This seminar surveys major questions that motivate research in comparative politics. The course introduces PhD students to the subfield and helps them prepare for the comprehensive exam.

Requirements:

1) Weekly readings: The reading load for this course is heavy. Students must come prepared to discuss the readings for the week.
2) Presentations: Each student must make one *individual* presentation and one *collaborative* presentation with another student (see below). Students will choose topics the first week of class. (20% of grade for each presentation)
3) Course requirements also include ten email posts (to the instructor and other seminar participants). Postings should be made no later than 10:00 a.m. on the day of each class meeting to allow time to read them. The postings need not be perfect essays - they should pose a series of questions or general ideas for discussion. The key is to make sure that we have some common talking points in class.
4) Written essay: one ten-page paper, submitted in two drafts. Details on the paper will be provided in class. Pose an interesting comparative politics question tell us briefly how others have explored this or related questions, and tell us how you might answer it differently and/or better.

**Readings:** 1) Asterisked readings can be downloaded through the university library website; copies of these will not be made available. 2) All other readings are available on the department’s “reading archive.” We have not ordered any books through the bookstore but you should consider purchasing some of the books on this list for your own library.

**Week 1 (): Comparative Politics: Varying Approaches**

**Discussion questions:** What is comparative politics? Where did the field come from? What, if anything, unites the subfield of comparative politics? What are the main epistemological, ontological, methodological, political or other divides?

- *“Symposium on Interpretivism.” APSA Qualitative Methods Section newsletter 1(2): 2-23.*
Week 2 (): Comparative Politics: Methodological Issues

Discussion questions: What is “the” comparative method? What are the primary methodological hurdles confronting comparative politics research(ers)?

- James Mahoney. 2003. “Strategies of Causal Assessment in Comparative Historical Analysis.” In James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences, pp. 337-72. (entire book recommended for exam prep)

Week 3 (): Nation and State I

Discussion questions: What is the state and where did it come from? Why do the institutions of the state take on different forms? What is state “strength” and what is its source?

- Jared Diamond, Guns, Germs, and Steel. Chapter 14, “From Egalitarianism to Kleptocracy.”

Week 4 (): Democracy
Discussion questions: What is democracy? What do we think we know about where it comes from?

- James Mahoney, “Knowledge Accumulation in Comparative Historical Research: the Case of Democracy and Authoritarianism.” In Mahoney and Rueschemeyer eds.

**Week 5 (): Institutions of Democracy**

Discussion questions: what are the main differences in the ways that democratic states are organized? What is the best approach to studying such institutional variation? What consequences does such variation have for political outcomes?

- Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy*, chapters 1-3
- Samuels and Hellwig, “Electoral Accountability and the Variety of Democratic Regimes.” Forthcoming (2007), *BJPS*

**Week 6 (): Political Culture**

Discussion questions: what is “political” culture, where does it come from, and how does it impact political behavior or political outcomes? How should we study political culture? What, if anything, ties the authors we study this week together? What is the difference between state and nation? What is the boundary between state and society? What is nationalism and where did it come from?

- *Lisa Wedeen APSR article*
**Week 7: Ethnic Conflict**

Discussion questions: what is ethnic identity, where does it come from, and what explains why ethnic groups clash (or not)?


**Week 8 (): Political Culture and Democratic Quality: Civil Society**

Discussion questions: what is “social capital,” why and how is it important?

- Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America Chapters TBA
- Joseph A. Schumpeter. 1942. Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy, chs. 21, 22.
- Matthew Cleary and Susan Stokes. 2006. Democracy & the Culture of Skepticism. Ch. 1, 4
- Charles Tilly, 2005. Trust and Rule, chapters 1-2, 6 NEED

**Week 9 (): Parties and Governance**

Discussion topic: What are the relevant differences in party systems and what creates them? What are the political consequences of differences in party systems?

**Week 10 (): Social Movements**

- Doug McAdam *et al.* 1996. *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*, Introduction and chs. 1-2, 6. Or McAdam *et al* *The Dynamics of Contention*

**Week 11 (): Political Economy I: The Wealth and Poverty of Nations**

Discussion question: Why are some countries rich and some countries poor?


**Week 12 (): Political Economy II: Varieties of Capitalism and Varieties of Democracy**

Discussion question: What creates incentives for redistribution, and why do such incentives differ across states?

- *Pontussen and Kenworthy in Perspectives on Politics 2005*
- Iversen *Capitalism, Welfare and Democracy*, chapter that extends Iverson and Soskice 2001 APSR paper
- Alberto Alesina *et al.*, “Why does the US not have a European-style welfare State?”

**Week 13 (): Political Economy III: The Global Context**

Ron Rogowski. *Commerce & Coalitions*, Chapters 1-2


Wibbels and Arce *World Politics* piece

Wibbels “Dependency Theory Redux” article

**Week 14: Student’s Choice Week**

The only we require for this week is that we read and discuss Chapter 1 from Munck and Snyder, “The Human Dimension of Comparative Research” (available at http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Political_Science/people/SnyderResearch.html.) The topic and others readings are up to you.