PSCI 220S.01: Introduction to Comparative Government

Abhishek Chatterjee

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

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi/5794
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 rigorously and systematically compare, 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 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 hand these to your teaching assistant at the beginning of the lecture under which it is listed. Finally note that you don’t have to do the assignment every week (i.e. you have to do it only for the readings marked with asterisks, and there are no such readings some of the weeks).

2. 10% of your grade will be based on 2 in-class (25 minute) quizzes (5% each). These will be given on February 29, and April 13.

3. 25% of your grade will depend on an in-class midterm exam on March 21

4. 25% of your grade will be based on a 5-page paper due on April 18 (the topic/question for the paper will be distributed on April 11)

5. 30% of your grade will depend on an in class, cumulative final exam, to be held on May 12 between 10:10 am and 12:10pm.

Readings

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


Walter C. Opello, and Steven J. Rosow, *The Nation State and Global Order* (Lynne Reinner, 1999)

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](http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php)
**Schedule**

**WEEK 1**

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

January 25: introduction and overview of the class

January 27: Political or social ‘science’


January 29: Comparative politics and the comparative Method

- O’Neil and Rogowski, 3-7, 9-12, 18-22

**WEEK 2**

**Part II: The State**

February 1: What is the “state” and why is it important?

- O’Neil and Rogowski, 26-39

February 3: More about the state

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

February 5: Sovereignty, a closer look

- O’Neil and Rogowski, 68-74

**WEEK 3**

February 8: Subjects/citizens and the state: exertion of power


February 10: How states make citizens, and (sometimes) vice-versa


February 12: Nationalism

• O’Neil and Rogowski, 77-85
• Michael Hechter, *Containing Nationalism* (Oxford University Press, 2000) 24-33, 56-69

WEEK 4

February 15: No Class, President’s Day

Part III: The State and the Regime

February 17: 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 19 Democratization: The historical background (in Europe)


WEEK 5

February 22: Historical background, continued


February 24: Some general propositions

• O’Neil and Rogowski, 405-430

February 26: 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

WEEK 6
February 29: Contemporary authoritarianism (20 Minute quiz before lecture)
- O’Neil and Rogowski, 303-12

March 2: Democratization and authoritarianism, some puzzles

March 4: International sources of authoritarianism

WEEK 7
March 7: Puzzles, continued
- O’Neil and Rogowski, 250-64

Part IV: Challenges to the state and regime
March 9: Revolutions
- *O’Neil and Rogowski, 316-30

March 11: Revolutions, continued
- O’Neil and Rogowski, 349-63, 366-72

WEEK 8
March 14: Civil wars
- O’Neil and Rogowski, 86-94
- Stathis N. Kalyvas, “Civil Wars,” in Boix & Stokes: *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*

March 16: Civil wars continued

March 18: Review session for midterms

WEEK 9
March 21: *In class midterm exam*

Part V: The state and the economy
March 23: “Rich” states and their economies
• Walter C. Opello, and Steven J. Rosow, *The Nation State and Global Order* (Lynne Reinner, 1999), Chapter 7
• O’Neil and Rogowski, 440-48

March 25: Continued
• O’Neil and Rogowski, 450-64

WEEK 10
March 28: Catch up day, no readings.

March 30: The wealth and poverty of nations
• O’Neil and Rogowski, 137-59

April 1: Institutions and development, an example
• *O’Neil and Rogowski, 160-80

April 4-April 8: Spring Break

WEEK 11
April 11: Some finance (*paper topic distributed*)
• O’Neil and Rogowski, 134-36, 184-85

April 13: Development and development strategies and another view on how the “rich” got “rich”
(20 minute quiz before lecture)
• Ha-Joon Chang, “Kicking Away the Ladder”

April 15: Continued

WEEK 12
April 18: Development strategies, successes, and failures (*paper due*)
• Vivek Chibber, *Locked in Place: State Building and Late Industrialization in India* (Princeton, 2003), chapter 1

April 20: Development, underdevelopment and growth
• O’Neil and Rogowski, 547-69
April 22: Continued


WEEK 13

Part VI: Globalization

April 25: What is globalization?

- O’Neil and Rogowski, 595-608

April 27: 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 29: A critical view of globalization-talk


WEEK 14

May 2: Globalization and the state

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

May 4: Wrap up

May 6: Review session for final exam

Final Exam: Thursday, May 12th
10:10 am to 12:10 pm