PROSEMINAR IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Pol. Sci. 520/496

Ken Roberts
Spring 2005
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Office Hours: Tues. 10:00-11:30, Thurs. 1:30-3:00

Course Objectives:

This course is a graduate-level introduction to the sub-field of comparative politics. It is designed to provide students with an overview of the conceptual, methodological, and theoretical tools used in the advanced cross-national study of government institutions and political processes. The course begins with an overview of the methodological approaches utilized in comparative research, including case studies, qualitative comparative analysis, and large-N statistical analysis. It then explores alternative theoretical approaches used to study political phenomena, focusing primarily on structural, cultural, rational choice, and institutionalist perspectives. The readings range broadly across nations and geo-political regions, and they cover a broad range of substantive topics, including states, political regimes, institutional design, civil society and social movements, and the political economy of development. Assigned readings are intended to provide students with the broadest possible coverage of both "classical" and contemporary research in the sub-field; however, given the breadth and depth of comparative research, assigned readings can only cover a small sample of the relevant literature. The list of recommended readings on each topic points students toward other pertinent literature; students who intend to take comprehensive exams in the comparative politics field should be well-versed with this broader literature.

Course Requirements:

1. **Take-home mid-term exam** (40 percent of course grade): A take-home exam will be passed out on March 9 and will be due in class on March 23. The mid-term exam will focus primarily on methodological issues, and will pose questions similar to those asked on comprehensive exams. The exam will require that students integrate material from a range of different approaches, critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of alternative methods, and relate these methods to the analysis of empirical cases.

2. **Theory and methods paper** (40 percent of course grade): Select any substantive topic in the field of comparative politics (such as democratization or regime change, economic development or policy reform, the eruption of social movements or political conflict, etc.) and write a 12-15 page paper that tests two different theoretical approaches by means of a qualitative comparative analysis of two or more cases. The paper should draw from the relevant theoretical literature on the topic as well as from primary or secondary material on the selected cases. Topics, cases, and theoretical approaches must be discussed with me in advance. A one-page abstract identifying your research question, dependent variable, alternative theoretical explanations, and case selection is due in class on April 13. The paper itself is due in my office at 5:00 p.m. on May 10 (Tuesday of Finals Week). Extensions and incompletes will be granted only in exceptional cases for medical emergencies.

3. **Weekly Literature Reviews**: Each week you should turn in a one-page critical review of that week’s readings. A good review will include a one-paragraph assessment of the main contributions made by the readings, a one-paragraph critique of the limitations of the readings, and two questions raised by the readings that you would like to see the class discuss.
4. **Class Participation and Oral Presentations** (20 percent of final grade): As a learning experience, the seminar will depend heavily on the quality of class participation and student interaction. It is essential that members of the seminar attend all sessions, participate actively in classroom discussions, and complete all required readings prior to class. Required readings are marked with an asterisk (*) and will be available in the UNM Bookstore and/or electronic reserves.

In addition, each student will make two short (about 8-10 minutes) oral presentations on the weekly topics. The students presenting each weekly topic should work together as a team to develop a unified analytical strategy and divide up the required readings. Oral presentations should be analytical and critical in style; **THEY ARE NOT INTENDED TO BE DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARIES OF THE READINGS.** It is assumed that everyone has already read the material, so there is no need to provide more than a cursory overview of the reading. Instead, presentations should focus on the major issues or debates raised in the readings, identify the most important contributions of the work in question (i.e., what is new or innovative in its approach or argument?), compare and contrast it to other readings or approaches (i.e., locate the work within the broader literature), and identify the main limitations or weaknesses of the work (i.e., present your critique). Additionally, oral presentations should conclude with one or more specific questions that can be used to stimulate classroom discussion.

**Grading:**

- Mid-Term Exam: 40 percent (passed out March 9, due March 23)
- Analytical Paper: 40 percent (due May 10)
- Oral presentations and class participation: 20 percent

In accordance with UNM’s ADA policy, qualified students with disabilities needing appropriate academic adjustments should contact me as soon as possible to ensure that your needs are met in a timely manner. Handouts are available in alternative accessible formats upon request.

**Plagiarism Policy:**

I have a zero-tolerance policy toward academic dishonesty or plagiarism. Plagiarism will result in a failure of the course and will be reported to the proper university authorities for disciplinary action. Any written material taken from another source must be properly cited; ignorance of academic conventions is not a suitable defense for plagiarism in this course.

**Assigned Reading:**

There are eight required texts for the course, all of them available for purchase at the UNM bookstore. Most of these texts are also on reserve at Zimmerman and may be checked out for 24-hour periods. Articles designated as assigned readings will be on electronic reserves at Zimmerman Library. The required texts are:

COURSE TOPICS AND READINGS
(Required Readings in Asterisks)

PART I: THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS: CONCEPTS, CAUSALITY, AND RESEARCH METHODS

1. Jan. 19: Introduction to the Course


Recommended Reading:

Ruth Lane, *The Art of Comparative Politics* (Allyn and Bacon, 1997).
James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds. *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge 2003).

2. Jan. 26– The United States in Comparative Perspective

*Seymour Martin Lipset and Gary Marks, It Didn’t Happen Here: The Failure of Socialism in the United States (especially Chaps. 1-5 & 7-8)

Recommended Reading:

Adam Przeworski, *Capitalism and Social Democracy.*

3. Feb. 2– Theory, Causality, and Social Science Epistemology: Toward a Science of Comparative Politics?


**Recommended Reading:**

Charles Ragin, *The Comparative Method: Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies* (California, 1987).


Lawrence Mayer, "The Epistemology of Social Science and the Comparative Method," in *Redefining Comparative Politics* (Sage, 1989) (on reserve).


Alasdair MacIntyre, "Is a Science of Comparative Politics Possible?," in *Against the Self-Images of the Age: Essays on Ideology and Philosophy* (Schocken, 1972).

**4. Feb. 9-- Building Blocks of Theory: Concepts and Concept Formation in Comparative Politics**


*John Gerring, *Social Science Methodology* (Cambridge, 2001), Chap. 3 (on reserve).


**Recommended Reading:**


5. Feb. 16– Large-N Research Designs, Quantitative Methods, and the Area Studies Debate


*Brady and Collier, eds. Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards, Chaps. 3-5 (chapters by Brady, Bartels, and Rogowski)

*M. Steven Fish, “Islam and Authoritarianism,” World Politics (October 2002) (on reserve).


*Kirk Bowman, Militarization, Democracy, and Development: The Perils of Praetorianism in Latin America (Penn State University Press, 2002), Chaps. 2 & 6 (on reserve).

Recommended Reading:


6. Feb. 23– Small-N Research Designs and Qualitative Methods: Case Studies and Field Research


*Brady and Collier, Rethinking Social Inquiry, chaps. 1 & 9.


*Dietrich Rueschemeyer, “Can One or a Few Cases Yield Theoretical Gains?”, in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds. Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences (Cambridge 2003) (on reserve)


**Recommended Reading:**


John Gerring, Social Science Methodology (Cambridge 2001).


Atul Kohli et. al, "The Role of Theory in Comparative Politics," World Politics (October 1995).


7. March 2-- Comparative Research Methods

*John Stuart Mill, "Two Methods of Comparison," from A System of Logic as excerpted in A. Etzioni and F. Dubow, eds. Comparative Perspectives (on reserve).

*Stanley Lieberson, “Small N’s and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases,” Social Forces (December 1991) (on reserve).

*Brady and Collier, Rethinking Social Inquiry, Chaps. 6-8 & 10-13.

*“Symposium: Qualitative Comparative Analysis,” Qualitative Methods (Fall 2004) (on reserve).

**Recommended Reading:**

David Collier and James Mahoney, "Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research," World Politics (October 1996)


Arend Lijphart, "The Comparable Cases Strategy in Comparative Research," Comparative Political Studies (July 1975)

Arend Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," APSR (September 1971).


8. March 9-- Comparative Historical Analysis and Historical Institutionalism

*James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, “Comparative Historical Analysis,” in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds. Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences (Cambridge, 2003) (on reserve)

*Paul Pierson, Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis, Chaps. 1-3 & 5-6.

*Barbara Geddes, Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics (University of Michigan Press, 2003), chapters to be announced (on reserve)
(Mid-Term Exam passed out)

Recommended Reading:

Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers, "The Uses of Comparative History in Macro-Social Theory," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22,2 (1980)
Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*
James Mahoney, *The Legacies of Liberalism: Path Dependence and Political Regimes in Central America*
Sven Steinmo, Kathleen Thelen, and Frank Longstreth, eds. *Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics* (Cambridge 1992)

March 14-18 – Spring Break

**PART II: COMPETING PARADIGMS AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES**

9. **March 23– Structural Approaches and Macro-Analytic Political Economy: Class, States, and Regimes**

* Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyne Huber Stephens, and John D. Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy*, 1992 (Read Chaps. 1-3 & 7, plus one chapter from 4, 5, or 6).

* Barbara Geddes, *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics* (University of Michigan Press, 2003), chapter to be announced (on reserve)


* Ian S. Lustick, "History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias," *American Political Science Review* (September 1996) (on reserve)

(Mid-Term Exam Due)

Recommended Reading:

Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, 1979.
Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Falletto, *Dependency and Development in Latin America*. 

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Alexander Gerschenkron, *Bread and Democracy in Germany* (Univ. of California, 1943).

10. March 30: Rational Choice and Micro-Analytic Political Economy

*André Blais, *To Vote or Not to Vote*


Recommended Reading:

Margaret Levi, “A Model, a Method, and a Map: Rational Choice in Comparative and Historical Analysis,” in Mark Lichbach and Alan Zuckerman, *Comparative Politics*.
James Alt and Kenneth Shepsle, eds. *Perspectives on Positive Political Economy*.
Robert Bates, *Toward a Political Economy of Development: A Rational Choice Perspective*
Samuel Popkin, *The Rational Peasant*. 
Gabriel Almond, "Rational Choice Theory and the Social Sciences," in *A Discipline Divided*.

11. April 6– No class session; work on theory and methods paper


(Paper Abstract due)

Recommended Reading:

Juan Linz, “The Perils of Presidentialism,” *Journal of Democracy*
Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies*
James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions* (Free Press 1989) and *Democratic Governance*. 

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13. April 20 – Political Culture


**Recommended Reading:**

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America.*
PART III: SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES AND THEORETICAL DEBATES

14. April 27– States and Markets: The Political Economy of Development


Recommended Reading:

Robert Bates, Beyond the Miracle of the Market.
Peter Evans, Dietrich Ruescemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds. Bringing the State Back In (1985)
David Held, Political Theory and the Modern State (Stanford, 1989).
Joel Migdal, Strong Societies and Weak States (1988)
Sebastian Edwards, Crisis and Reform in Latin America: From Despair to Hope (Oxford University
Robert Wade, Governing the Market.
Robert Keohane and Helen Milner, Internationalization and Domestic Politics (Cambridge University Press, 1996).
Luigi Manzetti, “Political Manipulations and Market Reform Failures,” World Politics (April 2003) (on reserve)
Duane Swank, Global Capital, Political Institutions, and Policy Change in Developed Welfare States.
Evelyne Huber, ed. *Models of Capitalism: Lessons for Latin America*.

15. **May 4: Civil Society, Social Movements, and Contentious Politics**


**Recommended Reading:**

Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge 2001).
Philip Oshorn, *Organizing Civil Society: The Popular Sectors and the Struggle for Democracy in Chile*.

**Final paper due May 10 at 5:00 p.m.**