

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 5324**  
**SEMINAR IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS**  
**FALL 2005**

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This course is designed as a “gatekeeper” or “field seminar.” Its purpose is to take in the broad sweep of comparative politics, to introduce you, that is, to both the major approaches and theoretical issues in the subfield. This is no small task, as comparative politics is an immense domain. In fact, its practitioners do not even agree on what it encompasses.

Generally, there are three types of studies that parade under the banner of comparative politics. The first is simply the study of foreign governments; this is indefensible, of course, from any type of social science standpoint. The second is methodological. Comparison is viewed as one of the methods used by political scientists to generate and test theory. For many, this is a second best method, with statistical studies always being preferable. For others, though, including the founders of American political science (and even Aristotle), rigorous comparative inquiry is the *sine qua non* of political science. Hence, we get detailed discussions of *how* to do inquiry. The third group constitutes works that focus on substantive theory development. Some of the best of these efforts take on grand theory: why revolutions occur, the political bases of economic growth, the character of elite rule, the preconditions for democracy, and so forth. Others are more limited in scope, but still important.

In this course, we will devote ourselves to the second and third of these categories, and continually discuss how they interact. That is, are the methods applied by a scholar appropriate to the research problem under scrutiny? Are the substantive conclusions persuasive? Are there other, alternative, explanations that might fit the proffered evidence better? Or, is there evidence that is missing? If so, can it be obtained?

Requirements

Evaluation will be based on class participation, a presentation, five essays, and a final exam. The values for these are 20%, 10%, 30%, and 40% respectively.

Because this seminar is designed to survey a broad swath of literature rather than taking up an intensive examination of a particular body of literature, we will concentrate on shorter writing projects rather than a major research paper. On the five occasions that

we read an entire book, I will give you some essay topics the week before. These papers should be 5-7 pages responding to the question you are assigned.

Each student in the seminar will also be responsible for making an oral presentation of his/her essay topic during one class meeting, and the leading the discussion around that topic.

### Books for purchase

Russell Dalton, *Democratic Challenges, Democratic Choices: The Erosion of Political Support in Advanced Industrial Democracies* (2004).

Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (2000).

Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (2004).

Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis* (2004).

Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (1993).

### Attendance policy

There is no rigid attendance policy (aside from the general university regulation mandating a failing grade if absences exceed 25% of classes). However, missing seminar classes leaves enormous gaps, as each class is a week's worth of work. Moreover, you miss out on a vital element of graduate education, namely sharing and critiquing ideas. Of course, too, it has to affect your participation grade.

### Calendar and reading assignments

August 25	Introduction
September 1	An overview of comparative politics
	Peter Mair, "Comparative Politics: An Overview," in Robert Goodin and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, eds., <i>A New Handbook of Political Science</i> (1996).
	Charles Ragin, <i>The Comparative Method</i> (1987), Chap. 1.
	Jan W. van Deth, "Equivalence in Comparative Politics Research," in Jan W. van Deth, ed., <i>Comparative Politics: The Problem of Equivalence</i> (1998).
September 8	Modernization

David Apter, *The Politics of Modernization* (1965), Chap. 1.

Shari Berman, "Modernization in Historical Perspective: The Case of Imperial Germany," *World Politics*, April 2001, 431-462.

September 15                      Democratization

Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (1991), Chaps. 1 and 6.

September 22                      Democratization and economic development

Gordon White, "Constructing a Democratic Developmental State," in Mark Robinson and Grodon White, eds., *The Democratic Developmental State: Politics and Institutional Design* (1998).

Adrian Leftwich "Forms of the Democratic Developmental State: Democratic Practices and Development Capacity," in Robinson and White, eds., *Democratic Developmental State*.

September 29                      How linear is development?

Bruce Magnuson and John Clark, "Understanding Democratic Survival and Democratic Failure in Africa: Insights from Divergent Democratic Experiments in Benin and Congo," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, July 2005, 552-582.

Eva Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East," *Comparative Politics*, January 2004, 139-148.

Bill Kissane, "Democratization, State Formation, and Civil War in Finland and Ireland: A Reflection on the Democratic Peace Hypothesis," *Comparative Political Studies*, October 2004, 969-985.

October 6                              Comparative history as comparative social science

Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (1979), Chaps. 1 and 2.

October 13                            Path dependency

Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time*

October 20                            Rational choice theory and comparative politics

Gerardo Munck, "Game Theory and Comparative Politics: New Perspectives and Old Concerns," *World Politics*, January 2001, 173-204.

Kaare Strom, "Parliamentary Democracy and Delegation," in Kaare Strom, Wolfgang Muller, and Torbjorn Bergman, eds., *Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies* (2003).

October 27                                      Comparing mass political beliefs in advanced industrial democracies

Russell Dalton, *Democratic Challenges, Democratic Choices*

November 3                                      Comparing public policies (Using labor market policy as an example)

Thomas Janoski, "Direct State Intervention in the Labor Market: The Explanation of Active Labor Market Policy from 1950 to 1988 in Social Democratic, Conservative, and Liberal Regimes," in Thomas Janoski and Alexander Hicks, eds., *The Comparative Political Economy of the Welfare State* (1994).

Giuliano Bonoli, "Social Policy through Labor Markets: Understanding National Differences in the Provision of Economic Security to Wage Earners," *Comparative Political Studies*, November 2003, 1007-1030.

November 10                                      State autonomy

Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*

November 17                                      Political culture

Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*

November 24                                      Thanksgiving

December 1                                      Religion and comparative politics

Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*

Final exam as scheduled