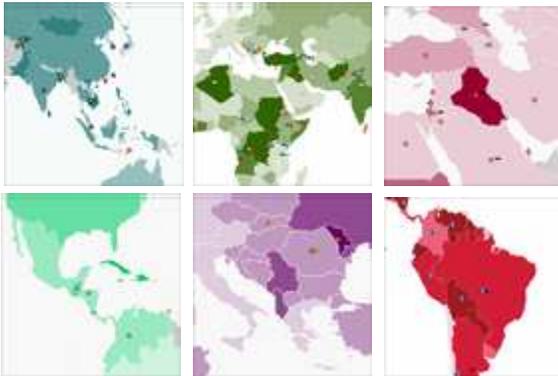


POSC 120: Comparative Political Regimes

Carleton College, Winter 2008



Professor: Devashree Gupta
Office: 404 Willis Hall
Telephone: x4681
Email: dgupta@carleton.edu
Office Hrs: Tuesdays, 1:30-3:30pm
Wednesdays, 3:30-5:00pm

*“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 is a vast subject that covers a lot of theoretical ground. Scholars of comparative politics study political economy, democratic transitions, political violence, labor relations, globalization, and nationalism—to name just a few of the possible areas of inquiry. Empirically, comparative politics takes all the countries of the world—including the United States—as potential subjects for investigation.

Given this diversity, we will out of necessity focus our attentions in this class on a few broad issues—regime types and transitions, economic development, and welfare and social policy—in our attempt to understand what kinds and combinations of political institutions seem best able to promote freedom, security, prosperity, equality, and other desirable goals. Throughout, we will compare and contrast the variety of ways that countries have chosen to shape their political institutions and practices while assessing the relative costs and benefits of these choices. Our empirical focus will be eclectic, drawing on examples from both the developed and developing world.

Throughout the course, we will also discuss some of the core methodological skills needed to make meaningful comparisons about countries and institutions. We will cover the basics of the comparative method and rudimentary data analysis—all of which will be helpful as you evaluate different institutional designs and public policies in your readings as well as in your own research.

Course Materials

There is one required text for this class, which is available for purchase at the Carleton Bookstore:

Alan Siaroff (2005). *Comparing Political Regimes*. New York: Broadview Press.

All other course readings will be available on e-reserve (E) through the library or on Moodle (M). 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 all on-line and in English. The BBC World Service and NPR also provide streaming audio coverage of international news.

Course Requirements

Your grade in this class will be based on the following elements:

Quizzes	200 points (5 @ 40 points each)
Comparative methods memos	200 points (1 @ 50 points, 2 @ 75 each)
Constitutional design paper	150 points
Participation	150 points
Final research project	300 points

	1000 points

A points-to-letter grade conversion chart and interpretation can be found on Moodle (under "Assignment Rubrics").

Quizzes

There will be six quizzes during the term, each worth 40 points. Quizzes will consist of questions drawn from the assigned readings and lectures, and are intended to assess your comprehension of the material. Each quiz will be administered twice; the first time, all students will answer the questions by themselves and will receive an individual score (out of 20). The second time, students will be able to work in small groups and discuss the questions and possible answers before registering a group answer and receiving a group score (out of 20). Thus, the total score for each quiz—40 points—will be partly based on each student's individual understanding of the material (thus making it important for each person to keep up with the assigned work) and partly on students' reasoned discussions in small groups.

Quizzes will be scheduled randomly. The lowest individual and group scores in the term will be dropped. There will be no make-ups on quizzes. If you are absent during a quiz day, you will receive a zero for that quiz, and that will automatically be the score that is dropped from your grade calculation.

Comparative Methods Assignment

In this assignment, you will have a chance to apply your knowledge of the comparative method as you analyze the arguments presented in a brief research document. This assignment will also give you an opportunity to practice some of the skills—research design, evaluating hypotheses—that will come in handy for the final research project

You will be given a research brief and asked to write three short memos about it. The first memo (50 points) will require you to identify the document's main hypotheses, independent and dependent variables, and causal mechanisms. The second memo (75 points) will require you to assess the arguments and evidence, noting strengths and weaknesses. The third memo (75 points) will ask you to devise a hypothetical comparative research design that would provide a reasonable test of the hypotheses you identified. We will set aside some time in class for small group discussion and peer feedback for the second and third memos.

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.

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: regular, informed contributions during large and small group discussions; questions raised in class or during office hours; and thoughtful posts on the discussion forum on Moodle. 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.

Final Research Project

The final project will involve a collaborative research activity. You will be divided into small groups of about 3-4 people, and will be charged with evaluating one of several possible hypotheses on democratization, development, social policy, or political institutions. As a group, you will (a) pick your preferred hypothesis; (b) determine how to evaluate this hypothesis and specify the kinds of data that you will require; (c) collect the data; (d) analyze the data and present the results of this analysis in a written report of no more than 12-15 double-spaced pages; and (e) present your findings in an oral report to the rest of the class.

This final project is worth a total of 300 points, which will be subdivided as follows:

- Research plan (50 points): each group will be required to turn in a brief (2-3 page) paper that details its chosen hypothesis, the variables that the group will focus on when testing this hypothesis, the way it hopes to measure these variables, and

some of the likely places it will look for the data. If a group decides it wants to conduct case studies, the research plan should state which countries will be chosen and why.

- Presentation (50 points): each group will be responsible for developing a 15-20 minute in-class presentation on its research and fielding questions about its findings. All members of the group MUST have a substantial part in this presentation. Half of the presentation score (25 points) will be based on each individual's role in the presentation, and half on the overall group's presentation.
- Final report (150 points): each group will submit a report of 12-15 double-spaced pages, including all references, charts, and tables. This paper will be due on the last day of class.
- Individual contribution (50 points): each group member will submit a confidential memo assessing the contributions and effectiveness of the other members of the group. Based on the total reports from the group, a contribution score will be calculated for each individual.

Additional information about this, and the other written tasks, will be provided in class. For those interested, evaluation criteria for all of the above assignments will be available on Moodle.

Assignment Due Dates

January				
M	T	W	Th	F
				4
	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

February				
M	T	W	Th	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

March				
M	T	W	Th	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14

Course Policies

Policy on Late Work

Late work will incur a 10 point per day penalty 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 plagiarism and academic dishonesty

Both are serious offenses. Anyone caught cheating will automatically receive a zero for the assignment. 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

A NOTE: The readings for this course come from a variety of sources, some of which are aimed at a more general public or those brand new to political science (and presume very little advanced knowledge of politics or history) and some that are written for a more informed audience. You may therefore 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, you are responsible for taking each one seriously and reading it with care in order to distill the author's main arguments and assertions. Though the page limits will vary, on average you may expect between 75-150 pages of reading per week.

E = reading is on e-reserve through the library (password: posc)

M = reading is on Moodle



= Written assignment is due in class that day

Date	Topic	Readings
Fri, 1/4	Introduction to the course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read through this syllabus • Familiarize yourself with the course Moodle page, including assignments, evaluation rubrics, and resources
Mon, 1/7	Philosophical and conceptual foundations of comparative politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alan Siaroff, <i>Comparing Political Regimes</i>, ch. 1 • Raymond Plant (2004). "Neo-liberalism and the Theory of the State." <i>Political Quarterly</i>, 75:1, pp. 24-37. (M)
Wed, 1/9	How do we compare? Research design, causal arguments, & data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, <i>Designing Social Inquiry</i>, pp. 7-23, 82-87, 99-114 (E)
Fri, 1/11	The comparative method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timothy C. Lim, <i>Doing Comparative Politics</i>, ch. 2 (E)
Mon, 1/14	Theoretical building blocks: agents, structure, and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timothy C. Lim, <i>Doing Comparative Politics</i>, ch. 3 (E)
Wed, 1/16	Applying methods and theories to a substantive issue: why are some countries poor?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timothy C. Lim, <i>Doing Comparative Politics</i>, ch. 4 (E)
Fri, 1/18	States and regimes in comparative perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siaroff, ch. 3, 8
Mon, 1/21	The evolution of mature democracies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moore, ch. 1 (E)
Wed, 1/23	Alternative routes to democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ashutosh Varshney (1998). "Why Democracy Survives." <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, vol. 9(3), pp. 36-50. (M)
Fri, 1/25	Deviations and detours on the road to democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homa Katouzian (1995). "Problems of Political Development in Iran: Democracy, Dictatorship, or Arbitrary Government?" <i>British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies</i>, vol. 22(1/2), pp. 5-20. (M)

Mon, 1/28 	Democratization and regime transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siaroff, ch. 5, 9 (pp. 227-247)
Wed, 1/30	Transition processes and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, <i>Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies</i>, pp. 15-56 (E)
Fri, 2/1 	Library research session with Kristin Partlo – meet in CMC 110.	No reading!
Mon, 2/4	Mid-term break	No reading!
Wed, 2/6	Democratic consolidation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan (1996). "Toward Consolidated Democracies." <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, vol. 7(2), pp. 14-33. (M) • Andreas Schedler (2001). "Measuring Democratic Consolidation." <i>Studies in Comparative International Development</i>, vol. 36(1), pp. 66-92. (M)
Fri, 2/8	Is democracy needed for development? Is development needed for democracy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evelyne Huber, Dietrich Rueschmeyer, and John D. Stephens (1993). "The Impact of Economic Development on Democracy." <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i>, vol. 7(3), pp. 71-85. (M) • Shalendra D. Sharma (1999). "Democracy, Neoliberalism, and Growth with Equity: Lessons from India and Chile." <i>Contemporary South Asia</i>, vol. 8(3), pp. 347-371. (M)
Mon, 2/11	Democratic breakdown and state failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siaroff, ch. 9 (pp. 247-254) • Samuel P. Huntington (1996). "Democracy for the Long Haul." <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, vol. 7(2), pp. 3-13. (M) • Larry Diamond (2000). "Is Pakistan the (Reverse) Wave of the Future?" <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, vol. 11(3), pp. 91-106 (M) <p>NOTE: I may also assign a handful of short news articles about current events in Pakistan for this session; keep an eye on Moodle for updates!</p>
Wed, 2/13	Centralization and division of power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siaroff, ch. 6 • Daniel J. Elazar (1997). "Contrasting Unitary and Federal Systems." <i>International Political Science Review</i>, vol. 18(3), pp. 237-251. (M)
Fri, 2/15 	No class today!	<p>No reading today!</p> <p>NOTE: Email your research designs <u>before</u> 5pm!</p>

Mon, 2/18	Electoral systems and party politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siaroff, ch. 7 • Pippa Norris (1997). "Choosing Electoral Systems: Proportional, Majoritarian, and Mixed Systems." <i>International Political Science Review</i>, vol. 18(3), pp. 297-312. (M)
Wed, 2/20	Institutional choices in deeply divided societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ian Lustick (1979). "Stability in Deeply Divided Societies: Consociationalism versus Control." <i>World Politics</i>, vol. 31(3), pp. 325-344. (M)
Fri, 2/22	Institutional design, incentives, and policy outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Douglass C. North and Barry R. Weingast (1989). "Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutional Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth-Century England." <i>The Journal of Economic History</i>, vol. 49(4), pp. 803-832. (M)
Mon, 2/25 	Modernization and economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. Samuel Valenzuela and Arturo Valenzuela (1978). "Modernization and Dependency: Alternative Perspectives in the Study of Latin American Underdevelopment." <i>Comparative Politics</i>, vol. 10(4), pp. 535-557. (M)
Wed, 2/27	Alternative models of economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bela Belassa (1988). "The Lessons of East Asian Development: An Overview." <i>Economic Development and Cultural Change</i>, vol. 36(3-Supplement), pp. S273-S290. (M)
Fri, 2/29	Social policy and welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gøsta Esping Anderson, <i>The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism</i>, ch. 2, 3 (E)
Mon, 3/3	Social policy, citizenship, and gender politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haya Stier, Noah Lewin-Epstein, and Micheal 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)
Wed, 3/5	Group presentations	No reading!
Fri, 3/7	Group presentations	No reading!
Mon, 3/10 	Wrap-up session (and overflow from group presentations if needed)	No reading!