

**SYLLABUS**

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**Course Description**

This course serves as an introduction to the basic concepts, methods, primary empirical materials, theoretical approaches, and current challenges of comparative politics. Students will be trained to think and write critically on substantive issues in the politics of different countries. Although comparative politics is often defined as “the study of all countries *excluding* the United States,” this course will not abide by that rather perfunctory definition. The U.S. will be included at different points in the course as a baseline for comparison.

As a primer for newcomers to this subdiscipline of political science, the course has been organized with an increasing level of difficulty. Students begin with an introduction to the most basic tools of political science; then they are trained to analyze complex empirical materials. Later, they must make their way up the “ladder of abstraction” to the tricky world of theory-building and hypothesis-testing.

In the first section of the course (Session 1), students will examine the methods, concepts, and epistemology of comparative politics. Learning how to use these tools to study politics is similar to “basic training.” I prefer: a “bootcamp for the mind” - not very pleasurable, but very necessary. Aspiring majors in political science and/or international relations will find this primer useful. I *strongly recommend* that such students enroll in POSC 230 Methods of Political Research soon after completing this course.

The second section of the course (Sessions 2-4) introduces students to six country cases - Britain, Germany, and the “BRICs” – Brazil, Russia, India, and China. Students will also receive a primer on the European Union. This survey will provide students with a basic lay of the political land. Students will learn about the crucial moments, institutions, processes, and individuals that shaped the political experiences of these major actors in world politics. The surveys will also present several “mid-range propositions” - causal statements about particular sets of countries that come in handy when attempting to understand complex empirical materials.

As students use these empirical cases and mid-range propositions, class lectures will introduce students to some of the theoretical arguments that have been built on the comparative study of the countries examined in this section. The study of Britain and Germany will inform our on-going discussion about diverse routes to democracy; Russia and China will provide empirical material for the application of theories about state-building and revolution that are taken from

work on Western Europe; the study of China will highlight the problems of transitioning to democratic governance in the context of “late late” development; and analysis of the European Union will inform our examination of how the effectiveness of public policies might be evaluated using social science methods. Study of Brazil and India will spearhead our examination of theories of modernization and democratization, the final section of the class (Session 4).

In addition to instruction on political science methods, theory, empirical data, and the data analysis project, students in this course will receive workshop instruction on writing, oral presentation skills, and research techniques. Workshops will occur during the regular class time though off-class options for further instruction will be available on a recommended basis.

### **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. Students must be fully prepared *at all times* to discuss the readings and concepts from previous lectures. 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. Attendance is required.

### **Reading Materials**

This course requires your purchase of one textbook, which is presently on sale at the college bookstore:

Mark Kesselman, Joel Krieger, and William A. Joseph, eds. 2010. *Introduction to Comparative Politics*. Boston: Wadsworth/Cengage. The best collection of “middle-range” studies of comparative cases currently on the market. We will refer to this reading as “KKJ,” for short.

The following is optional for purchase (available on Amazon.com and other purveyors):

W. Phillips Shively. 2002. *The Craft of Political Research* Sixth Ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

All the reading materials for this course are available on Moodle. This includes clippings from periodicals such as *The New York Times*, the *Financial Times*, the *Economist*, and audio and video materials. Students wishing to deepen their quantitative skills will have access to a second Moodle page with podcasts and other materials providing instruction on multiple statistical techniques. Additional resources are available on the course’s web page (<http://people.carleton.edu/~amontero/cpr.htm>).

### **Grading**

Assessment of the students in this course will be based on their performance on two short papers,

a group data analysis project with oral presentation and written report components, and classroom participation. The grade breakdown follows:

<b>First Writing Assignment</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Second Writing Assignment</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Group Data Analysis Project</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Preliminary Report:</b>	<b>(5%)</b>
<b>Group Dynamics:</b>	<b>(5%)</b>
<b>Oral Presentation:</b>	<b>(10%)</b>
<b>Final Report:</b>	<b>(10%)</b>
<b>Class Participation (including periodic diagnostic exams)</b>	<b>20%</b>

### Writing Assignments

Paper assignments in this course are of varying lengths. Yet they must all be typed, paginated, and double-spaced with 12cpi font size and one-inch margins (unjustified). I require the use of Times New Roman font type as this is a cross-platform variety.

These assignments must be turned in as PDF files unless otherwise indicated by 5 p.m. in the student's hand-in folder on the Courses directory on the due date specified below. *Late work will receive no credit.* Technical problems involved in converting and uploading work onto Courses will not be accepted as a reason for late or improperly formatted work. Students remain responsible for addressing all glitches unless they are systemic. Proper use of spelling, punctuation, and grammar is expected. Since ability to edit your own work and produce concise argument is a touchstone for assessing and developing your critical skills, students will not be allowed to surpass the required number of pages. A handout will be distributed with the particular parameters of each of these assignments well before the due date. Note: This course is a WR2 course.

#### Paper #1 (Methods Exercise):

Students will be asked to select a single article from a list of citations, find and download a copy in PDF format. Once acquired, students will evaluate the article by identifying the main argument, the key variables, indicators for variance, and main concepts. Students must specify if

the concepts are clear to them or not. If not, they must explain why. This paper must be four to five pages in length. Additional requirements of this Methods Exercise will be made available in a handout.

### Paper #2 (Mid-Range Proposition Building Exercise):

Based on their study of Britain, Germany, Russia, and China students will prepare a five to six page paper proposing a causal argument about the formation and maintenance of democracy. They will support their argument with a brief qualitative comparison of two of the three countries listed above. Papers that integrate light research and present both quantitative and qualitative data to support the author's claims will receive the highest grades.

### Group Data Analysis Project

As the class begins to consider empirical cases, the students will be divided into groups of 3-4 members. Each group will be charged with the task of collecting quantitative data on a number of countries as part of a collaborative project involving a choice of hypotheses concerning the link between socio-economic development and democratization. Each group will work with the professor to focus their project and they will consult Danya Leebaw or Kristin Partlo, the social science librarians, for help in acquiring the necessary data. Each research team will carry on some of their discussions in Moodle so that the professor may monitor the group's progress. Using Excel and Stata, a statistical program, each group will analyze the quantitative data they have collected and render a report of 6-8 pages due at the end of the term. Each group will present their data formally in a timed presentation to the class during the final week of the term. A detailed handout will describe the format and other aspects of this project during Session 2.

While each member of the research groups will receive a share of the group score on the written report and the oral presentation, peers will prepare confidential, written insights on the contribution of all other members. Additionally, group members will be required to post on their Moodle conference evidence of *consistent* progress. This data and the professor's own observations will be used to adjust the individual score for group members, if need be. Students ought to be aware that the poor performance of any one member of their research team can affect the scores of their colleagues. Hence, *group dynamics scores* are, like the presentation scores (although less strictly so), the products of *collective responsibility*.

The group assignment will be evaluated with four grades – the first for a preliminary report on the variables and data the group is working with; the second for the relative capacity of the group members to collaborate successfully; the third for the group oral presentation; and the fourth for the final report due at the end of the term.

### 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 class discussion. The following are structured presentation formats that will be used in this course, in addition to the formal presentation of the group research project:

- (1) A simulation on Russian democracy and state capacity.
- (2) A debate on human rights and political liberalization in China.
- (3) Small group discussions on some of the reading.

In addition to these activities, occasionally students will prepare homework assignments or answer written and oral questions based on the readings and the lectures. These periodic “diagnostics” will assess listening and reading comprehension skills. They will compose half of the total participation score.

### Discussion Section

I offer informal and voluntary discussion sections on the graded assignments in this course. These sessions, which take the form of Q&A meetings with the professor, will usually be held in the classroom during common time.

### The Grading Scale

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

- 98-100 A+
- 94-97 A
- 91-93 A-
- 88-90 B+
- 83-87 B
- 79-82 B-
- 76-78 C+
- 72-75 C
- 68-71 C-
- 67/below D/F

### 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 the useful handout on “Avoiding Academic Misconduct,” available on the course webpage.

## 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.**

## **SECTION I**

### **BOOTCAMP FOR THE MIND:**

#### **THE TOOLS OF STUDYING COMPARATIVE POLITICS**

#### **Session 1: Science! Assumptions, Causal Relationships, Concepts, Method, and Variables**

##### **Toward a *Science* of Politics: The Rational-Choice Assumption (September 13, Monday)**

Richard Harter, "Piltdown Man" (A Cautionary Tale About The Importance of Verification in Scientific Inquiry). On Moodle only (study webpage to get the main idea).

Gina Kolata, "Behind Cancer Guidelines, Quest for Data," *New York Times* (November 23, 2009). On Moodle.

##### **Epistemology: The Assumption of Rationality in Political Science (September 15, Wednesday)**

William H. Riker, "Political Science and Rational Choice." In *Perspectives on Positive Political Economy*, eds. James E. Alt and Kenneth A. Shepsle. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

##### **How Do We Know a Good Causal Argument When We See One? (September 17, Friday; September 20, Monday)**

Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994, Chapter 1.

Shively, *The Craft of Political Research*, ch. 6.

*Recommended:* Gerardo Munck, "Canons of Research Design in Qualitative Analysis," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 33:3 (1998): 18-45.

### **Variables, Definitions, and Conceptualization (September 22, Wednesday)**

Philippe Schmitter & Terry Lynn Karl, "What Democracy Is....and Is Not," *Journal of Democracy* (Summer 1991).

### **Skills Workshop #1: Methods Exercise and Writing Basics (September 24, Friday)**

Shively, *The Craft of Political Research*, chs. 7 and 9.

Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War," *International Security* 20:1 (Summer 1995): 5-38.

Podcast: Writing Workshop

*Review Excel spreadsheet program and see podcast on the homework assignment. Prepare bivariate correlation homework assignment for September 27, Monday.*

## **SECTION II**

### **DIFFERENT ROUTES TO MODERNITY AND DEMOCRACY**

#### **Session 2: The Advanced Capitalist States: Class, the State, and Institutions in the Building of Democracy**

##### **Britain**

#### **"No bourgeoisie, no democracy": The Barrington Moore Theorem (September 27, Monday)**

KKJ, Chapter 2, Sections 1-3

Barrington Moore, *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1966, pp. 413-432.

#### **Critiques of Barrington Moore: Skocpol and Institutional Arguments (September 29, Wednesday)**

Theda Skocpol, "A Critical Review of Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*," *Politics and Society* 4:1 (1973): 1-34.

KKJ, Chapter 2, Sections 4-5

## **British Politics in Comparative Perspective (October 1, Friday)**

*The Economist* articles and other materials on Moodle.

## **Germany**

### **How Democracies Die: By Natural Causes or Murder? (October 4, Monday)**

Juan Linz, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, pp. 14-32 and 50-58.

KKJ, Chapter 4, Sections 1-3.

## **THE DATA ANALYSIS GROUP ASSIGNMENTS ARE DISTRIBUTED (October 5, Tuesday) – MOODLE DISCUSSIONS SHOULD BEGIN AFTER THIS DATE**

### **SHORT PAPER #1: METHODS EXERCISE DUE (October 7, Thursday)**

*Class on Wednesday, Oct. 6 and Friday, Oct. 8 are cancelled due to the Latin American Studies Assoc. meetings in Toronto. During this period, as a supplement to the data analysis group work, all students must watch a series of quantitative methods podcasts. All students are expected to work on their own and review Shivley's chs. 6-7 and 9 as well as the materials on the methods Moodle page. Some homework assignments on these materials will be used to follow up on these skills.*

### **Bringing the Social Back In: Social Democracy and Its Crisis (October 11, Monday)**

KKJ, Chapter 4, Sections 4-5.

Eckhard Hein and Achim Truger. 2005. "Whatever Happened to Germany?" *International Review of Applied Economics* 19:1 (January).

## **The European Union**

### **History and Institutions (October 13, Wednesday)**

Europa webpage ([http://europa.eu/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/index_en.htm)) (Become familiar with the material on this page. Also review the Statistics area).

Helen Wallace. 2005. "An Institutional Anatomy and Five Policy Modes." In *Policy-Making in the European Union* 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. Helen Wallace, William Wallace, and Mark A. Pollack, eds. New York: Oxford University Press.

*The Economist*. 2007. "Future of the European Union." (March 17) and additional articles on Moodle.

**PRELIMINARY DATA REPORTS DUE (October 14, Thursday)**

**The Travails of the Modern EU (October 15, Friday)**

Ian Ward. 2003. "A Decade of Europe? Some Reflections on an Aspiration." *Journal of Law and Society* 30:2 (June): 236-57.

Paul Magnette. 2003. "European Governance and Civic Participation: Beyond Elitist Citizenship?" *Political Studies* 51:1: 144-60.

**Skills Workshop #2: Working with Stata (Oct. 16-19)**

Podcasts on quantitative techniques on Methods Moodle page.

**NO CLASS - MIDTERM BREAK (October 18, Monday)**

**Session 3: The BRICs: From Socialism to Capitalism**

**Russia**

**State-Building As Organized Crime: The Russian Case (October 20, Wednesday)**

Charles Tilly. 1985. "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime." In *Bringing the State Back In*, Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds. New York: Cambridge University Press.

KKJ, Chapter 11, Sections 1-3

**Russian Democracy as a Problem of State-Building (October 22, Friday)**

KKJ, Chapter 11, Sections 4-5

Alexandra V. Orlova. 2004. "From Social Dislocation to Human Trafficking: The Russian Case," *Problems of Post-Communism* 51:6 (November-December).

**Russian Democracy in Action: The Russia Simulation (October 25, Monday)**

**China**

**From Political Revolution to Economic Reform (October 27, Wednesday)**

KKJ, Chapter 13, Sections 1-5

Film: “PBS Frontline: China in the Red” on Moodle page.

**Does Economic Development Guarantee Democratization? (October 29, Friday)**

An Chen. 2002. “Capitalist Development, Entrepreneurial Class, and Democratization in China,”  
*Political Science Quarterly* 117:3 (Fall): 401-423.

**China’s Growth and Development: The China Debate (November 1, Monday)**

**SHORT PAPER #2: PROPOSITION-BUILDING EXERCISE DUE (November 2, Tuesday)**

**Session 4: The BRICs: From Underdevelopment to Globalized Growth**

**Brazil**

**Development Without Equity? (November 3, Wednesday)**

KKJ, Chapter 9, Sections 1-3

**Globalization and Improved Social Welfare? (November 5, Friday)**

KKJ, Chapter 9, Sections 4-5

*The Economist*, survey of Brazil (Fall 2009), on Moodle.

**India**

**Post-Colonialism, Independence, and Statism (November 8, Monday)**

KKJ, Chapter 6, Sections 1-3

**The Reformist Push (November 10, Wednesday)**

KKJ, Chapter 6, Sections 4-5

**Session 5: Student Perspectives on the Development-Democracy Nexus**

**Data Analysis Group Presentations (November 12, Friday; November 15, Monday; November 17, Wednesday)**

**PEER EVALUATIONS DUE (November 17, Wednesday)**

**DATA ANALYSIS GROUP REPORTS DUE (November 19, Friday)**