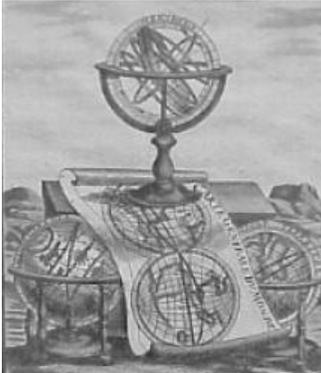


POSC 120: Comparative Political Regimes

Carleton College, Fall 2008



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Mondays & Wednesdays, 1:00-4:00pm

*"Without comparisons to make, the mind does not know how to proceed."
- Alexis de Toqueville*

*"And what should they know of England who only England know?"
- Rudyard Kipling*

Course Description

This class serves as an introduction to comparative politics, one of the four main subfields within political science.

Comparative politics involves the systematic study and comparison of the world's political systems. There are almost two hundred independent states in the world, and within this group of countries, there is a great deal of variety in institutions, policies, political attitudes, and participation. Students of comparative politics attempt to understand and account for the similarities and differences among these societies.

In this class, we will explore some of the classic questions that have occupied scholars in this field, including:

- Why are some countries able to develop stable democratic political systems while others are unable to implement or sustain democracy?
- Why are some countries poor and other countries wealthy?
- What are the consequences of having different political "rules of the game" and variations in national political institutions?
- How do people in different societies think about and participate in politics?

As we investigate these questions, we will also explicitly think not only about the *content* of comparative politics, but also the *method* of comparison. Students of comparative politics employ a diverse "toolkit" of approaches to answer the questions that are of interest to them, and this class will give you a general introduction to some of these approaches, including single case studies, paired comparisons, and large-N analyses.

Course Materials

There are two required texts for this class. Both are available for purchase at the Carleton bookstore:

- Howard J. Wiarda (2000). Introduction to Comparative Politics, 2nd ed. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Arend Lijphart (1999). Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

All other course readings will be available on Moodle. You are expected to do all assigned readings before coming to class.

Students are also STRONGLY encouraged to keep current with world events by reading a high-quality newspaper on a daily basis. The *New York Times*, *International Herald Tribune*, *Guardian*, *Washington Post*, and *Christian Science Monitor* are recommended English-language sources. The BBC World Service and NPR also provide excellent coverage of international events. We will incorporate discussions of current events into the course when appropriate.

Course Requirements

Your grade in this class will be based on five elements, which will be weighted as follows:

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| Participation | 10% |
| Policy analysis paper | 15% |
| Constitutional design paper | 20% |
| Polity paper | 25% |
| Final Exam | 30% |
| Total | 100% |

1. Participation

The participation grade is based on your active engagement with the class and material. It is not simply a gauge of how much you can talk during class. In fact, a high participation score will never be achieved by sheer volume of discussion alone. Instead, I will assess participation scores based on your ability to make regular, informed contributions during large and small group discussions.. Behaviors that will substantially lower your participation score include: repeated tardiness, a pattern of unexplained absences from class, and disruptive or disrespectful behavior during class discussions.

2. Policy analysis paper

For this paper, you will contribute to an ongoing public policy debate by analyzing some relevant data on that topic and writing up the results. You will be assigned to small groups of 3-4 people, and will collectively select an article about a current policy debate from a list provided on Moodle. Then, you will work together to analyze data pertinent to this debate and make a decision about how to interpret the results and the implications for the larger policy debate. You will report your findings in a 3-4 page (double-spaced) paper. **Note: while the data analysis**

will take place in groups, you will submit individual papers. More information about the articles, data sources, analytic techniques, and format for the findings will be distributed in class or on Moodle. We will also allocate one class day to a data analysis workshop to aid you in your investigations. This paper will be due on October 3.

3. Constitutional design paper

For this assignment, you will read the text of the Iraqi constitution, which was adopted by popular referendum in October 2005. Then, selecting one or two features of this constitution (e.g., electoral rules, division of power, etc.) you will write a critical analysis of approximately 4-6 double-spaced pages in which you discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the specific institutional choices that were made given the Iraqi context, what alternatives were possible, and why these alternatives would be better or worse than the status quo. This assignment gives you the opportunity to apply some of the theoretical materials on institutional design and its consequences to a real-world example of constitutional engineering. This paper will be due on October 29.

4. Polity paper

Throughout the course, we will play Polity League, a comparative politics version of a fantasy sports league. More details of this game will be made available in class. For this paper, you will select one of the countries in your team's polity portfolio that has an interesting, unusual, or unexpected ranking on one of our political, economic, or social indicators. You will then research this case to see if you can propose an explanation for this anomalous result, drawing on both case-specific readings and relevant scholarly literatures. You will write up the results of your investigation in a 6-8 double-spaced paper. You will have the chance to turn in a draft of this paper for peer review and feedback before turning in the final draft. The rough draft will be due on November 14. The final draft will be due on November 17.

5. Final exam

The final exam will consist of a short-answer section and an essay section, both of which will contain some choice in terms of questions. It will be closed-book, closed-note, cumulative, and self-scheduled.

Course Policies

Attendance

You are expected to come to class regularly and on time. If you are unable to attend due to illness or some other personal matter, you should notify me by email in advance. A pattern of unexcused absences or tardiness will lower your participation grade. If you need to miss class, it is your responsibility to see me in office hours or to get notes from a classmate. Emailing me and asking “did I miss anything?” is not an acceptable substitute.

Policy on Late Work

Late work will incur a penalty of 1/3 grade per day unless documentation of extenuating circumstances (ill health, family emergency) is provided. Make a note: technology is heartless. Computers crash, printers jam, and files occasionally disappear from disks. It is your responsibility to plan ahead, to make back-ups of your work, and to leave yourself sufficient time to compensate for mishaps. Technological difficulties will not excuse late work!

Policy on Extensions

Extensions will not be granted except in exceptional circumstances involving unforeseen complications or obstacles. Simply having three papers due in a week is not grounds for getting an extension. All assignments for this class have clearly posted due dates and in all cases, the assignment instructions will be made available *at least* one week before the due date. This should be sufficient time for you to plan ahead and manage your workload accordingly.

Policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty

Both are serious offenses. Anyone caught cheating will automatically receive a zero for the assignment and will have the case referred to the Dean’s Office for further investigation and possible disciplinary action. To avoid any semblance of impropriety, please take pains to cite your sources correctly. You are also strongly encouraged to keep any outlines or rough drafts of your papers to document the evolution of your work. For more information on Carleton’s policy on academic honesty, please consult

http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/dos/handbook/academic_regs/?policy_id=21359

Policy on special needs

If you require special accommodation due to a documented physical or learning disability, please come see me during the first week of class to discuss how I might best assist you in meeting the objectives and requirements of this course.

Schedule of Readings

The readings for this course come from a variety of sources, some of which are aimed at people who have very little advanced knowledge of politics or history, and some that are written for a more informed audience. Therefore, you may find some of these readings to be very basic and others to be tough going depending on your background and prior experience with the subject. Regardless, it is your responsibility to take each one seriously and read it with care in order to understand the author's main arguments. I will occasionally post reading guides on Moodle to help you get the most value out of the material.

Though page limits will vary, on average, you may expect 75-125 pages of reading per week. (M) = reading available on Moodle

| Date | Topic | Readings |
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Why (and how) do we study countries comparatively?

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| 9/15 | Course introduction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skim Wiarda, ch. 1 (pp.1-17) and ch. 2 |
| 9/17 | Defining the "good society" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Woodrow Wilson, <i>The State</i>, ch. 15 (M) Benito Mussolini, <i>Facism</i>, selected passage (M) Vladimir Lenin, <i>State and Revolution</i>, selected passages (M) |
| 9/19 | Nuts and bolts of comparison I | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steven van Evera, <i>Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science</i>, pp. 7-30 (M) Wiarda, ch. 11 |
| 9/22 | Nuts and bolts of comparison II | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timothy C. Lim, <i>Doing Comparative Politics</i>, ch. 2 (M) |
| 9/24 | Data workshop <i>Note: today's class will be in CMC 109</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy analysis background documents and data analysis handout (M) |

Why are some countries democratic and other countries are not?

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| 9/26 | Regime types | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adam Przeworski, et al, <i>Democracy and Development</i>, ch. 1 (M) |
| 9/29 | Paths to democracy I | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robert A. Dahl, <i>Polyarchy</i>, ch. 3-5 (M) |
| 10/1 | Paths to democracy II | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wiarda, ch. 6, 7 |
| 10/3 | Special library session with Danya Leebaw | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No reading! <p><i>Policy analysis paper due in class!</i></p> |
| 10/6 | Democratic consolidation and breakdown | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robert A. Dahl, <i>On Democracy</i>, ch. 12-14 (M) Nancy Bermeo, "Getting Mad or Going Mad? Citizens, Scarcity, and the Breakdown of Democracy in Interwar Europe." Working Paper 97-06, Center for the Study of Democracy, UC Irvine (M) |
| 10/8 | Discussion sections | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack (2003). "Democracy in Iraq?" <i>Washington Quarterly</i>, 26(3): 119-136 (M) |

What are the consequences of different political institutions and “rules of the game”?

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| 10/10 | Institutional varieties | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lijphart, ch. 1-4 |
| 10/13 | Concentration of power: unitary, federal, presidential, and parliamentary systems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lijphart, ch. 7, 10-11 |
| 10/15 | Parties and party systems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lijphart, ch. 5 |
| 10/17 | No class! | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reading! |
| 10/20 | No class! | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reading! |
| 10/22 | Electoral rules | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lijphart, ch. 8 |

Why are some countries poor and other countries rich? How do state policies affect patterns of inequality and opportunity for their citizens?

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| 10/24 | Development and growth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wiarda, ch. 3, 5, 8 |
| 10/27 | Development in Latin America and East Asia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gary Gereffi (1990). “Paths of Industrialization: An Overview.” In <i>Manufacturing Miracles: Paths of Industrialization in Latin America and East Asia</i>, G. Gereffi and D.L. Wyman, eds. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press (M). |
| 10/29 | Failed development in Africa | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul Collier and Jan Willem Gunning (1999). “Why Has Africa Grown Slowly?” <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i>, 13(3): 3-22 (M). <p>Constitutional design paper due in class!</p> |
| 10/31 | Discussion sections | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giovanni A. Cornia and Julius Court (2001). “Inequality, Growth, and Poverty in the Era of Liberalization and Globalization.” Policy Brief, UN World Institute for Development Economics Research (M). |
| 11/3 | Social policy and the welfare state | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gøsta Esping-Anderson, <i>The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism</i>, ch. 2-3 (M) |
| 11/5 | Welfare and gender | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haya Stier, Noah Lewin-Epstein, and Michael Braun (2001). “Welfare Regimes, Family-Supportive Policies, and Women’s Employment along the Life Course.” <i>American Journal of Sociology</i>, 106(6): 1731-1760 (M) |

How do identities, attitudes, and participation in politics vary across countries?

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| 11/7 | Participation and engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pippa Norris, <i>Democratic Phoenix</i>, ch. 3 (M) |
| 11/10 | Civil society and social capital | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robert Putnam, <i>Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy</i>, ch. 5 (M) |
| 11/12 | Protest and violence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charles Tilly, <i>The Politics of Collective Violence</i>, ch. 3 (M) |
| 11/14 | Nationalism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guiseppe Mazzini, <i>The Duties of Man</i>, selections (M) • Ernest Renan, "What is a Nation?" In <i>Modern Political Doctrines</i>, A. Zimmern, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press (M) • Eric Hobsbawm, <i>Nations and Nationalism since 1780</i>, selections (M) <p><i>Rough draft of polity paper due in class!</i></p> |
| 11/17 | Religion in comparative perspective | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pippa Norris, <i>Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide</i>, ch. 3 (M) |
| 11/19 | Wrap up: globalization and the future of comparative politics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reading! <p><i>Final draft of polity paper due in class!</i></p> |