Proseminar in Comparative Analysis

COURSE OUTLINE

Comparative politics is the political science sub-field which seeks to understand political systems and processes through comparative analysis. While this definition may seem straightforward, comparative politics confronts a tension between its historical constitution as a field prior to the Second World War devoted to non-American political systems (i.e., as seen in the appellation, “foreign governments”) and more recent efforts to constitute the field around the notion of comparative method. For many, comparative politics still elicits the idea of area specialists - Europeanists, Latin Americanists, Africanists, and so on - and indeed the field is still largely structured by this logic in many American universities. However, current cutting edge research in comparative politics, whether of a comparative historical or contemporary nature, is generated less by case studies of individual countries or regions than by the development of new methodologies designed to be applicable trans-regionally. We will focus on methodological issues and case materials which have implications for current debates in the field.

The categories that structure the course syllabus reflect the dominant debates and controversies in the comparative politics field today. These debates actually encompass broader philosophical issues about what types of conceptual frameworks produce the best theoretical explanations. We will be less interested in offering judgments on these debates than in laying out the arguments of various conceptual schools and making explicit the methodological criteria that each one employs to arrive at its explanations. In juxtaposing competing paradigms in comparative analysis such as political culture versus political economy, structure versus agency, inductive/atomistic (e.g., rational choice, quantitative) versus deductive/holistic (e.g., neo-Weberian, neo-Marxian), or comparative historical versus “presentist” models, we will search more for integrative possibilities (“family resemblances”) than for mutual exclusiveness.

Students will be expected to prepare not only the core readings but also to familiarize themselves with the recommended readings. Teams of discussants will present short critical analyses of the core readings at the beginning of each session. These presentations should offer probing questions and critical comments intended to stimulate class discussions. Presentations and class participation will constitute 20% of your evaluation. A research design which analyzes a phenomenon from the perspective of at least two competing approaches and which strives for theoretical synthesis will constitute 30% of your evaluation. The design should include an extensive bibliography. A take-home final examination will comprise 50% of your evaluation.

Because a proseminar is meant to introduce the student to ongoing debates and issues in a particular field and thereby better prepare her/him for future research, the focus is on becoming well-versed with a broad range of readings rather than research per se. Students should survey the major political science journals for the latest articles on comparative political analysis as part of the compilation of a bibliography, such as the APSR, World Politics, Comparative Politics, International Organization, Government and Opposition, Comparative Studies in Society and History, Comparative Political Studies, Politics & Society, Public Culture, and area specific journals, e.g., China Quarterly, East European Politics and Societies, International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, Journal of Latin American Studies, and African Studies Review.

Office hours will be held at 512 Hickman Hall: Tues. 10:45-12:00, and Th.11:45-12:30, and by appointment. Tel: (732)932-9322; email: <emdavis@rci.rutgers.edu>
COURSE READINGS

(Available at the Douglass Cooperative Bookstore, Nichol Ave.; Book Manager: contact: Deb Nilson; 932-9017)

Diamond, Larry, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Johns Hopkins)
Lickbach, Mark Irving and Alan S. Zuckerman, eds., *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture and Structure* (Cambridge)
Mahoney, James, and Dietrich Rueschmeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge)
Moore, Barrington, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Beacon)

COURSE OUTLINE

I. INTRODUCTION: EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL CONCERNS (Sept. 7, 14)
   Mahoney and Rueschmeyer, 373-404
   Alasdair MacIntyre, “Is A Science of Comparative Politics Possible?,” in *Against the Self-Images of the Age* (Schocken,1971): 260-279
   Lickbach and Zuckerman, “Research Traditions and Theory in Comparative Politics: An Introduction,” 3-16
   Recommended:
   Gabriel Almond, *A Divided Discipline: Schools and Sects in Political Science* (Sage, 1990)
   Peter Winch, *The Idea of a Social Science and its Relationship to Philosophy* (RKP, 1958), 1-65

II. METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES IN COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS (Sept. 14, 21, 28)
   Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (Basic Books, 1973): 3-30
   Charles Ragin, *Fuzzy-Set Social Science* (Chicago, 2000), 21-42


**Recommended:**

Charles Ragin, *Comparative Method* (California, 1987), 1-84.

Ragin, *Fuzzy Sets*, 203-308

Gary King, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*, 3-63


Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Schucken, 1971)


Green and Shapiro, *Pathologies*, 47-97

### III. APPROACHES TO COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: POLITICAL CULTURE (Oct. 5, 12)

**A. Political Anthropology (Oct. 5)**


David D. Laitin and Aaron Wildavsky, “Political Culture and Political Preferences,” *APSR* 82/2 (June 1988): 589-93


**Recommended:**


**B. Political Psychology (Oct. 5)**


**Recommended:**


C. Political Identity (Oct. 12)
   Mark Howard Ross, “Culture and Identity in Comparative Political Analysis,” in Lickbach and Zuckerman, 42-80

   **Recommended:**

D. Culturalist Perspectives on the State (Oct. 12)
   Joel Migdal, “Studying the State,” in Lickbach and Zuckerman, 208-235
   Eric Davis, *Memories of State: Politics, History and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* (California), 1-33, 271-283

   **Recommended:**
   Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983)

IV. APPROACHES TO COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: POLITICAL ECONOMY (Oct. 19, 26)

A. Modeling Comparative History (Oct. 19, 26)
   Mahoney and Rueschmeyer, 3-40, 305-337
   Moore, 3-39, 413-483
   Ira Katznelson, “Structure and Configuration in Comparative Politics,” in Lickbach and Zuckerman, 81-112
   Ian S. Lustick, “History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and Selection Bias,” *APSR*, 90/3 (1996): 605-618
   Pierson, *Politics in Time*, 1-53

   **Recommended:**

B. Rational Choice in Historical Perspective (Oct. 26)

   **Recommended:**
   Mancur Olson, *The Rise and Decline of Nations* (Yale, 1982)

C. New Institutionalism (Nov. 2)
   Peter Hall, “The Role of Interests, Institutions and Ideas in the Comparative
Political Economy of the Industrialized Nations,” Lickbach and Zuckerman, 174-207
Mahoney and Rueschmeyer, 208-240

Recommended:

D. The State in the Global Economy (Nov. 2)

Recommended:
Michael Shafer, Sectors, States and Social Forces: Toward a New Comparative Political Economy of Development (Cornell, 1994)

V. COLLECTIVE ACTION THEORY (Nov. 9)
Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, “Toward an Integrated Perspective on Social Movements and Revolution,” in Lickbach and Zuckerman, 142-173

Recommended:
Roberto Franzosi, The Puzzle of Strikes: Class and State Strategies in Postwar Italy (Cambridge, 1995)

VI. THEORIES OF THE STATE: COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES (Nov. 9, 16)
A. State-Society Relations (Nov. 4)
Samuel Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, 1-92
Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions* (Cambridge, 1981): 3-43
Timothy Mitchell, “The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics,” *APSR* 85/1 (Mar.1991): 77-95

**Recommended:**

B. The State and the New Institutionalism (Nov. 30)

**Recommended:**

C. State and Civil Society (Nov. 30)

**Recommended:**
Cohen and Arato, *Civil Society*, 492-563
James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (Yale, 1991)
James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State* (Yale, 1999)

VII. NATIONALISM, ETHNICITY, AND GENDER (Nov. 30)
Saskia Sassen, “Towards A Feminist Analytics of the Global Economy,” in *Globalization and Its Discontents*, 82-100

**Recommended:**
813- 440


James Jankowski and Israel Gershoni, *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East* (Columbia, 1997)

VIII. AUTHORITARIANISM, DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS AND POST-TRANSITIONS (Dec. 7)


Recommended:


Seymour Martin Lipset and Gabriel Salman Lenz, “Culture, Corruption and Markets,” in *Culture Matters*, 112-124


IX. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL SUMMATIONS (Dec. 7)


Mark I. Lickbach, “Social Theory and Comparative Politics,” in Lickbach and Zuckerman, 239-276

Alan S. Zuckerman, “Reformulating Explanatory Standards and Advancing Theory in Comparative Politics,” in Lickbach and Zuckerman, 277-310

*Recommended:*


X. SUBMISSION OF RESEARCH DESIGNS, QUESTIONS FOR FINAL EXAMINATION AND COURSE EVALUATION (Dec. 11)