Government 2105: Comparative Politics Field Seminar
Spring 2010
Tuesday 2-4 pm
Professors Steve Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt

This survey of major topics in comparative politics is designed for Ph.D. students wanting to familiarize themselves with the subfield, its evolution, and emerging research questions and controversies. It considers works of theoretical importance dealing with politics in the developed and developing world. Each week the course discusses a subsection of the pertinent scholarly literature, usually focusing on a major theoretical controversy. Key methodological issues in the study of comparative politics are addressed in the context of these substantive and theoretical works. Because this is a reading and discussion course, active student participation is essential.

Enrollment: The main audience is Ph.D. candidates in the Government Department. Enrollment is with consent of the instructors. There are no formal prerequisites.

Requirements: Each student is expected to complete all the required reading each week and to contribute to the collective discussion.

In addition, each student will write six short papers during the semester; each paper should be no more than seven double-spaced pages, normal type size, times font. Please submit three papers to each instructor by the end of the term.

All papers must be submitted to the relevant instructor not later than the beginning of class (Tuesday 2 pm) for the given seminar session.

The instructors will send out a question each week to guide the writing assignment. You may either answer this question or develop a topic of your own. If you develop your own topic, the paper should not be a mere summary of the readings but a critical commentary and a discussion of the issues that arise in the works. Good papers are the product of original thought and set forth a distinct hypothesis or interpretation of the relevant issues.

The papers need not be based on any additional reading beyond the required reading. They will be evaluated according to the effectiveness and insight with which they illuminate the principal debates and scholarly contributions to them in an independent and critically-minded way. They cannot cover all the conceivable issues and need not cover all the assigned readings, though broad coverage is desirable.
There are no other requirements for this course. Students should not plan to write long research seminar papers in this course. There are no exams.

**Course materials:** On each topic, the readings are designed to include insofar as possible: (1) landmark studies that stimulated and shaped subsequent research on the topic; (2) analytical surveys of the work that has been done on the topic; (3) studies setting forth different views on major controversial issues concerning the topic; and (4) recent studies that reflect the current state of work on the topics.

A set of all course reading materials is available in the Government Department Office. Scanned book chapters and PDF files of journal articles will also be available on the course website.

**Grading:** Class participation will count for one quarter of the final grade. Each short paper will count for 12 percent of the final grade. [The remaining 3 percent will be awarded arbitrarily]

**Office Hours:** Professor Levitsky’s office is in CGIS-North (1737 Cambridge Street), room K204. His office hours are M, W 3:45-5:15 (email ahead of time to reserve a spot or make another appointment). His office telephone number is 617-495-9997. His e-mail address is levitsky@wcfia.harvard.edu

Professor Ziblatt office is in the Center for European Studies (CES), 27 Kirkland St, #122. His office hours are Tuesdays 4-6 PM. His office telephone number is 617-495-4303 ext 216. His email address is dziblatt@fas.harvard.edu
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January 27: Introduction

February 2: Foundational Works: Classical Approaches to the Problem of Modernization

**Moore and Huntington interviews in Gerardo Munck and Richard Snyder, Passion, Craft, and Method in Comparative Politics (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007) (Chapters 4, 7)

Required Reading


Additional Sources


Bell, Daniel The Coming of Post-Industrial Society

Chenery, Hollis, Redistribution with Growth (London: Oxford University Press, 1974).


3. February 9: Competing Approaches to Comparative Politics

**Almond interview in Munck and Snyder, Passion, Craft, and Method (Chapter 3)

Required Reading


Economic Approaches

Peter Gourevitch, Politics in Hard Times: Comparative Responses to International Economic Crises (Cornell University Press, 1986), Ch 1 (pp. 17-34) and Ch 6 (pp. 221-240).


Cultural Approaches


Statist Approaches


Rational Choice Approaches

Barbara Geddes, Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics (University of Michigan Press, 2003), chapter 5 (pp. 175-211).

Path Dependent Approaches
Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time* (Princeton University Press, 2004), Introduction (pp. 1-10 only), Chapters 1-2 (pp. 17-78).

**Additional Sources**

**Economic Approaches**

Marx, Karl, *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*


**On Culture/Cultural Approaches**


**Rational Choice Approaches**


Donald P. Green and Ian Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory* (Yale University Press, 1994)


**Statist Approaches**


Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions* (Cambridge University Press, 1979).


**Path Dependent Approaches**


James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds. *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, 2003).
4. February 16: Institutions and Institutional Analysis

**Lijphart interview in Munck and Snyder, *Passion, Craft, and Method* (chapter 8)

Required Reading

Overview and Approaches

Peter A. Hall and Rosemary Taylor, “Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms,” *Political Studies*, 44 (December 1996)


Institutional Effects

Matthew S. Shugart and John M. Carey, *Presidents and Assemblies: Constitutional Design and Electoral Dynamics* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), Chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-54) and Chapter 13 (pp. 273-287).


Explaining Institutional Design


Institutional Change:


Additional Sources


Gretchen Helmke and Steven Levitsky, eds. *Informal Institutions and Democracy* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006)


George Tsebelis and Jeannette Money, Bicameralism (Cambridge University Press, 1997).


February 23: The Logics and Methods of Comparative Politics

**Collier interview in Munck and Snyder, Passion, Craft, and Method (chapter 15)

**Required Reading


Theda Skocpol and M. Somers, The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 65 (1980): 174-197


Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* (Princeton U Press), pp. 3-9; 36-46; 115-149; 168-69; 176-182; 185-187; 189-193; 208-228

Henry Brady and David Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, Chapter 1 (pp. 3-20) chapter 6 (pp. 85-102), Chapters 12-13 (195-266).


**Additional Sources


John Gerring, *Social Science Methodology* (Cambridge University Press, 2010)

John Gerring, Case Study Research (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)


March 2: Political Economy of Development

**Bates interview in Munck and Snyder, Passion, Craft, and Method

Required Reading:


Additional Sources


Cardoso, Fernando Henrique and Enzo Faletto, Dependency and Development in Latin America (University of California Press, 1979).


March 9: The State and State-Building

**Skocpol interview in Munck and Snyder, Passion, Craft, and Method

Required Reading:

Stephen Krasner, “Approaches to the State,” *Comparative Politics* (January 1984), pp. 223-246


Additional Sources on the State, Bureaucracies, and Federalism


Joel Migdal, “Researching the State,” in Lichbach and Zuckerman, eds. Comparative Politics (Cambridge University Press 2009)


Cameron Thies, “National Design and State Formation in Africa,” *World Politics* (October 2009)


Max Weber, “Bureaucracy” in Gerth and Mills (eds) From Max Weber (pp. 198-244)


Daniel Ziblatt, *Structuring the State: The Formation of Italy and Germany and the Puzzle of Federalism* (Princeton University Press, 2006)


**8. March 16: No class Spring Break**
9. March 23: Political Regimes I: Classical Approaches to Democratization

**Dahl and Linz interviews in Munck and Snyder, Passion, Craft, and Method**

**Required Reading**


**Additional Sources for Weeks 9 and 10**


Bratton, Michael and Nicolas van de Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa* (Cambridge University Press, 1997)


Fish, M. Stephen, *Democracy Derailed in Russia* (Cambridge University Press, 2005)


Skocpol, Theda and Jeff Goodwin, “Explaining Revolutions in the Contemporary Third World,” *Politics and Society* 17, No. 4 (December 1989).


Ziblatt, Daniel, “Does Landholding Inequality Block Democratization? A Test of the Bread and Democracy Thesis and the Case of Prussia,” *World Politics* July 2008:
10. March 30: Political Regimes II: Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Post-Cold War Era

**O’Donnell and Schmitter interviews in Munck and Snyder, Passion, Craft, and Method**

**Required Reading:**


Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming) [excerpts from chapters 1-2]


11. April 6: Civil Society, Contentious Politics, and Social Movements

Required reading:


Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Cornell University Press, 1997), pp.1-29;


Additional Resources


James Scott, “Peasant Revolution: a Dismal Science.” *Comparative Politics* 1977

James Scott “Hidden Forms of Resistance” in Forrest Colburn (ed) Everday Forms of Peasant Resistance (Armonk: ME Sharpe), pp. 3-30


Sidney Verba, Norman Nie and Jae-on Kim, Participation and Political Equality: A Seven Nation Comparison (1978).

**Laitin interview in Munck and Snyder, *Passion, Craft, and Method***

**Required Reading:**


Steven Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence* (Cambridge University Press), Chapter 1 (pp. 1-18)


**Additional Resources**


Barth, Fredrik. 1969: *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*.


Required reading:

Voters and Voting


Russell J. Dalton and Martin P. Wattenberg (eds.), *Parties without Partisans: Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies* (Oxford University Press, 2000), chapters 2 (Dalton) and 3 (Dalton, McAllister, and Wattenberg) [pp. 19-76]


Electoral Rules and their Consequences

Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy*, Ch 8 (electoral systems) (pp. 143-170)

Gary W. Cox, *Making Votes Count: Strategic Coordination in the World’s Electoral Systems* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), chapters 1-3 (3-68) and 10-12 (pp. 181-237). Recommended: chapters 4-5 (pp. 69-122)


Explaining Electoral Design


**Additional Resources**


14. April 27: Political Parties and Party Systems

**Przeworski interview Munck and Snyder, Passion, Craft, and Method

Required Reading:


[From *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State* (Wiley and Sons, 1954/1963).]


Read at least one of the following two clusters:

1) Parties and Party Systems in the Developing World

Scott Mainwaring, *Rethinking Party Systems in the Third Wave of Democratization: The Case of Brazil* (Stanford University Press, 1999), chapter 2 (pp. 21-60).
Pradeep K. Chhibber, *Democracy without Associations: The Transformation of the Party System and Social Cleavages in India* (University of Michigan Press, 1999), Ch 1 (pp. 1-23) and Ch 8 (pp. 177-194)

2) Parties and Party Systems in the Post-Communist World


**Additional Sources**


15. May 4: Political Economy of Advanced Democracies


Peter Katzenstein, Small States in World Markets (Cornell University Press, 1985) Chapter 1 (pp. 17-38) and Chapter 3 (pp. 80-135).


Additional Reading
[Note: includes work on interest groups and corporatism in advanced industrialized countries]


Alt, James, and K. Alec Chrystal, Political Economics (Berkeley: California University Press, 1983).


Rueda, David, and Jonas Pontusson, “Wage Inequality and Varieties of Capitalism,”
World Politics (2000).


