

Honors Seminar in Comparative Politics

Department of Politics
University of Virginia

PLCP 4990, Fall 2017
Tu 3:30-6 p.m., Ruffner Hall 125

Professor Jonah Schulhofer-Wohl
S283 Gibson Hall
Email: j.sw@virginia.edu

Overview

As its name suggests, comparative politics as a field implies a method in addition to its substantive focus. This seminar will introduce you to contemporary – and often cutting-edge – research in comparative politics, foundational concepts for comparative analysis, and ongoing methodological debates. By the end of the semester you will be a literate and critical reader of academic research in this field. As important, you will be able to apply your knowledge of comparative politics and its analytical toolkit to evaluate arguments you encounter in a diverse range of settings, including other classes, social scientific studies of topics that interest you, popular writing on history and current events, and discussions of public policy.

Traditionally comparative politics consisted of the study of foreign countries' domestic politics. This seminar will take a broad view of the subject, in three ways. First, although scholars often treat the study of the United States – and sometimes other home countries – as distinct from comparative politics, we will consider politics in the United States as fitting squarely under our purview. Second, research tended to exclude international relations, which professionally developed on its own as a field. The most obvious consequence was that scholars in each field paid lip service to the clear interactions between the two realms but did not study those interactions as such. Much progress has been made to end this artificial separation. But the split also had the less-appreciated effect of pigeon-holing the study of foreign policy and leaders' behavior within international relations. Although this course will not cover such topics directly, we may well discuss them as they relate to our (select) topics of study. Third, for a good portion of modern political science's history, politics was taken to mean government, and if a somewhat more expansive perspective was desired, the economic, social, cultural, psychological, and other factors that influenced its operation. This is no longer the case, and we will instead proceed from the current understanding that political science is rightly concerned with politics in its broadest sense – the creation, use, and effects of power in human affairs.

The semester is organized around four central themes in comparative politics: the construction of states and the delimitation of their citizenry, with some attention to the various types of leaders involved in these processes; how dictatorships operate and transitions between this form of government and democracy – in both directions; political parties' interactions with society, through or in competition with government institutions; and the breakdown of existing politics in civil war or periods of political violence, with organizations' and individuals' attendant efforts to construct new forms of order.

A single semester cannot do justice to the vast range of topics studied in comparative politics. Many that you hope to study are undoubtedly missing from this syllabus. To remedy this issue, I plan to work with each student individually to develop a reading list (or lists) on topics of particular interest, with an eye towards exploring potential questions for your honors thesis.

The course outline below lists required reading and optional, “recommended” reading, which offers additional information or alternative viewpoints on methodological questions. You must complete the assigned reading and come to class prepared to discuss it. For any 6 of the 11 classes from September 12 through November 28 you must write a 2-pp.* critical review paper on the required reading. As a final assignment, you must write a 5 pp.* research design paper drawing on the reading for our final class on December 5. You will first bring an exploratory memo to that class, which will be run as a workshop on these memos. You must then hand in your final paper by 5 p.m. on Friday, December 15.

* Papers must be single-spaced in 12 pt Times New Roman font, with margins no greater than 1.25 inches on the sides and 1 inch on the top and bottom.

Reading

The following books are required. Many are available as e-books from the UVa library. The others will be available on reserve at Clemons Library or, in the case of the unpublished manuscript, on Collab. I recommend purchasing any hard copies using the Bookfinder.com search engine, or via Abebooks.com or Amazon.com.

Polanyi, Karl. 2001 [1944]. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Boston: Beacon Press. [E-book](#).

Herbst, Jeffrey. 2014. *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. 2nd edition. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Lawrence, Adria. 2013. *Imperial Rule and the Politics of Nationalism*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Teele, Dawn. 2017. *Political Origins of the Female Franchise*. Unpublished ms., University of Pennsylvania.

Svolik, Milan. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mickey, Robert. *Paths Out of Dixie: The Democratization of Authoritarian Enclaves in America's Deep South*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [E-book](#).

Berman, Sheri. 1998. *The Social Democratic Moment: Ideas and Politics in the Making of Interwar Europe*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. [E-book](#).

Cammett, Melani. 2014. *Compassionate Communalism: Welfare and Sectarianism in Lebanon*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. [E-book](#).

- Gingerich, Daniel W. 2014. *Political Institutions and Party-Directed Corruption in South America: Stealing for the Team*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Dancygier, Rafaela. 2010. *Immigration and Conflict in Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press. [E-book](#).
- Arjona, Ana. 2016. *Rebelocracy: Social Order in the Colombian Civil War*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Balcells, Laia. 2017. *Rivalry and Revenge: The Politics of Violence during Civil War*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Finkel, Evgeny. 2017. *Ordinary Jews: Choice and Survival during the Holocaust*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.]
- Lister, Charles. 2016. *The Syrian Jihad: Al-Qaeda, the Islamic State and the Evolution of an Insurgency*. New York: Oxford University Press.

All other readings are posted in an e-reserve on the class's Collab website under "Resources," either as a pdf or link to an e-book.

Expectations and Other Policies

Attendance, Participation, and Late assignments

Your attendance and participation is required at all class meetings. Take careful note also of the deadlines listed on this syllabus. Late papers will not be accepted.

If you expect to miss class or an assignment deadline due to a legitimate reason beyond your control (e.g., scheduled athletic events), contact me via e-mail at least two weeks prior. I will notify you about whether it is possible to reschedule the assignment and/or provide you with the details of any make-up requirements for a missed class.

Arrangements to hand in late assignments without prior approval will be made only should you have a documented medical or family emergency.

Academic integrity

Please familiarize yourself with [the University's Honor Code](#). If at any point during the semester you are unsure about whether you are in compliance with it, contact me as soon as possible, i.e. before you begin an assignment or while you are working on it, rather than when or after you hand it in.

Communication

I will respond to e-mails within 24 hours. Please include the text "[PLCP 4990]" (without quotes) in the subject line to ensure that I receive your email.

COURSE SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTION

August 22: The Study of Comparative Politics

Hobbes, Thomas. 2009 [1651] *Leviathan*. The Floating Press. Chs. 13 & 17, pp.174-82, 239-47.

[E-book](#).

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 1, "The Science in Social Science," pp.3-33, esp. 7-12, 28-33.

Recommended

Sartori, Giovanni. 1970. "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics." *American Political Science Review* 64(4): 1033-53.

Macridis, Roy C. 1968. "Comparative Politics and the Study of Government: The Search for Focus." *Comparative Politics* 1(1): 79-90.

August 29: Macro-History/Politics

Thelen, Kathleen and James Mahoney. 2015. "Comparative-Historical Analysis in Contemporary Political Science." In Thelen and Mahoney, eds. *Advances in Comparative-Historical Analysis*. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp.3-36

Polanyi, Karl. 2001 [1944]. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Boston: Beacon Press. [E-book](#).

Recommended

Sewell, William H., Jr. 1967. "Marc Bloch and the Logic of Comparative History." *History and Theory* 6(2): 208-218.

Ragin, Charles. C. 2014 [1987]. *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Ch. 1, pp.1-18. [E-book](#).

PART 1: STATES, LEADERS, & CITIZENS

September 5: State-Building

Elster, Jon. 1989. *Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1, "Mechanisms," pp.3-10.

Ragin, Charles. C. 2014 [1987]. *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chs. 2 & 3, pp.19-52. [E-book](#).

Herbst, Jeffrey. 2014. *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. 2nd edition. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Recommended

Przeworski, Adam and Henry Teune. 1970. *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*. New York: Wiley. Introduction and Ch. 1, pp.3-30.

September 12: Identity and Nationalism

Lawrence, Adria. 2013. *Imperial Rule and the Politics of Nationalism*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Marx, Anthony W. 1998. *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of South Africa, the United States, and Brazil*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Introduction, pp.1-25, and 27-8, 81-3, 264-6, and 267-78. Skim pp.120-57; 217-49.

Recommended

Fearon, James D. 1991. "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science." *World Politics* 43(2):169-95.

Przeworski, Adam and Henry Teune. 1970. *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*. New York: Wiley. Ch. 2, pp.31-46.

September 19: Boundaries of Citizenship

Teele, Dawn. 2017. *Political Origins of the Female Franchise*. Unpublished ms., University of Pennsylvania.

PART 2: DICTATORSHIP & DEMOCRACY

September 26:

Svolik, Milan. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Recommended

Green, Donald and Ian Shapiro. 1994. *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Preface and Chs. 1-3, pp.ix-xi, 1-46. [E-book](#).

Elster, Jon. 2000. "Rational Choice History: A Case of Excessive Ambition." *American Political Science Review* 94(3): 685–695.

October 3: Reading Day (No Class)

October 10: Transitions I – Redistribution and Political Competition

Ansell, Ben and David Samuels. 2010. "Inequality and Democratization: A Contractarian Approach." *Comparative Political Studies* 43(12):1543-74.

Mickey, Robert. *Paths Out of Dixie: The Democratization of Authoritarian Enclaves in America's Deep South*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [E-book](#).

October 17: Transitions II: Ideology and Elites

Berman, Sheri. 1998. *The Social Democratic Moment: Ideas and Politics in the Making of Interwar Europe*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. [E-book](#).

PART 3: POLITICAL PARTIES & SOCIETY

October 24: Replacing the State

Cammett, Melani. 2014. *Compassionate Communalism: Welfare and Sectarianism in Lebanon*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. [E-book](#).

October 31: Capturing the State

Gingerich, Daniel W. 2014. *Political Institutions and Party-Directed Corruption in South America: Stealing for the Team*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

November 7: Exploiting Social Cleavages

Brass, Paul R. 1996. "Introduction: Discourses of Ethnicity, Communalism, and Violence." In Brass, ed. *Riots and Pogroms*. New York: New York University Press, pp.1-32.

Dancygier, Rafaela. 2010. *Immigration and Conflict in Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press. [E-book](#).

PART 4: CIVIL WAR & VIOLENCE

November 14: Governing

Arjona, Ana. 2016. *Rebelocracy: Social Order in the Colombian Civil War*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

November 21: Killing

Balcells, Laia. 2017. *Rivalry and Revenge: The Politics of Violence during Civil War*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

November 28: Surviving

Finkel, Evgeny. 2017. *Ordinary Jews: Choice and Survival during the Holocaust*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

CONCLUSION

December 5: Research Design Workshop

Lister, Charles. 2016. *The Syrian Jihad: Al-Qaeda, the Islamic State and the Evolution of an Insurgency*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Friday, December 15: Final papers due at 5 p.m.