

POLS - 3401 Introduction to Comparative Politics (Fall 2016)

Instructor: Amr Adly

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Class times: Sunday and Wednesday 10:00-11:20 am

Office Hours: Sundays 12-2 pm

Office: 2011

Class: HUSS C150

Course description

Comparative politics is one of the three constituent parts of political science, alongside political theory and international relations. It has traditionally hosted a great theoretical and conceptual diversity in approaches, methodologies and research topics. Each theoretical tradition has been based on a number of basic assumptions about the nature of political action and hence the construction of the political phenomena under study. Principal approaches varied to include culture, rational choice, structuralism and functionalist analysis and institutionalism. These approaches sometimes compete and some other times converse, converge or combine in various ways.

Comparative politics has also developed an extensive list of political themes and research topics ranging from the state to society and political economy. The state has been one traditional focal point of study of comparative politics together with all that is related to its structures and practices of authority like regimes and governments, political parties, electoral politics, civilian and military bureaucracies etc. Conversely, society assumed an increasingly importance in the last decades entailing the study of a great variety of phenomena like civil society organizations, social movements, class struggle, interest and advocacy groups and organizations and the politics of contention. Beside state and society, political economy and development have also come to constitute a distinctive sub-discipline of comparative politics that harbored a great diversity of approaches and research agendas.

Course objectives

The course aims at achieving three goals:

The first is a comprehensive introduction of political science students to the approaches and concepts of comparative politics. Comprehensiveness implies the thorough covering of a diversity of approaches that constitute the body of comparative politics and through which socio-political phenomena are constructed. It also includes the critical engagement with a rich literature on the topics and themes that exemplify these approaches and concepts.

The second goal is to enable the students to acquire the analytical tools of comparative politics in a way adequate enough to analyze, critique and deconstruct what they receive through the course and the phenomena they come across in the real world, both locally as well as globally. Comparative politics after all is a body of social knowledge and it thus should contribute to the awareness and understanding of its students of the world around them.

Finally, the third goal is the development of the students' abilities to apply the analytical tools and approaches in the research they develop whether through this course (papers, presentations and exams) or in future academic engagements.

Requirements and assessment

- You are expected to attend and participate in class. Even though attendance is NOT graded, it will be taken every class.
 - According to university rules, if you miss more than three weeks of classes, **for whatever reason or excuse**, you will receive an (F) in the course.
 - It is your responsibility to make sure that you are marked present for the day or withdraw from the course if you have too many absences.
 - **You should make it to class on time (10 sharp). If you arrive late, you will NOT be allowed to attend. No excuses!**
- All readings on the syllabus are required to complete the course.
- There will be one mid-term and a final examination.
- You are required to submit a paper towards the end of the course. The paper will be a topic of your own choice provided that you apply what you learned in the course. Word count should be around 3000 words. The exact date of submission will be communicated by email.
 - **No late submissions will be accepted or graded regardless of the excuse.**
 - Do NOT cite sources from the internet (e.g. Wikipedia, blog posts etc.) Rely only on academic sources that have been refereed. Lecture notes are also unacceptable as are dictionaries and encyclopedias.
- There will be group presentations through the course on assigned topics. Groups will be made up of 5 to 6 students. Presentations should be based on teamwork, good research and the applying of the themes and tools learned in class. The assessment will be based on the quality of research and presentation skills, both group and individual. The exact schedule

and topics of the presentations will be communicated by email in due course.

- Assessment will be as follows:

Participation:	10 per cent
Group Presentation:	15 per cent
Paper:	25 per cent
Mid term:	25 per cent
Final:	25 per cent

The grade cut-offs will be as follows: A (94 and above), A- (90-93), B+(87-89), B (84-86), B- (80-83), C+ (77-79), C (74-76), C- (70-73), D+ (61-69), D (50-60).

- Cheating and Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assessment item. Heavier penalties may apply.

Classes

Class 1 (Sunday September 4th): Introduction to the course

Class 2 (Wednesday Sept. 7th): What is comparative politics?

What is Comparative Politics and what are its domains of interest? Lim, Ch.1 pp.1-30

Class 3 (Sunday Sept. 11th): What is comparative politics? (Cont.)

Theories in Comparative Politics, Social Mechanisms, and Methods. Lim, Ch.2,3 pp.31-103 & Lichbach and Zuckerman, Ch.3 pp.72-95

Class 4 (Sunday Sept. 18th): What is comparative politics? (Cont.)

Almond, G. and Powell, B. and Mundt, R. 1993. Comparative politics : a theoretical framework

The state, government and political regime

Class 5 (Wednesday Sept. 21st): What is the state?

Skocpol, T., Evans, P. and Rueschemeyer, D., 1999. Bringing the state back in. Cambridge.

Class 6 (Sunday Sept. 25th): Democracies

Coppedge, M., Lindberg, S. and Gerring, J., 1990. Varieties of Democracy. Studies in Comparative International Development, 25(1), pp.51-72.

Class 7 (Wednesday Sept. 28th): Non-democracies

Linz, J., 1993. Authoritarianism. The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993)

Class 8 (Sunday October 2nd): Non-democracies (cont.)

Linz, J.J., 1975. Totalitarian and authoritarian regimes. Handbook of political science, chapter one

Class 9 (Wednesday Oct. 5th): Party politics

Lipset, S.M. and Rokkan, S., 1967. Cleavage structures, party systems, and voter alignments: an introduction

Class 10 (Sunday Oct. 9th): Government types

Constitutional Government and Institutional Design. Kenneth and Jan, Ch.4,5 pp.71-103

Class 11 (Wednesday Oct. 12th): The military

Springborg, R. Arab Militaries in Lynch, M. ed., 2014. The Arab uprisings explained: New contentious politics in the Middle East. Columbia University Press

Political change

Class 12 (Sunday Oct. 16th): Political change

Huntington, S.P., 2006. Political order in changing societies. Yale University Press, chapter one

Class 13 (Wednesday Oct. 19th): Revolutions

Skocpol, T., 1979. States and social revolutions: A comparative analysis of France, Russia and China. Cambridge University Press, chapter one

Society

Class 14 (Sunday Oct. 23rd): Ethnicity, identity and ethnic conflict

McGarry, J. and O'leary, B., 2013. The politics of ethnic conflict regulation: Case studies of protracted ethnic conflicts. Routledge, chapter one

Class 15 (Wednesday Oct. 26th): Class analysis

Wright, E.O., 1997. Class counts: Comparative studies in class analysis. Cambridge University Press.

MIDTERM EXAM (Sunday 30th of October – Class 16)

Class 17 (Wednesday November 2nd): Civil society

Edwards, M., 2009. Civil society. Polity, chapter one

Class 18 (Sunday Nov. 6th): Religion and politics

Stepan, A.C., 2000. Religion, democracy, and the "Twin Tolerations". Journal of Democracy, 11(4), pp.37-57.

Class 19 (Wednesday Nov. 9th): Gender politics

Weldon, S.L., 2006. The structure of intersectionality: A comparative politics of gender. Politics & Gender, 2(02), pp.235-248

Class 20 (Sunday Nov. 13th): Social movements

Della Porta, D. and Diani, M., 2009. Social movements: An introduction. John Wiley & Sons, Chapter 1

Class 21 (Wednesday Nov. 16th): Social movements (Cont.)

Della Porta, D. and Diani, M., 2009. Social movements: An introduction. John Wiley & Sons, Chapter 2

Political Economy and Development

Class 22 (Sunday Nov. 20th)

Caporaso, J.A. and Levine, D.P., 1992. Theories of political economy. Cambridge University Press, chapter one

Class 23 (Wednesday Nov. 23rd): Developmental state literature

Evans, P.B., 1995. Embedded autonomy: states and industrial transformation (Vol. 25). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, chapter one

Class 24 (Wednesday Nov. 27th): Regime type and development

Lipset, S.M., 1959. Some social requisites of democracy: Economic development and political legitimacy. American political science review, 53(01), pp.69-105

Class 25 (Sunday Nov. 30th): Economic and political transformations

Stark, D. and Bruszt, L., 1998. Postsocialist pathways: Transforming politics and property in East Central Europe. Cambridge University Press, Chapter one

Class 26 (Sunday December 4th): Economic and political transformations (Cont.)

Walder, A.G., 1995. Local governments as industrial firms: an organizational analysis of China's transitional economy. American Journal of sociology, pp.263-301.

Class 27 (Wednesday Dec. 7th): Rentier states

Karl, T.L., 1997. The paradox of plenty: Oil booms and petro-states (Vol. 26). University of California Press, chapter one

Class 28 (Sunday Dec. 11th): Comparative economic systems

Coates, D. ed., 2005. Varieties of capitalism, varieties of approaches). New York:
Palgrave Macmillan, chapter one

Class 29 (Wednesday Dec. 14): Warp-up session

FINAL EXAM