ‘3’ for the week. Your five-point score corresponds to standard letter grades. Thus a score of ‘5’ corresponds to a grade of ‘A’, a score of ‘4’ to a letter grade of ‘B’ and so on. Your two lowest section scores will be thrown out and the remainder averaged to arrive at your final class participation score. You will receive feedback on how you are doing in terms of class participation at midterm.
Grade challenges

Should you be dissatisfied with a grade you receive, I encourage you to meet with your TA during her/his office hours for an informal discussion. However, if you remain dissatisfied with your grade, you may lodge a formal appeal by submitting a one-page explanation of why you feel you deserve a higher grade. If the TA remains unconvinced of your case, s/he will forward your assignment or exam to me for a re-grade. Please note: I reserve the right to exercise full judgment during a re-grade and thus, the right to give you a lower score than the one originally assigned by your TA.

Grade scale

The grading scale used for this course is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94+</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>64-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>≤ 59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Makeup, attendance and lateness policies

Except for documented family or medical emergencies, there will be no makeup exams provided in this course. All family or medical emergencies must be verified through the academic advising office of your college. Routine doctor’s appointments do not qualify as medical emergencies; students will not be excused from exams or assignments for non-emergency doctor’s appointments.

No make-ups or deadline extensions will be provided for early holiday travel. Please make your travel plans so that they do not conflict with exam week!!

Since your two lowest section scores are discarded, there will be no excused absences from section.

Late exercises will accrue a penalty of one point per day. So, for example, if your assignment is due on Friday and you turn it in on Saturday, the highest score you can receive is a ‘4/5’. If you turn it in on Sunday, the highest score you can receive is ‘3/5’, etc. Please be mindful of the exercise deadlines, as this penalty will be strictly enforced. The exercises impose a heavy grading responsibility on your TAs, and they should not be unduly burdened with grading a constant barrage of late assignments.

Academic integrity

Academic integrity is vital to the health and reputation of the University. It is also vital to your education. I will pursue violations of academic integrity, including but not limited to cheating on exams and plagiarism on essays, to the fullest extent possible.

The following is an excerpt from Article II, Section 1 of the University’s Code of Academic Integrity, which defines academic dishonesty:

“(a) Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.

(b) Common examples of academically dishonest behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:
1) Cheating - intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise; copying from another student's examination; submitting work for an in-class examination that has been prepared in advance; representing material prepared by another as one's own work; submitting the same work in more than one course without prior permission of both instructors; violating rules governing administration of examinations; violating any rules relating to academic conduct of a course or program.

2) Fabrication - intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any data, information, or citation in an academic exercise.

3) Plagiarism - intentionally representing the words, ideas, or sequence of ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise; failure to attribute any of the following: quotations, paraphrases, or borrowed information.

4) Falsification and forgery of University academic documents - knowingly making a false statement, concealing material information, or forging a University official's signature on any University academic document or record. Such academic documents or records may include transcripts, add-drop forms, requests for advanced standing, requests to register for graduate-level courses, etc. (Falsification or forgery of non-academic University documents, such as financial aid forms, shall be considered a violation of the non-academic student disciplinary code.)

5) Facilitating academic dishonesty - intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.”

According to Article III, section 5 of the Code, the minimum penalty for a first offense is failure of the assignment in question. Repeat offenders will be referred directly to the Academic Integrity Council for a hearing.

For more information, please refer to the Code: http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html
(1) Scope and Method

Week 1: Comparative politics and the comparative method

Jan 15: What is comparative politics? An overview of the field and the course syllabus [18]
• O’Neil, Chapter 1

Jan 17: What is the comparative method? How is comparison useful? [39]
• Michael Sodaro, *Comparative Politics*, Chapter 3

(2) States and State-building

Week 2: State capacity

Jan 22: What is state capacity? [45]
• O’Neil, Chapter 2
• Francis Fukuyama, “The Imperative of State-Building”
• Foreign Policy Magazine, “The Failed State Index”

Jan 24: How do states become powerful? Why are some states stronger than others? [39]
  *Regional focus: Europe-Africa comparison*
• Charles Tilly, “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime”
• Jeffrey Herbst, “War and the State in Africa”

Week 3: The causes and implications of state weakness

Jan 29: What causes state failure? [37]
  *Regional focus: Afghan-Pakistani Frontier*
• Barnett Rubin, “Saving Afghanistan”
• Elizabeth Rubin, “In the Land of the Taliban”

Jan 31: What are the implications of state weakness for democracy? [32]
  *Regional focus: Africa*
• Richard Joseph, “Africa: States in Crisis”
• Okonta Ike, “Nigeria: Chronicle of a Dying State”
• Posner and Young, “The Institutionalization of Political Power in Africa”

***Exercise 1, ‘2x2 Diagram’: due Friday, February 1***

(3) Political Regimes

Week 4: Authoritarianism and democracy

Feb 5: What is authoritarianism? Where does it come from? [33]
  *Country focus: China*
• O’Neil, Chapter 5
• Various Authors, “The Future of China’s Party –State”

Feb 7: What is democracy? How democratic is the world today? [30]
• O’Neil, Chapter 6
• Thomas Carothers, “Democracy’s Sobering State”
Week 5: Democratic consolidation

Feb 12: Do political parties matter for democratic consolidation? [47]
  
  Country focus: Russia
  • O’Neil, Chapter 8
  • Henry Hale, “Why Not Parties?”

Feb 14: What are the prospects for democracy in the Islamic world? [27]
  
  Country focus: Middle East
  • Stepan and Robertson, “An Arab More Than a Muslim Gap”
  • Sanford Lakoff, “The Reality of Muslim Exceptionalism”
  • Stepan and Robertson, “Arab, Not Muslim, Exceptionalism”

***Exercise 2, ‘Causal Diagram’: due Friday, February 15

(4) Ethnicity and Nationalism

Week 6: Ethnic diversity and civil strife

Feb 19: What is ethnicity? Does ethnic diversity contribute to civil strife? [29]
  • O’Neil, Chapter 3, pp. 44-66
  • Paul Collier, “The Market for Civil War”

Feb 21: What are the implications of ethnic diversity for nation-building? [24]
  
  Regional focus: Middle East
  • Barry Rubin, “Dealing with Communalism”
  • Stephen Biddle, “Seeing Baghdad, Thinking Saigon”

Week 7: Managing ethnic diversity through ‘institutional engineering’

Feb 26: The consociational model [36]
  
  Country focus: Lebanon
  • Arend Lijphart, “Constitutional Design for Divided Societies”
  • Brenda Seaver, “The Regional Sources of Power-Sharing Failure”

Feb 28: The centripetal model [40]
  
  Country focus: Sri Lanka-Fiji comparison
  Simulation: Instant Runoff Voting (IRV)
  • Donald Horowitz, “Ethnic Conflict Management for Policymakers”
  • Benajamin Reilly, Democracy in Divided Societies, Chapter 5

***Exercise 3, ‘Most Similar and Different Systems Designs’: due Friday, February 29
(5) Review and Midterm

Week 8: Review I

Mar 4: What have you learned so far? A review with question and answer
• No reading

***Midterm: Thursday, March 6

(6) Political Ecology

Week 9: Collective action problems and the environment

Mar 11: The tragedy of the commons [43]
• Garrett Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons”
• Shepsle and Bonchek, Analyzing Politics, Chapter 10

Mar 13: How do collective action problems affect the environment? [40]
Case: Pre-historic Easter Island
• Jared Diamond, Collapse, Chapter 2

***Spring Break: March 15-23

Week 10: Climate change

Mar 25: What is climate change? What are its potential consequences? [39]
• The Economist, “The Heat is On”
• The Stern Review on Climate Change, Introduction

Mar 27: Is there a viable political solution to climate change? [27]
• Thomas Schelling, “What Makes Greenhouse Sense?”
• Hovi, Skodvin and Andresen, “The Persistence of the Kyoto Protocol”

***Exercise 4, ‘Game Theoretic Analysis’: due Friday, March 28

(7) Political Economy

Week 11: Political economy of advanced industrial democracies

Apr 1: The theory of institutional comparative advantage [50]
• O’Neil, Chapter 4, pp. 77-95
• David Soskice, “Divergent Production Regimes”

Apr 3: Is there a tradeoff between redistribution and economic growth? The political economy of welfare states in the OECD [49]
• O’Neil, Chapter 4, pp. 100-108
• Pontusson, Inequality and Prosperity, chapter 7
Week 12: Political economy of developing countries

Apr 8: Do political institutions matter for economic growth? [29]
- Carlos Santiso, “The Contentious Washington Consensus”

Apr 10: Is democracy compatible with rapid economic growth? [39]
Country focus: India-China Comparison
- Drèze and Sen, India: Economic Development and Social Opportunity, Chapter 4
- Amartya Sen, “Democracy as a Universal Value”

***Exercise 5, ‘Scatter Diagram’: due Friday April 11

(8) The Politics of Gender

Week 13: The politics of women in the workplace

Apr 15: Gender and politics in the developing world [33]
   Guest Lecturer: Gina Lambright
   - Rangan and Gilmartin, “Gender, Traditional Authority, and the Politics of Rural Reform in South Africa

Apr 17: What explains gender-neutral employment policy in the OECD? [31]
   Country focus: France
   - Kimberly Morgan, “The Politics of Mothers’ Employment: France in Comparative Perspective”

Week 14: Gender and political participation

Apr 22: Why are women underrepresented in politics? What can be done about it? [35]
   - Inglehart and Norris, “Cultural Obstacles to Equal Representation”
   - Marian Sawer, “Parliamentary Representation of Women”

Apr 24: What did you learn? A review with question and answer

***Exercise 6, ‘Analyze It’: due Friday April 25

***Final exam during scheduled exam period