Political Science 385, Comparative Democratic Systems

Fall 1999

PRELIMINARY SYLLABUS

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Course Description

This research seminar will provide students with a thorough review of the major debates and literature in the field of comparative politics, including issues such as political culture, democratization, state formation, nation-building and nationalism, ethnic politics, development and dependency, and globalization. This course is designed to serve advanced political science students planning to take the comprehensive examination and answer comparative politics and international relations questions. The course also serves paper comps students interested in expanding their knowledge of the discipline. Finally, the course prepares students interested in pursuing graduate studies in comparative politics.

What is Expected of Students

Students will be expected to read, think, criticize, and form arguments. That means that students must keep up in their reading assignments and attend class regularly. Since the research seminar is organized around structured discussions, all students must be fully prepared at all times to discuss the readings and concepts in the course. The best students will be critical but balanced in their assessments, and will develop coherent arguments that they can defend in their writing and their in-class discussion.

Reading Materials

The four required books for this course have been ordered and are presently on sale at the college bookstore. The texts are:


In addition to these texts, this course requires your study of a number of other readings from diverse sources. In order to facilitate your access to these materials, I have prepared a compendium of these readings. You are free to borrow this compendium for photocopying. It is available at my office during the day. Students are advised to make readable copies of these materials early during the course. Also, in order to reduce your costs, I have placed the required materials, including books and photocopied essays on closed reserve.

In addition to the readings, this course requires your use of select audio and video materials. These items include assorted National Public Radio reports on audio tapes and short videos. Brief portions of these multimedia items will be presented during class as a part of the seminar discussions, but you will be required to view and listen to some of these materials in their entirety during off-class hours. Audio materials will be available through the class web page. Video materials will be placed on closed reserve at the library.
I will occasionally distribute handouts and clippings from *The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal*, the *Economist*, the *Miami Herald*, the Minneapolis/St. Paul newspapers, and the internet at the beginning of class. Students are also invited to check out links to course relevant web pages on the professor's web page. Materials on the course's web page will be updated during the semester and will supplement rather than duplicate the substance of the discussions and the readings. Students will be invited to reference these resources during the course.

**Grading**

As a true research seminar the assessment of students' performance will focus on the composition and completion of a 20-25 page research paper due at the end of the course. The first draft of this paper will be graded. Additionally, students will complete an oral midterm exam. Most important, each student will be called upon during the course of the semester to present on the readings in structured critiques and discussion and debate formats. The grade breakdown follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral Midterm Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Draft</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar Presentations</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Draft</td>
<td>30%</td>
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**Oral Midterm Exam**

The oral exam will consist of a 30-minute meeting with me during the exam week. During the exam, I will ask the student questions based on the readings and the seminar discussions to that point. Students will be signed up for the oral exams no later than one week before the exams are held. A handout and a discussion in class regarding the oral exam requirement will outline additional aspects of this assignment.

The oral exam has been designed to not only test the students' knowledge of the literature, but also their ability to make clear oral arguments during an interview-like process. Students should study comprehensively for the oral exam and practice their interview skills in small groups. If you cannot attend the oral exam, you must notify me no later than two days before your exam is scheduled.

**The Seminar Presentations**

As a research seminar, the in-class discussions play a pivotal role in this class. In order to facilitate discussion, this seminar will be organized around periodic debate formats that will involve all of the students in the course. Although the following is not an exhaustive list of the usable formats, it is an indication of the discussion structures we will use:

1. Formal, timed debates on resolutions defined by the professor and based on topics covered in the readings. Students will debate the "affirmative" or "negative" of the resolution. Resolutions will be distributed several days before the scheduled debate.

2. Extemporaneous debates following the same structure of #1 but the resolution will be defined the day the debate is scheduled. Candidate resolutions may be drawn from a pool of suggestions prepared by the students before class.

3. Presentation of individual critiques of the readings/authors with designated defenders of the author(s)’ position.

4. Role-playing Q&A with voting. In this simulation, some students take on the persona of a political actor and through questions and answers reveal the nature of their interests. Students will vote for candidates/reform ideas based on their assessments.
(5) Paired deliberation on critical questions prepared by the professor. Groups of two students will be presented with a political problem based upon a real-life scenario. Within time constraints they must offer a solution and present that idea to the group. The nature of the real-life scenario will then be revealed and the students' ideas will be discussed in that context.

Typically, I will begin each class session by offering a general overview of the issues to be discussed. I will also present you with a set of critical questions to structure discussion. For certain sessions, I will lead off with a video or audio presentation. After the overview portion, the seminar will proceed to student presentations, and then general discussion. I will conclude each class session with a brief review of the authors and readings for the next meeting. The seminar will include a brief break of about 5-10 minutes in the middle of each class session. Whenever feasible, refreshments will be served.

The Seminar Paper

The culmination of student work in this seminar will be the composition of a seminar paper of 20-25 pages of text (typed, double-spaced, 12cpi, one-inch margins) and a research bibliography of a minimum of three pages. The composition of the seminar paper will be broken down into the following steps:

1. By **September 28**, students will have decided upon a research topic in consultation with me.
2. By **October 5**, students will hand in a copy of a research bibliography of no less than 3 pages. A handout will define the proper citation and reference format for the paper.
3. By **October 28**, students will hand in a first draft of the argumentative section of their paper.
4. On **November 23**, the final draft of the seminar paper will be due.

Consultation with me during each of these steps is crucial. We will also discuss the format and direction of paper topics and issues as part of the normal discussion of the research seminar. One of the most important lessons of the seminar is that good research depends upon the input and support of colleagues. Each student will be expected to contribute their share to this effort.

Class Participation

Communicating your insight into the subjects analyzed in this course is an integral part of the learning experience. In no way do I consider class participation a residual category for subjectively determining the final grade. In this course, I will evaluate your performance in both formal, scheduled presentations and informal seminar discussion. All oral arguments and presentations will be assessed on structure, relevance, insight, and style. Perfect attendance is expected.

The Grading Scale

I will be using the following grading scale in this course:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>98-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>91-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>79-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>76-78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>72-75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>68-71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D/F</td>
<td>67/below</td>
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Academic Misconduct
Given the fact that academe relies upon the ethical conduct of scholars, students are held to the same standards in their own work. Any act of academic dishonesty or misconduct will be referred to the Office of the Dean. For further information, see Carleton College's *Academic Honesty in the Writing of Essays and Other Papers* and the section on "academic honesty" in *Academic Regulations and Procedures, 1998-99*. Both are available in Laird 140.

**Special Needs**

Students requiring access to learning tools/special schedules approved by Student Support Services should contact me at the beginning of the course.

**NOTE:** Readings must be completed for the dates assigned below. Readings marked with an (*) are required, all others are recommended.

**Introduction (Sept. 14, Tues.)**

**Session 1: Rationality and Choice (Sept. 16, Thurs.)**


**Session 2: Modernization Theory and Political Culture**

*All Good Things Go Together: Modernization Theory and Political Culture (Sept. 21, Tues.)*


*All Good Things Do Not Go Together: Political Decay and Order (Sept. 23, Thurs.)*


*Neo-Marxist Responses to Theories of Modernization: The Social Origins of Democracy (Sept. 28, Tues.)*


**Session 3: Bringing the State (and the Nation) Back In**

*The Diverse Routes of State Formation (Sept. 30, Thurs.)*


**The Challenges of Nation-Building (Oct. 5, Tues.)**


**Strong or Weak States? State Capacity in Comparative Perspective (Oct. 7, Thurs.)**


**Strong Societies and Weak States (Oct. 12, Tues.)**


**Globalization and The Withering of the State? (Oct. 14, Thurs.)**


**Session 4: The "New Institutionalism" in Comparative Politics**

**Public Goods and Problems of Collective Action (Oct. 19, Tues.)**


**Institutional Solutions to the Politician's Dilemma: Political Parties and Electoral Systems (Oct. 21, Thurs.)**


**Presidentialism vs Parliamentarism (Oct. 26, Tues.)**


**ORAL EXAM WEEK (Oct. 25-29)**

https://acad.carleton.edu/curricular/POSC/classes/Pusc385/F99/index.html
Institutional Design and Economic Development: Transaction Costs Approaches (Oct. 28, Thurs.)


Institutional Design and Economic Development: Historical-Institutionalist Approaches (Nov. 2, Tues.)


Session 5: Political Participation and Social Movement Theory

Varieties of Political Action: Participation, Contentious Politics, and Bowling Alone (Nov. 4, Thurs.)


Social Movements (Nov. 9, Tues.)


Transnational Advocacy Networks (Nov. 11, Thurs.)

*Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. *Activists Beyond Borders*, Chapters 1-2, and choose one of the cases: Chapters 3, 4, or 5.

Final Assessment (Nov. 16, Tues.)