This seminar is a graduate-level introduction to the literature in comparative politics. It can serve as a survey or review for advanced students as well. Because the key theories and concepts are also key political science concepts and theories, it is not exclusively intended for those majoring or minoring in comparative politics; all are welcome. It is not a course in methods or methodologies of research. The focus will be on concept formation, theoretical approaches, theory formulation, and competing theories, not on theory testing or verification.

Requirements:

(1) In order to cover as much material as time allows, students will be expected to participate fully in seminar discussion – often in concise oral reports on the readings and controversies within them. These will be assigned in advance. These reports do not, however, excuse those who are not presenting that day from doing the required reading and being prepared to join in the discussion.

(2) Three short papers (the length of an average answer to a first exam question) will be assigned. The due dates of those papers are: October 10, November 14, and December 13.

(3) A take-home examination, due December 19, to be discussed.

The course grade will weight each of these 3 equally (33 percent each), but with upward adjustment for improvement over the semester.

Books:

Most of the readings for this course will be articles or chapters from books, and therefore you will have to rely on the library (everything is now on Blackboard – the password will be given at the first meeting of the seminar; thus, some are books on reserve, some non-circulating annuals and journals, and some articles in on-line journals).
There are no required texts for this course. Many will be worth purchasing for your personal library, but that should be an individual decision. I have, however, ordered copies of the Lichbach and Zuckerman volume, which you will read in its entirety, and, for the same reason, Polanyi and O’Donnell and Schmitter. They are available at Barnes and Noble Textbook Division on Fifth Avenue at 18th street.


It would also be worth your time to keep an eye on the tables of contents of the major journals in the field, look each year at the very useful essays in *Annual Review in Political Science*, and read book reviews regularly (e.g., in *Perspectives in Politics* and the review essays in *World Politics*) so as to keep in touch with theoretical trends and debates.

**Class Schedule and Readings**

**September 5  Introduction**

*[No class September 12]*

**September 19  Scope of the Field and the Roles of Theory and Concepts**

*What is the primary subject matter of comparative politics? Are there major debates within the subfield? How would you explain the current organization of subfields in comparative politics? Evolution of the field. What is the role of a concept? What is theory? What is conceptual stretching and why does it occur?*

**Required reading**


Further reading:


Brian Barry, Sociologists, Economists, and Democracy (1978)


September 26 Theoretical Approaches

What is an “approach”? What is the difference between a theory, a research approach, and a research method? Does it matter what approach one uses? Identify four distinct approaches and their defining assumptions and concepts.

Required reading:


Paul Pierson and Theda Skocpol, “Historical Institutionalism in Contemporary Political Science,” in Katznelson and Milner, eds., Political Science: State of the Discipline

Further reading:


T.S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (1970)
Donald P. Green and Ian Shapiro, Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science (1994), chs. 1-3, 8 (pp. 1-46, 179-204)

[No class October 3]

October 10 The State

What is the primary unit of analysis in comparative politics? Is the state a concept or a type? What are the main theories on the origins of the modern state? What is the debate about the western (or European) bias of the concept of the state? What is the difference between state and nation, and why does it matter?

Required reading:


Thomas Ertman, Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe (1997), ch. 1 (pp. 1-34).


Mahmood Mamdani, Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism (1996), chapters 1 and 8, pages 3-34 and 285-301.


**Further reading:**


Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (1979): chs. 1, 4, conclusion (3-43, 161-173, 284-293).


Reinhard Bendix, *Nation-Building and Citizenship* (1964)


October 17  
**Regime Type: Concepts and Explanations**

*What is a regime in comparative politics (as distinct from international relations theory)? What are the standard typologies of regimes? What is the purpose of such a typology? What are the characteristics of democracy? Of non-democratic regimes? What is the difference between authoritarian and totalitarian regimes? What is dictatorship? Is the distinction between parliamentary and presidential regimes actually a regime difference? What are the “waves” of democratization?*

**Required reading:**


**Further Reading:**

Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (1947)

Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1973)


October 24  Explanations of regime type

Comparative politics is primarily a study of variation – why do regimes differ? Why do governments or their policies differ? Does it matter? Why are some countries democracies, others authoritarian regimes? What types of democracy are there, and how does one explain these patterned differences? The rise of fascism in the 1930s gave particular impetus to the key texts in this literature on regime type: what are the origins of fascism, or, why did democracy collapse?

David Collier and Ruth Collier, Shaping the Political Arena (1991), overview, introduction, and conclusion (pp. 1-55, 745-774).

Further reading:
October 31 Breakdown in regimes (and “transitions”)

What causes regimes to break down? What is Polanyi’s classic statement of the problem? Democratization; transition to vs. consolidation of democracy.

Required readings:

Karl Polanyi, The Great Transformation (1944)
Rudolf Heberle, From Democracy to Nazism: a regional case study on political parties in Germany (1945; 1970), chapters 4-5, pp. 90-127.
Lisa Anderson, ed., Transitions to Democracy (1999), articles by Dankwart Rustow and by Stephan Haggard and Robert Kaufman [OR, access the original in Comparative Politics 29: 3 (April 1997)].

Further Reading:

Nancy Bermeo, Ordinary Citizens in Extraordinary Times: Citizens in the Breakdown of Democracy (2003), chapters 1 and 7 (pp. 7-20, 221-56).
Adam Przeworski, Democracy and the Market (1990)
Adam Przeworski, Sustainable Democracy (1995)
Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, eds., The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes (Johns Hopkins UP: 1978), 3 volumes.
November 7 Causes of Regime Stability

The stability of systems is a major avenue of political inquiry. Indeed, one of the oldest questions of political science is that of order. Identify four theories (or more) of stable democracy. Can these theories be extended to all political systems? If not, what alternatives for non-democratic systems can you propose? Much of the work on “mechanics of democratic rule” has, in fact, been done on the American political system; is it applicable in comparative politics (to variation among countries)?

Required reading:

Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (1968): chapter 1 (pp. 1-92).
Arend Lijphart, Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in 36 Countries (1999), chapters 1-4, 16-17 (pp. 1-61 and 275-309). (Read the other chapters if you wish detail on different institutions of democratic government.)

Further reading:

Jon Elster, Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences: chs. 11 (Equilibrium), 12 (Social Norms), and 16 (Social Change) (pp. 101-123,159-171).
G. Bingham Powell, Contemporary Democracies: participation, stability, and violence (1982), introduction, ch. 4, and conclusion (pp. 1-11, 54-73, 201-228).
Philippe C. Schmitter and Gerhard Lehmbruch, eds., Trends toward Corporatist Intermediation (1979), chs. 3, 7 (pp. 63-94, 185-212); recommended, ch. 9 (pp. 231-270).
Ronald Inglehart, *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society* (1990)

**November 14 and 21**

Collective Action

The “problem” of collective action; identity; citizenship; collective choice; organized interests; coordination failure; revolution; social movements; mass politics; civil society; civil war.

**Required readings:**

Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, “Toward an Integrated Perspective on Social Movements and Revolution,” in Lichbach and Zuckerman, eds., pp. 142-173.


(and if you wish, James Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (1976), chs. 1 and 2)


**Further reading:**


Sidney Verba, Norman Nie, and Jae-on Kim, Participation and Political Equality: A Seven Nation Comparison (1978).
Donald L. Horowitz, Ethnic Groups in Conflict (1985)
Ashutosh Varshney, Ethnic Conflict and Civil Life: Hindus and Muslims in India (2001)
Sidney Tarrow, The New Transnational Activism (2005)

November 28 The Role of the State in Development

The relation between regime type and development is not uniform. How can one explain the variation in economic development and growth among countries? This question focuses on the independent role of the state, particularly in response to international economic conditions, and the class coalitions or alliances on which it is based. This question also reengaged old questions about the autonomy of the state to act – a Marxist question primarily but increasingly translated into a Weberian one.

Required readings:

Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Falletto, Dependency and Development in Latin America (1979), preface to English edition, introduction, ch. 6, conclusion, and postscriptum (preface and pp. 1-7, 149-216). (You would be well rewarded by reading the entire book; it is not long.)
Peter Evans, Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation (1995), chs. 1-3 and 10 (pp. 3-73 and 227-250).

Chalmers Johnson, MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy (1982), chs. 1 and 9 (pp. 3-34 and 305-324).


Further reading:

Michael Ross, “Does Oil Hinder Democracy?” World Politics 53:3 (April 2001). (for the concept of “rentier state” as well as his careful empirical testing of the question)
Ester Boserup, Women’s Role in Economic Development (1970)
Gøsta Esping-Andersen, Politics against Markets (1985)
Peter Hall, Governing the Economy: The Politics of State Intervention in Britain and France (1986)
Paul Pierson, Dismantling the Welfare State? (1994)

December 5 The Global Context
States exist in a state system and a global economy. What is the impact on domestic politics and policy? Is “globalization” leading to convergence (political, institutional, economic, cultural)?

Required readings:


Further reading:


Helen V. Milner, Interests, Institutions, and Information: Domestic Politics and International Relations (1997), chs. 1, 9.


Peter A. Gourevitch, *Politics in Hard Times: Comparative Responses to Economic Crises* (1986).


December 12 Summing-Up, Review, and Other Theories