Political Science G6411

COMPARATIVE POLITICS SURVEY I

FALL, 2011

1302 International Affairs Building
Mondays, 6:10-8:00

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 2:30-3:30 and by appointment

OVERVIEW

This seminar is part of a two-course sequence that surveys major questions that motivate contemporary research in comparative politics. The course is designed to introduce PhD students to the modern subfield, and to help prepare them for success on the comparative comprehensive exam. The course should also help students to develop skills that are necessary to become successful teachers and scholars in the comparative subfield.

This first part of the sequence focuses on the "building blocks" of many arguments in comparative politics: institutions, culture, parties, groups, and regime types. The second course, next semester, will focus on central substantive issues motivating the subfield, including violence, development, stability, growth, inequality, and redistribution. Either course can satisfy the "three field survey" requirement in the PhD program.

This course is intended for PhD students preparing for qualifying exams and enrollment is limited. Doctoral students will be given priority and the requirements of the PhD program will be considered if it is necessary to establish priority among them.

REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

The requirements are as follows:

*Class Participation – 20% of the final grade.* Students are expected to read the assigned works closely and will be graded on both their knowledge of the material and their contributions in the seminar discussions.

*3 Response Papers – 10% of the final grade each.* Students must submit one paper during each of the following three sections of the course: (1) September 17-October 1, (2) October 8-29, (3) November 12-December 3. Students can choose any week during these periods to write their paper. Papers must be posted on Courseworks by noon the day of
class. Response papers must focus on the substantive topic of that week's readings (so, for example, if you turn in a paper on September 17 it must focus on the culture and divided societies. The response papers are not summaries of readings. Instead, good response papers advance an original argument based on thinking about the readings. In so doing, students should demonstrate a clear understanding of more than one reading for that week. For example, a student writing on "Institutions" (Oct. 1) might critique the use of coordination games as metaphors for institutions, or might argue that path dependence arguments are unhelpful because []. Students will be expected to read their colleagues’ papers before class. Papers are limited to two double-spaced pages with 12 point font.

Practice Comp – December 10. 50% of the final grade. In the final class session students will have one hour to answer one out of three questions posed. The three potential questions will be circulated in advance and students will be expected to do some reading of relevant research that is not on the syllabus. Further information will be provided in class.

Books to be purchased. Students should purchase the following books:


September 10. Introduction

Background readings:

Shepsle, Kenneth A. and Mark S. Bonchak, Analyzing Politics: Rationality, Behavior and Institutions, (chapters 5, 8, 9)


September 17: Culture and divided societies


**September 24: Collective Action, Free riding and Mobilization**

Mancur Olson, *The Rise and Decline of Nations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), chapter 2


October 1: Institutions


October 8: Endogenous institutions (and the problems associated with understanding the effects of institutions)


Edward Glaeser, Rafael La Porta, Florencio Lopez-de-Silanes, and Andrei Shleifer. 2004. “Do Institutions Cause Growth?” Journal of Economic Growth, September,


Mares, Isabela and Lucas Leemann. 2012. "The Adoption of Proportional
October 15. The State


October 22. Autocracy

Barbara Geddes, "What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1999): 115–44.


October 29: Democracy


Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy*, chapters 1-3


**November 5: NO CLASS**

**November 12: Parties and Elections**


**November 19: Presidentialism, Parliamentarism and Federalism**

Huber, John "The Vote of Confidence in Parliamentary Democracies," *American Political Science Review*, 1996

Tsebelis, G "Veto players and law production in parliamentary democracies: An empirical analysis," *American Political Science Review* 1999 v.93(3)


Rodden, Jonathan, *Hamilton's Paradox: The promise and peril of fiscal federalism* (chapter 4)

**November 26: Interest groups**

Mancur Olson, *The Rise and Decline of Nations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), chapter 3


**December 3. Delegation to bureaucracies and judges**


Vanberg, Georg. 2011. •“Substance vs. Procedure: Constitutional Enforcement

December 10: Final "comprehensive exam"