

**THEORIES OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS**  
**POLSCI 740**  
**Term 1, Fall 2018**

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**Seminar:** Tuesdays, 11.30am-2:20pm  
**Classroom:** KTH 709

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or by appointment

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## **Course Description**

This course is designed to introduce students to the main theoretical and conceptual issues in the field of Comparative Politics. It offers students a broad view of the selected themes, concepts and approaches that characterize the field, as well as an appreciation of how the field has evolved over time. The scope of the material will range from comparative paradigms, dominant methodologies, theoretical approaches, key issues and debates in the understanding of politics and government in Western and non-Western, developed and developing areas.

This course is intended for MA and PhD political science students who plan to write comprehensive exams and/or a thesis in comparative politics. Each week we will discuss a subset of the pertinent scholarly literature, focusing on a major theme or theoretical debate. Key methodological issues are addressed in context of the substantive and theoretical works, as well as in the written assignments for the class.

The required and recommended readings are not exhaustive comprehensive exam preparation: students will need to consult to study guide circulated in May. However, this course will give students an introduction to key works and debates from each theme covered on the exam, and provides opportunities to practice the writing skills necessary to write exam answers.

## **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Identify key debates in comparative politics and understand how different strands of the literature fit together
- Take a position on key debates in the literature; identify gaps in the theory, evidence, and/or scope of existing works of comparative politics
- Communicate their understanding of the literature and their analysis and critique clearly and concisely

## **Required Materials and Texts**

- Parsons, Craig. 2007. *How to Map Arguments in Political Science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Available at the campus store or online booksellers, or on reserve at Mills Library. Please note that this book is essential for providing a framework for your other readings
- All other articles and book chapters are available as library links on the Avenue page

## **Class Format**

One weekly seminar, 3 hours

## **Course Evaluation – Overview**

1. Participation, 20%, ongoing
2. Discussion leadership, 10%, date determined first week
3. Critical review papers, (2 x 15%) 30%, date determined by student
4. Take home final exam, 40%, due December 11

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

### **Participation (20%), ongoing**

A central feature of a seminar is that students learn from each other through discussion. As such, it is essential that all students do the readings in advance of the seminar and come prepared to participate actively in the class discussion. I strongly encourage you to think about what insights you can gain from the readings, not just what's "wrong" with them, which can be one's first inclination. Think about how the readings fit together (or don't), how they relate to readings in previous weeks, and especially how they relate to the topic of your literature review or policy debates with which you are familiar. I recognize that speaking in seminar can be intimidating at times, but it is a crucial skill in academia (and life!), and my goal is for our seminar to be an open-minded and considerate place to practice.

To help you prepare for class, you are required to **post a brief (350-500 word) reading response by Friday at midnight**. The response should include a preliminary answer to at least one question from the weekly guide I will post Tuesdays by midnight, at least one additional discussion question, and indicate familiarity with all the assigned readings. The best type of questions will be those that bridge, juxtapose, or somehow address multiple readings, highlighting theoretical or methodological similarities and differences. You should read your colleagues' responses before class, and **post at least one substantive response** (e.g. respond to their question or comment on additional questions it might raise, rather than saying "good point!"). You can skip one week's response without notice or penalty.

Students are expected to regularly read a newspaper with Canadian and international coverage and to contribute to class discussion on current events related to public policy.

Each week, PhD students are expected to read at least one of the items included under additional readings as part of their PhD comprehensive preparation and reference the reading in their reflections, comments, and class discussion.

### **Discussion leadership (10%), date determined first week**

You will take on the role of discussion leader for one week, in some cases in collaboration with a fellow student. It will be the discussion leader(s)' responsibility to review their colleagues' responses on Avenue and **compile a discussion guide, submitted to me by email no later than Monday at 2pm**. The guide should include my questions and a synthesis of student questions (so you will have to merge, edit, and organize according to the themes you identify). During class, the discussion leader(s)

will introduce the questions and key themes, explain why they are interesting or important, and initiate the discussion by proposing some answers, and facilitate throughout the seminar. The discussion guide should be prepared jointly when there is more than one student assigned to the week.

### **Critical review papers (2x15% = 30%), dates determined by student**

There are eleven weeks of readings in the class (after the first week and excluding the midterm break). You must submit two critical review essays, for any weeks except the week you are acting as discussion leader – they are separate assignments and need to be done on distinct topics. I don't need to know in advance when you plan to submit your review essay. Essays are due every week at the start of class (not later than that, and late submissions will not be accepted and do not count as submissions...since you choose when you submit and when you don't, there really isn't any valid excuse for handing in something late).

Essays must be 1500 words in length, single-spaced and typed in a 12-point font (this is approximately three single-spaced pages). They should refer to most or all of the required readings. Including one or more recommended reading is encouraged for MA students and required for PhD students, but additional research is not required. Review essays are NOT summaries of the readings. You are required to make links between readings, as well as providing a critical assessment of those readings. The essay should situate the readings and their research question(s) in the literature and discuss strengths and weaknesses. How do these readings contribute to our understanding of comparative politics?

### **Take home final exam (40%), due December 11<sup>th</sup>**

The final exam will cover all the materials introduced through the term. You will choose two out of four research questions. The exam questions will be circulated electronically on **November 27, 2018**. The exam questions will be based on the required readings and resemble questions ask in the comparative politics comprehensive field examinations. Your answer for each question should be around 4-5 pages long, single-spaced (about 2000 words each). A bibliography is required for all works cited. All students will submit their exams in hardcopy during class.

## **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

### **Week 1 (Sept 11) Introduction**

**Topic:** Introduction to course  
No assigned readings

### **Week 2 (Sept 18) What is comparative politics?**

**Topic:** What is comparative politics?  
Required readings:

Parsons, Introduction

Kohli, Atul, Peter Evans, Peter J Katzenstein, Adam Przeworski, Susanne Hoebler Rudolph, James C Scott, and Theda Skocpol. 1995. "The Role of Theory in Comparative Politics: a Symposium." *Policy Sciences* 48 (1): 1–49. doi:10.2307/25053951.

Baldez, Lisa. 2010. "The Gender Lacuna in Comparative Politics." *Perspectives on Politics* 8 (1): 199–205.

Recommended:

Mucciaroni, Gary. 2011. "The Study of LGBT Politics and Its Contributions to Political Science." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44 (1): 17–21. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096510001782>.

Laitin, David. 2002. "Comparative Politics: The State of the Subdiscipline." In *Political Science: State of the Discipline*, 630–659. W.W. Norton & Co.

Almond, Gabriel A. 1956. "Comparative Political Systems." *The Journal of Politics* 18 (3) (August 1): 391–409.

Wiarda, Howard J. 1998. "Is Comparative Politics Dead? Rethinking the Field in the Post-Cold War Era." *Third World Quarterly* 19 (5): 935–949.

### **Week 3 (Sept 25) What are comparative methods?**

**Topic:** What are comparative methods?

Required readings:

Hall, Peter. 2003. "Aligning Ontology and Methodology in Comparative Research." In *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, eds. James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Geddes, Barbara. 1990. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." *Political Analysis* 2 (1) (January 1): 131–150.

Mahoney, James. 2007. "Qualitative Methodology and Comparative Politics." *Comparative Political Studies* 40 (2) (February 1): 122–144.

Gaudry, Adam. 2015. "Researching the Resurgence." In *Research as Resistance*, edited by Leslie Brown and Susan Strega. *Insurgent Research and Community-Engaged Methodologies in 21st-Century Academic Inquiry*.

Recommended:

Lijphart, A. 1975. "The Comparable-Cases Strategy in Comparative Research." *Comparative Political Studies* 8 (2): 158–177.

Bennett, Andrew, and Colin Elman. 2006. "Qualitative Research: Recent Developments in Case Study Methods." *Annual Review of Political Science* 9 (1): 455–476.

Dion, Douglas. 1998. "Evidence and Inference in the Comparative Case Study." *Comparative Politics* 30 (2) (January 1): 127–145.

Tarrow, Sidney. 2010. "The Strategy of Paired Comparison: Toward a Theory of Practice." *Comparative Political Studies* 43 (2) (February 1): 230–259.

Gerring, John. 2004. "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?" *American Political Science Review* 98 (02): 341–354.

Rueschemeyer, Dietrich. 2003. "Can One or Few Cases Yield Theoretical Gains?" In *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, 305–336. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Collier, David, and James Mahoney. 1996. "Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research." *World Politics* 49 (1) (October 1): 56–91.

#### **Week 4 (Oct 2) Structure**

##### **Topic: Structure**

Required readings:

Parsons, Chapter 2

Skocpol, Theda, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), Chapter 1

Altamirano Jimenez, Isabel . 2007. "Indigenous Peoples and the Topography of Gender in Mexico and Canada." In *Remapping Gender in the New Global Order*, edited by Marjorie Griffin-Cohen and Janine Brodie. Rutledge: London.

Recommended:

Skocpol, Theda, and Margaret Somers. 1980. "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22 (2) (April 1): 174–197.

Mahoney, James, and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, ed. 2003. *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge University Press, Chapter 1.

Katzelson, Ira. 2009. "Strong Theory, Complex History: Structure and Configuration in Comparative Politics Revisited." In *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture and Structure*, 96–116. Second Edition. Cambridge University Press.

## **Week 5 (Oct 9) Fall mid-term recess, NO CLASS**

## **Week 6 (Oct 16) Institutions I: history**

### **Topic: Institutions I: history**

Required readings:

Parsons, Chapter 3

Hall, Peter A., and Rosemary C. R. Taylor. 1996. "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms." *Political Studies* 44 (5): 936–957.

Thelen, Kathleen. 1999. "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1): 369–404.

Waylen, Georgina. 2009. "What can historical institutionalism offer feminist institutionalists?" *Politics & Gender* 5(2):245-53.

Recommended:

March, James G., and Johan P. Olsen. 1984. "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life." *The American Political Science Review* 78 (3) (September 1): 734–749.

Steinmo, Sven, Kathleen Thelen, and Frank Longstreth, ed. 1992. *Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis*. Cambridge University Press, 1-32.

Pierson, Paul. 2000. "The Limits of Design: Explaining Institutional Origins and Change." *Governance* 13 (4): 475–499.

North, Douglass C. 1990. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge University Press, 3-10.

## **Week 7 (Oct 23) Institutions II: rationality**

### **Topic: Institutions II: rationality**

Required readings:

Munck, Gerardo L. (Gerardo Luis). 2001. "Game Theory and Comparative Politics: New Perspectives and Old Concerns." *World Politics* 53 (2): 173–204.



George Tsebelis, *Nested Games. Rational Choice in Comparative Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), Ch 2 . “In Defense of the Rational Choice Approach”, p.18-47.

Huber, Evelyne, and Michelle Dion. 2002. “Revolution or Contribution? Rational Choice Approaches in the Study of Latin American Politics.” *Latin American Politics and Society* 44 (3) (October 1): 1–28.

Recommended:

Levi, Margaret. 2009. “Reconsiderations of Rational Choice in Comparative and Historical Analysis.” In *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*, 117–133. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Calvert, Randall. 2002. “Identity, Expression and Rational Choice Theory.” In *Political Science: State of the Discipline*, 568–596. W.W. Norton & Co.

Cox, Gary. 2004. “Lies, Damned Lies and Rational Choice Analyses.” In *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*, 167–86. US: Cambridge University Press.

## **Week 8 (Oct 30) Culture & Ideas**

**Topic:** Culture & ideas

Required readings:

Parsons, Chapter 4

Finnemore, Martha, and Kathryn Sikkink. 2001. “Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 4 (1): 391–416.

Berman, Sheri. 2001. “Ideas, Norms, and Culture in Political Analysis.” *Comparative Politics* 33 (2) (January 1): 231–250.

Posner, Daniel N. 2004. “The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi.” *American Political Science Review* 98 (04): 529–45.

Recommended:

Almond, Gabriel Abraham, and Sidney Verba, ed. 1989. *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Sage Publications, Inc, Chapters 1 and 3.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." In *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, 3–30. N.Y.: Basic Books.

Putnam, Robert D., Robert Leonardi, and Raffaella Y. Nanetti. 1993. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton University Press, Chapters 4 and 5.

Wedeen, Lisa. 2002. "Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science." *The American Political Science Review* 96 (4) (December 1): 713–728.

Tarrow, Sidney. 1996. "Making Social Science Work Across Space and Time: A Critical Reflection on Robert Putnam's Making Democracy Work." *The American Political Science Review* 90 (2) (June 1): 389–397.

Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*, June 1. <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/48950/samuel-p-huntington/the-clash-of-civilizations>.

## **Week 9 (Nov 6) Democracy & Democratization**

### **Topic: Democracy and democratization**

Required readings:

Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late 20th Century*. University of Oklahoma Press, Chapters 1-2 (read selectively and note key arguments).

Schmitter, Philippe C. 1993. "Democracy's Third Wave." *The Review of Politics* 55 (2): 348–51. doi:10.2307/1407886. (review of Huntington by leading scholar)

Bunce, Valerie. 2000. "Comparative Democratization Big and Bounded Generalizations." *Comparative Political Studies* 33 (6-7) (September 1): 703–734.

Bellin, Eva. 2012. "Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons From the Arab Spring." *Comparative Politics* 44 (2): 127–49. doi:10.5129/001041512798838021.

Recommended:

Schedler, Andreas. "Elections Without Democracy: The Menu of Manipulation." *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 2 (2002): 36–50.

Howard, Marc, and Philip G. Roessler. "Liberalizing Electoral Outcomes in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes." *American Journal of Political Science* 50, no. 2 (April 2006): 365–381.

Carothers, T. "The End of the Transition Paradigm." *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 1 (2002): 5–21.

Geddes, Barbara. "What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 2, no. 1 (1999): 115–144.

Linz, Juan J. and Alfred C. Stepan. "Toward Consolidated Democracies." *Journal of Democracy* 7, no. 2 (1996): 14–33.

Art, David. 2012. "What Do We Know About Authoritarianism After Ten Years?" *Comparative Politics* 44 (3): 351–373.

## **Week 10 (Nov 13) Political economy and development**

### **Topic: Political economy and development**

Required readings:

Mahoney, James. *Colonialism and Postcolonial Development* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2010), Chapters 1 and 8

Kuokkanen, Rauna. 2011. "From Indigenous Economies to Market-Based Self-Governance: a Feminist Political Economy Analysis." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 44 (02). Cambridge University Press: 275–97.  
doi:10.1017/S0008423911000126.

## **Week 11 (Nov 20) Political representation I**

### **Topic: Political representation I**

Required readings:

Mansbridge, Jane. 1999. "Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent 'Yes.'" *The Journal of Politics* 61 (3): 628–57.

Celis, Karen, Sarah Childs, Johanna Kantola, and Mona Lena Krook. 2008. "Rethinking Women's Substantive Representation." *Representation* 44 (2): 99–110.

Htun, Mala. 2004. "Is Gender Like Ethnicity? The Political Representation of Identity Groups." *Perspectives on Politics* 2 (03): 439–458.

Krook, Mona Lena. 2010. "Women's Representation in Parliament: a Qualitative Comparative Analysis." *Political Studies* 58 (5): 886–908. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9248.2010.00833.x.

Recommended:

Bird, Karen. 2014. "Ethnic Quotas and Ethnic Representation Worldwide." *International Political Science Review* 35(1): 12-26.

Banducci, Susan A., Todd Donovan, and Jeffrey A. Karp. 2004. "Minority Representation, Empowerment and Participation." *Journal of Politics*, 56 (2): 534-556.

Krook, Mona Lena, and Andrea Messing-Mathie. "Gender Quotas and Comparative Politics: Past, Present, and Future Research Agendas." *Politics & Gender* 9:3 (2013), pp. 299–303.

## **Week 12 (Nov 27) Political Representation II**

### **Topic: Political representation II**

Required readings:

Zuber, Christina. 2015. "Reserved Seats, Political Parties, and Minority Representation." *Ethnopolitics* 14(4): 390-403. DOI: 10.1080/17449057.2015.1032007

Chaney, Paul. 2013. "Institutionally Homophobic? Political Parties and the Substantive Representation of LGBT People: Westminster and Regional UK Elections 1945–2011." *Policy & Politics* 41 (1): 101–21. <https://doi.org/10.1332/030557312X645793>

Evans, Elizabeth. 2016. "Diversity Matters: Intersectionality and Women's Representation in the USA and UK." *Parliamentary Affairs* 69 (3): 569–85. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsv063>.

Recommended:

Rule, Wilma. 1987. "Electoral Systems, Contextual Factors and Women's Opportunity for Election to Parliament in Twenty-Three Democracies." *Political Research Quarterly* 40 (3): 477–98.

Wängnerud, Lena. "Women in Parliaments: Descriptive and Substantive Representation." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12, no. 1 (2009): 51–69.

Tripp, Aili Mari, and Alice Kang. "The Global Impact of Quotas on the Fast Track to Increased Female Legislative Representation." *Comparative Political Studies* 41, no. 3 (March 1, 2008): 338–61.

## **Week 13 (Dec 4) Social movements & resistance**

### **Topic: Social movements & resistance**

Required readings:

Tarrow, Sidney, *Power in Movement*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), Chapters 1 and 6.

Voth, Daniel. 2016. "Her Majesty's Justice Be Done: Métis Legal Mobilization and the Pitfalls to Indigenous Political Movement Building." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 49 (2). Cambridge University Press: 243–66.

## **Week 14 (Dec 11) Take Home Final Exam Due**

No assigned readings, no seminar

**Notes: Hardcopy of take-home final exam due 11.30am to KTH-525**

## **Course Policies**

### **Submission of Assignments**

All assignments should be typed using a standard 12-point font, single spaced, and standard 1 inch margins. All written assignments require formal citations and a bibliography. Any standard citation style is acceptable (for example, APA or Chicago style, see <http://library.mcmaster.ca/citation-and-style-guides>).

All written assignments are to be submitted in hardcopy at the beginning of class on their due date.

### **Grades**

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

Please note that in graduate school, a B- or below is a fail. A grade of B or B+ is passable, but an indication that there are serious concerns about the quality of the work that should be discussed with the instructor.

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
69-60	F

## **Late Assignments**

The weekly reading responses are an important element of students' participation grade. Because the student discussion leaders rely on their colleagues to submit discussion questions in a timely fashion, no late reading responses will be counted towards the participation grade.

There is a high degree of flexibility built into the due dates for the critical review essays, so late assignments will not be accepted. If a student cannot complete an essay for the beginning of class on the week a topic is discussed, they should choose to submit on a different week.

## **Absences, Missed Work, Illness**

Participation in discussion is a crucial element of student learning in this class, and the discussion suffers when contributors are absent. If students are unavoidably absent, they should contact the instructor as soon as possible. Unexcused absences will impact participation grades.

## **Avenue to Learn**

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

## **University Policies**

### **Academic Integrity Statement**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities**

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca). For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#).

### **Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy**

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

### **Course Modification**

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.