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PSCI 220S.01: Introduction to Comparative Government

Abhishek Chatterjee

University of Montana - Missoula, abhishek.chatterjee@umontana.edu

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University of Montana
Department of political science

PSCI 220: Introduction to Comparative Government
Spring 2022
MWF, 10:00-10:50 am, University Hall 210

Abhishek Chatterjee

Email: Abhishek.chatterjee@umontana.edu

Office Hours: Mondays, and Fridays 11:30 am-12:30 pm; or by appointment

Office: Liberal Arts 355

Rachel Willcockson (Teaching Assistant)

Email: rachel.willcockson@umontana.edu

Office Hours: Friday 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm; or by appointment

Office Hours Link: <https://umontana.zoom.us/j/93780191899>

Course Description and objectives

As the title indicates, this is an introductory course in a sub-field of political science that tends to study the “politics,” and “government” of various countries—including the United States—“comparatively.” The quotes around some of the words above indicate that we will be collectively thinking a bit more deeply than perhaps usual about these terms. So, for instance we shall be asking about both what constitutes “politics” or “government,” and why we need to “compare” to understand politics and government. We will discover that the study of comparative politics includes the investigation of questions such as, “why are certain states ‘democratic,’ and others ‘authoritarian?’” and “why do certain countries have governments that can easily tax people, educate, and even relatively swiftly punish citizens, while others struggle to do all three?” and a final example, “why is the difference between the rich and the poor greater in some countries than others?” in each of these examples—as in many others—we aim to derive some general propositions about (roughly speaking) the causes of, respectively, democracy and authoritarianism, strength or capacity of governments to do things, and income and wealth inequality. It further turns out that comparing is an especially good—perhaps even natural—way of answering certain general questions about the social and political world. We shall therefore also try to learn what it means to compare rigorously and systematically, and perhaps start developing the habit ourselves when we ask similar questions.

None of the above precludes learning about particular countries; indeed, it allows one to ask “good” questions about the countries one is interested in, and as such provides a framework for learning. It is for this reason that instead of focusing on a particular group of countries, we will range widely across time and space in ways that illuminate the questions we ask.

Requirements

Reading assignments should be completed by the date listed on the syllabus. You are expected to attend every lecture. Note that the lectures are very important because many of the readings are not necessarily self-explanatory.

Your grade will be based on the following assignments:

1. **10%** of your grade will be based on a weekly/biweekly writing assignment. These assignments will not be graded; that is, you will get full credit as long as you complete them in the manner described as follows. You are required to write a brief (about one page) summary of the readings marked below with an asterisk. These summaries should be tightly compressed, concise summaries of the main arguments of the readings. In your own words, you should state the main claim of the reading: what is the phenomenon being discussed? What are the main concepts employed? And what are the main hypotheses proposed by the author? I think you will find that writing these short papers is excellent exercise: it will

force you to concentrate while reading, and you will find that, with practice, you can distinguish between central and peripheral material and focus on the former, even while reading difficult articles. And, if all that were not enough, when it comes time to study for examinations, you will have summaries of many of the readings at your fingertips. As long as you make a good faith effort to capture the essence of the readings, you will receive full credit. You are to upload these to the Moodle site (under “Weekly/Biweekly summaries”) before the lecture (i.e. by 10 am) under which it is listed. Finally note that you don’t have to do the assignment every week (you have to do it only for the readings marked with asterisks, and there are no such readings some of the weeks).

2. **30%** of your grade will depend on a take home midterm exam due on **March 18 (I will email you the exam or post it on Moodle on March 14)**

3. **30%** of your grade will be based on a 5 to 8- page group paper to be presented by each group (of around 5 students each). The paper will be of the nature of a research design, or a research proposal where each group will come up with a research question, justify why it’s worth pursuing, and finally sketch out what will be involved in pursuing it. Preliminary drafts of these papers, in turn will be ‘judged,’ or reviewed by your peers (other groups), after which each group will revise their papers, and present the final version in class during the last week. The presentation will, among other things, explain how each group addressed the comments of their peers. I will provide rubrics for evaluating the research questions. To help you stay on track, the paper will be done in stages. In stage one, each group comes up with a clear research question, and circulates it among the rest of the class. In the second stage, each group revises its research questions, and/or responds to feedback it receives from the other groups (each group receives three sets of comments), does the literature review (see below), and describes how the project will be completed. In stage 3, each group receives another 3 sets of comments, and then revises its paper accordingly. In the final stage, each group will write up their final version of the paper, and circulate it among the other groups prior to presenting them in class. **Stage 1 will be on February 28; you will receive feedback on your research questions on March 4. Stage 2 will be on March 29; You will receive written feedback by April 6. On this day (April 6) we will also discuss your proposals in class. The final versions of the papers should be circulated by May 2.**

We will talk more about this assignment in class, but the research design should generally have the following components:

- A statement of the research question, which addresses the following questions: (1) why is the question important, given the present state of knowledge? (2) How does the question fit into current conversations/ arguments; if it does not, why should the question be included? As will be discussed in class, research questions arise from a consideration of the merits of existing information, observations, or currently held beliefs. Are the current beliefs well supported? If not, what are the alternative ideas? Given these ideas, what are some logical next questions? You will need to provide context and evidence for your assertions such that your peers (who may not be as informed or interested in your chosen topic) are able to apprise your ideas. This means, among other things, citing references that support your ideas. **(This part comprises Stage 1)**
- A literature review, which succinctly summarizes what, if anything, has been written about the question, and what have been some of the approaches to answering it (if any). The review should also point out—if possible—some of the shortcomings of the extant ways of either looking at/conceptualizing and/or answering the question.
- A summary of the alternative argument that explains how it improves on or adds to the existing debate. Remember that this does not have to be the “final” argument; it can be an interesting alternative argument that illuminates a new aspect of the question or makes one think differently about it (of course you will have to say why it should be “interesting”).
- A description of how the project will be completed, which addresses the following questions: (1) what kind of evidence will be advanced to support the argument (for instance, will there be a case study, or some kind of comparative study)? (2) Why is such evidence appropriate for the question asked? (3) How will such evidence be collected?

The evaluation rubric for the research design (which I will be providing will use the following criteria):

- Does the research proposal contain the components enumerated above? If not, is there a good reason not to

include all of them?

- Is the question clear? Is it precisely stated?
- Is the project realistically achievable, say as a part of a senior, or master's (even doctoral) thesis?
- Is the writing clear and coherent? Are there too many spelling and grammatical errors? Are all the works properly cited?

4. **30%** of your grade will depend on a take home, cumulative final exam, which is to be uploaded to Moodle by 5 pm on Wednesday, May 11. I will email you the exam, or post it on Moodle on **May 4**.

Readings

The following book has been ordered through the bookstore. All other readings will be available on Moodle under the corresponding date/week listed in the schedule below.

Patrick H. O'Neil and Ronald Rogowski, *Essential Readings in Comparative Politics* (4th edition), W.W. Norton, 2013

Office Hours

You are all welcome-- even encouraged--to stop by, introduce yourselves, discuss any problems you might be having, talk about course material, and even, hopefully, argue about course material. I will also address specific questions sent to me by email. Please keep in mind, however, that I cannot summarize in an email the lecture that you missed.

Disability Services

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction by supporting collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you have a disability that requires an accommodation, contact either of us at the beginning of the semester so that proper accommodations can be provided. Please contact Disability Services for Students if you have questions, or call Disability Services for Students (DSS) for voice/text at 406.243.2243. You may also fax the Lommasson Center 154 for more information at 406.243.5330.

Academic Honesty

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the university. All students need to be familiar with the student conduct code: http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php

Schedule

Part I: Basic Approaches to Comparative Politics (and the social sciences in general)

January 19: Introduction and overview of the class

January 21: Political or social 'science'

- Daniel E. Lieberman, "Upending the Expectations of Science," *The New York Times*, July 14, 2002, 4/15
- Robin Dunbar, *The Trouble with Science* (Cambridge: Harvard university Press, 1995), 12-33

January 24: Comparative politics and the comparative Method

- Todd Landmann, *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics, An Introduction* (NY: Routledge, 2008), 3-16
- O'Neil and Rogowski, 3-7, 9-12, 18-22

Part II: The State

January 26: What is the "state" and why is it important?

- O'Neil and Rogowski, 26-39
- *Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in Peter B. Evans et al., *Bringing the State Back In* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1985)

January 28: More about the state

- O'Neil and Rogowski, 39-57
- Walter C. Opello, and Steven J. Rosow, *The Nation State and Global Order* (Lynne Rienner, 1999), Introduction, and Chapter 4

January 31: Sovereignty, a closer look

- O'Neil and Rogowski, 68-74

February 2: Subjects/citizens and the state: exertion of power

- *John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley* (Urbana Champaign: University of Illionis press, 1982) 3-32

February 4: State power

- Michael Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms, and Results," *European Archive of Sociology* 25 (1984): 185-212

February 7: How states make citizens, and (sometimes) vice-versa

- Martin Van Creveld, *The Rise and Decline of the State* (Cambridge University Press, 1999) 205-222.

February 9: Nationalism

- O'Neil and Rogowski, 77-85

February 11: More on Nationalism

- *Michael Hechter, *Containing Nationalism* (Oxford University Press, 2000) 24-33, 56-69

Part III: The State and the Regime

February 14: Democratization, how and why?

- O'Neil and Rogowski, 203-12
- Walter C. Opello, and Steven J. Rosow, *The Nation State and Global Order* (Lynne Reinner, 1999), Chapter 5.

February 16: Democratization: The historical background (in Europe)

- *Theodore Hamerow, *The Birth of a New Europe* (UNC Press, 1989), 285-309

February 18: Historical background, continued

- John Markoff, *Waves of Democracy: Social Movements and Political Change* (Pine Forge, 1996), Selections

February 21: **No Class, President's Day**

February 23: Some general propositions

- O'Neil and Rogowski, 405-430
- *Evelyne Huber, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and John D. Stephens, "The Impact of Economic Development on Democracy," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 7 (Summer 1993): 71-85

February 25: Authoritarianism, a closer look

- Walter C. Opello, and Steven J. Rosow, *The Nation State and Global Order* (Lynne Reinner, 1999), Chapter 6.
- O'Neil and Rogowski, 267-90

February 28: Contemporary authoritarianism

- O'Neil and Rogowski, 303-12

March 2: Democratization and authoritarianism, some puzzles

- Alfred Stepan and Graeme Robertson, "An 'Arab' More than 'Muslim' Electoral Gap," *Journal of Democracy* 14 (July 2003), pp. 30-44
- *Jason Browlee, "The Transnational Challenge to Arab Freedom," *Current History* (November 2011)

March 4: Puzzles, continued

- O'Neil and Rogowski, 250-64

Part IV: Challenges to the state and regime

March 7: Revolutions

- *O'Neil and Rogowski, 316-30

March 9: Revolutions, continued

- O'Neil and Rogowski, 349-63, 366-72

March 11: **Review session for midterms**

March 14: Civil wars (**Midterms posted**)

- Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Civil Wars," in Boix & Stokes: *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*

March 16: Civil wars continued

- O'Neil and Rogowski, 86-94

March 18: **Midterms Due**

- *John Bowen, "The Myth of Global Ethnic Conflict," *Journal of Democracy* 7 (1996): 3-14

March 21-25: **Spring Break**

Part V: The state and the economy

March 28: "Rich" states and their economies

- Walter C. Opello, and Steven J. Rosow, *The Nation State and Global Order* (Lynne Rienner, 1999), Chapter 7
- O’Neil and Rogowski, 440-48

March 30: Continued

- O’Neil and Rogowski, 450-64

April 1: The wealth and poverty of nations

- O’Neil and Rogowski, 137-59

April 4: Institutions and development, an example

- *O’Neil and Rogowski, 160-80

April 6: Day to discuss paper drafts

April 8: Development and development strategies and another view on how the “rich” got “rich”

- Ha-Joon Chang, “Kicking Away the Ladder”

April 11: Continued

- *Kiren Chaudhry, “The Myths of the Market and the Common History of the Late Developers,” *Politics and Society*, 21:245 (1993)

April 13: Development strategies, successes, and failures

- Vivek Chibber, *Locked in Place: State Building and Late Industrialization in India* (Princeton, 2003), chapter 1

April 15: Development, underdevelopment and growth

- O’Neil and Rogowski, 547-69

April 18: Continued

- *Giovanni Arrighi, “The African Crisis: World Systemic and Regional Aspects,” *New Left Review* 15 (May-June 2002): 5-36

Part VI: Globalization

April 20: What is globalization?

- O’Neil and Rogowski, 595-608

April 22: Is globalization “new?”

- Herman Schwartz, “Globalization, the Long View,” in in Richard Stubbs and Geoffrey Underhill, *Political Economy and the Changing Global Order*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005

April 25: A critical view of globalization-talk

- *Immanuel Wallerstein, “After Developmentalism and Globalization, What”, *Social Forces* 83:3, March 2005

April 27: Globalization and the state

- Walter C. Opello, and Steven J. Rosow, *The Nation State and Global Order* (Lynne Rienner, 1999), Chapters 11 and 12

April 29: Catch up day and/or wrap up

May 2: Review session for final exam, and class presentations

May 4: Class presentations (Final exam posted)

May 6: Class presentations

Final Exam: To be uploaded to Moodle on Wednesday, May 11th by 5pm.