

POLS 206/306, Spring 2009
SEMINAR IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS
Room 3-11, MW 1:30—2:55 pm

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Office Hours: M, 3-5 pm; R, 12-1 pm & by appt.

This course is an introductory survey of the field of comparative politics. We will review some of the major concepts, themes, issues and approaches that populate a field that seeks to study processes and institutions within countries, and to understand them in relation to broader trends and theories. Another sub-discipline of political science (International Relations) explicitly attends more to interactions among countries; so, while we will not be conducting deep examination of international and global dynamics (especially war and conflict), it is hard—especially with the changing nature of constitutive entities—to see actions and realities at home and abroad as deeply connected in today's world, and indeed, throughout history.

A number of contemporary world problems common to many countries call out to us for greater understanding: these include, but are not limited to, issues of perennial conflict, war, citizenship, participation, trade, poverty, education, inequalities, global organizations, markets, urbanization, social justice, militarization, etc. But, they might take a different form and discursive articulation in different places and at different times. With this expanse and diversity in mind, the course cannot claim to cover all this ground and will try to be mindful of its partiality. It, thus, has four main objectives:

- (1) In light of classic readings in comparative politics, to get an exposure to this field of inquiry: its history, defining puzzles, key theories, guiding explanations and crucial limitations.
- (2) To attend to some pertinent cases with the background of these readings. Some of these will be featured in the course directly, while the rest will be part of your independent research.
- (3) To identify contemporary problems/regions that we would want to address with these tools in a sustained manner, and make an attempt to do so.
- (4) To articulate broader questions/problems that might cut across and possibly reframe existent, popular comparativist takes on various issues, towards a more integrated approach to the study of entities within a global political system.

Following an introduction to method, comparison, and the fundamental terms of comparative politics, these political phenomena will be explored: types of states and their evolution, forms of governance (varieties of democracy and authoritarianism, and other alternatives), political change (through the action of political actors of various kinds at home and abroad), institutions and government infrastructure including expectations and outcomes. You will see that the questions of conflict, social existence and other problems encountered by inhabitants of our world are to be seen as at once products of and determining many of these political phenomena.

The syllabus is divided into modules addressing each of these different topics—each module including assigned readings, as well as days for case studies and analysis. It is our job as a class to take it upon ourselves that all regions of the world are adequately represented in our work, even if and especially when the readings do not directly address them.

TEXTS

Required

Brown, Bernard and Roy Macridis. *Comparative Politics: Notes and Readings (CPNR)*
Soe, Christian. *Annual Editions: Comparative Politics 07/08 (AE)*

EXPECTATIONS & REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and Preparation

You are required to attend class having done the assigned reading and other homework for the day. Please bring the texts to class. Active class participation is expected.

We will follow the college attendance policy. Two unexcused absences will earn you an official warning. Three unexcused absences shall result in suspension.

Written Work

There are **three** components of your written assignments for this course. Please note that there are 10 case days and 17 text days (all days not identified as case days).

First, you will keep a journal in which you will identify (1) 3 problems and questions within every reading/excerpt; (2) 3 current issues anywhere in the world to which that reading can be applied or which the reading can help us think about; (3) a contextual glossary of 3 new terms; (4) 1 important question the reading raises. These journals will be submitted at the beginning of every text day, and will count as your attendance. These will be short, succinct, journals.

Second, on every case day, you will be called on to present on your independent research pertaining to topics discussed on preceding text days. Every student is required to hand in a case report on each case day that includes: (1) a description of the event and issue, (2) sources you have used for your research, (3) an elaboration of the connection to readings, and (4) a thesis or question the study of the case and readings together allows you to articulate.

Please make two copies of all journals (handed in on text days) and case reports (handed in on case days), one for you and one for me.

Third, you will pull together all the journals and case reports and write a term paper that consolidates the main questions and findings from your work through the semester and write a research proposal that seeks to apply those lessons to a country, region or contemporary issue that can be studied in an integrated manner, and detail how you would go about doing that. This portion of the assignment should speak to Objective #4 from the course description above (to articulate broader questions/problems that might cut across and possibly reframe existent, popular comparativist takes on various issues, towards a more integrated approach to the study of entities within a global political system.)

There is no point to late submissions! The requisite number of timely journals and reports must be in to get a grade for that section.

For policies on Academic Honesty and Religious Holidays, please refer to the SRC Catalogue, pp. 31-33. For learning skills, and subsequent accommodations, please get in touch with me, and also contact Rebecca Fiske (rebecca@simons-rock.edu).

Grade Composition

Class Participation + Presentations	10%
15 Journal Submissions on Text Days (out of 17 possible)	40%
8 Case Reports on Case Days (out of 10 possible)	32%
Final Proposal	18%

CLASS SCHEDULE

- All readings marked with an asterisk are on electronic reserve. The rest are available at the Hart Bookstore.

Monday, 19 January	Breaking Ice
	Methods and Comparison
Wednesday, 21 January	<i>CPNR</i> , pp. 1-32
Monday, 26 January	States, Nations, Definitions
	<i>CPNR</i> , pp. 47-52, 84-106
Wednesday, 28 January	<i>CPNR</i> , pp. 108-134
Monday, 2 February	Case Day 1
	<i>AE</i> , #1, #2
	*Moreno et al., "A Failed Index?"
Wednesday, 4 February	Case Day 2
	<i>AE</i> , #26, #27, #28
	Types of Governance, Patterns of Legitimacy
Monday, 9 February	<i>CPNR</i> , pp. 171-174, pp. 238-241
	<i>AE</i> , #4, #6
Wednesday, 11 February	Democracies
	<i>CPNR</i> , pp. 175-201
	<i>AE</i> , #5
Monday, 16 February	Case Day 3
	<i>AE</i> , #8, Unit 2
Wednesday, 18 February	Case Day 4
	<i>AE</i> , #37, #38
Monday, 23 February	NO CLASS—Winter Break
Wednesday, 25 February	NO CLASS—Winter Break
Monday, 2 March	Democratization
	<i>CPNR</i> , pp. 202-222
Wednesday, 4 March	<i>CPNR</i> , pp. 222-236
	<i>AE</i> , #3
Monday, 9 March	Case Day 5
	Cases. # 34
Wednesday, 11 March	Authoritarianism
	<i>CPNR</i> , pp. 241-259
	<i>AE</i> , #29, #30
Monday, 16 March	<i>CPNR</i> , pp. 259-265
	<i>AE</i> , #31, #32, #33
Wednesday, 18 March	Islamism
	<i>CPNR</i> , pp. 267-291
	<i>AE</i> , #39, #40
	Zartman, "Democracy and Islam: A Cultural Dialectic"
Monday, 23 March	"Failed" States
	<i>AE</i> , #35, #36
	*Sandra Mackey, Booknotes on <i>The Reckoning: Iraq and the Legacy of</i>

	<i>Saddam Hussein</i>
	*Robert Rotberg, “Failed States, Collapsed States, Weak States: Causes and Indicators”
	*Staffan Lindberg, “Forms of States, Governance, and Regimes: Reconceptualizing the Prospects for Democratic Consolidation in Africa”
Wednesday, 25 March	Case Day 6
	Parties and the Public
Monday, 30 March	<i>CPNR</i> , pp. 312-334
Wednesday, 1 April	<i>CPNR</i> , pp. 336-351
	<i>AE</i> , #18, #19
Monday, 6 April	NO CLASS—Spring Break
Wednesday, 8 April	NO CLASS—Spring Break
Monday, 13 April	Social Movements and Revolutions
	*McAdam, McCarthy & Zald. “Introduction: Opportunities, Mobilising Structures, and Framing Processes: Toward a Synthetic Comparative Perspective on Social Movements.” p. 1-17
Wednesday, 15 April	<i>CPNR</i> , pp. 135-168
Monday, 20 April	Case Day 7
Wednesday, 22 April	Case Day 8
	Institutions and Infrastructure
Monday, 27 April	<i>CPNR</i> , pp. 354-377
Wednesday, 29 April	*Stoker, Gerry. “From Government to Governance”
	<i>CPNR</i> , pp. 380-407
	<i>AE</i> , #7, #23
Monday, 4 May	Case Day 9
	<i>AE</i> , #41, 42, 43, 44
Wednesday, 6 May	Case Day 10
Wednesday, 13 May	Final Assignments Due