

PSC/IR 256 THEORIES OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS

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M/W 9:00-10:15 Harkness 210

Comparative politics is the study of politics within political systems. Its theories seek to describe and explain various features of politics in different countries. In the first week we shall discuss what is meant by explanation and some of the political features that we shall be trying to explain. Among these features are the type of political regime and the stability of that regime. In the second week we shall be discussing the meaning of democracy as a system of government and describing some of the major types of democratic and authoritarian regimes in the world today.

PSC/IR 256 introduces theories in the field of comparative politics. We want to understand how the national and international environment, the political culture, the political institutions and the choices of citizens and leaders affect political performance. The course is organized around these types of explanatory variables. The economic, social and international environments create possibilities, problems and constraints. The political culture, including the values of different citizens and the political discourse, shapes political conflict and competition. The political institutions set limits and offer incentives to citizens and leaders. Citizens and leaders make choices that are shaped by these contexts, as well as by their own values and perceptions. We explain such features as democratization, stability, competition and conflict, citizen influence, and policy outcomes as consequences of the environment, culture and institutions and human choices in these contexts.

In this course we want to introduce some of the theories of comparative politics and evaluate their credibility, both through general readings and cross-national comparisons and by seeing how they play out in some specific countries. We shall especially use politics in Germany and the US, but also Britain and India, to exemplify various theoretical features.

The Monday sessions will usually present lecture material with some discussion. Wednesday will be a mix of lecture and discussion.

Grades will be based on a midterm exam on Wednesday October 21 (40%) and a second midterm examination on Wednesday December 11 (40%), with an additional 20% for class participation. Students may also choose as an **option** to write an original essay applying the concepts of the course to some aspect of political performance in a country (current or historic) that is not among those that we are examining collectively. These essays should be about 3000 words long and are due our last class day. For these students, the grades will be based on the midterm 25%, second exam 25%, essay 25%, class discussion 25%. Requirements and evaluation for students taking the IR/PSC W sections are described on p. 4 below.

REQUIRED READINGS The works listed with a star (*) are available for purchase in the bookstore. Other articles and book chapters will be on electronic reserve and can be accessed through the electronic version of the syllabus on Blackboard. The Dalton book is available on line.

- Achen and Bartels, *Democracy for Realists*. 2016, Ch. 11.
Journal of Democracy 27: 5-18.
- Brown, David. *Contemporary Nationalism*. 2000, Ch. 1.
Success of
 _____, 2001, Chapter 7.
- Bhavnani, Rikhil R. and Lacina, Bethany. 2015. *The Effects of Weather-Induced Migration of Sons of the Soil Riots in India*. *World Politics* 67(4): 760-794.
- Dalton, Russell. *Politics in Germany*. On line <http://www.socsci.uci.edu/~rdalton/Pgermany.htm>
- Dalton, Farrell & McAllister. 2011. *Political Parties & Democratic Linkage*. Ch. 4.
Journal of Democracy 2015,
 141-155.
- Geddes, Barbara. 1999. *Annual Reviews of Political Science* 2, 129-148.
- Geddes, Wright & Frantz. 2018. *How Dictatorships Work*. Cambridge. Ch. 1.
- Sur *APSR*. 2017.
- Hashke, Peter. 2017. *Human Rights in Democracies*. Routledge. Ch. 1.
APSR 113 (2):442-455.
- * Huntington, Samuel. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the 20th Century*. 1991.
- * LeDuc, Lawrence, Niemi and Norris. *Comparing Democracies 4*. 2014. Especially articles by Gallagher, Kitschelt, Hooghe, Krook, Kayser, LeDuc & Niemi, Norris, Powell.
- Nordlinger, Eric. *Soldiers in Politics*. 1977, Ch. 3.
- Norris & Inglehart *Contemporary Sociology* 2002
APSR Nov. 2004
- Powell, G. B., *Elections as Instruments of Democracy*, 2000, ch. 1.
- Powell, G.B. *Ideological Representation* 2019, Ch. 1.
- Rogowski, Ronald. *Commerce and Coalitions*. 1989. Ch. 1.
- Schedler, Andreas. *Journal of Democracy* April 2002.
- Tarrow, Sidney. *Power in Movement*. 2nd ed. 1998, Ch. 5 and Ch. 6.
A Different Democracy: American Government in a Thirty-One Country Perspective. 2014.
- Tsebelis, George, 1995. -Making in Political Systems: Veto Players in
 Presidentialism,
BJPS: 289-325 .

ACADEMIC HONESTY: All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy. More information is available at: www.rochester.edu/college/honesty Be prepared to sign the Honor pledge on all exams and papers.

The following Honor Pledge will be copied and signed by all students on all examinations: "I affirm that I will not give or receive any unauthorized help on this exam, and that all work will be my own."

For papers:

"I affirm that I have not given or received any unauthorized help on this assignment, and that this work is my own."

NOTE: PSC/IR 256W REQUIREMENTS Students taking the course as PSC/IR 256W are required to write original essays. The PSC/IR 256W course fulfills the University and departmental writing requirement; its essays must take the following form:

1. Two distinct essays.
2. Each essay at least 500 words.
3. One essay revised after correction and criticism.
4. Total essays add up to minimum of 3500 words.

Substantively, the essays should choose a country that is not Germany, the USA, India or Britain, (which we are discussing collectively as continuing examples) and discuss the way that one or more of the theories of democracy from the class relate to that country.

politics as a test of the theory and discuss its relationship to the credibility of that theory. Early in the course, I would like you to commit yourself to your country and start reading about it. I'll pass around a sign up sheet asking for that commitment. I can probably give you some help on sources and can also help with the design of your essays.

I. Essay I should be brief, 500-1000 words, explaining why you have chosen your country, some of its politically interesting features, and what you will write about in your subsequent essay. **This essay is due no later than Thursday, October 10.**

II. Essay II should discuss one or more of the theories of comparative politics that we have introduced in the course and relate the theory to politics in your country. Be sure that your presentation of the theory includes the causal mechanisms that link the independent and dependent varia theory, or you can treat that aspect as a test of the theory. It should be at least 2500 words long. **This essay is due by Thursday, November 14.** I shall correct and return it with comments within two weeks. The revised version is due on our last class, **Wednesday Dec.11.**

THE TWO ESSAYS TOGETHER MUST TOTAL 3500 WORDS. The essays will be weighted by their relative length and will collectively count for 25% of the course grade, averaged at the end. For Essay II the final grade depends on the writing as well as the substantive quality of the revised essay.

Please be aware of the issue of plagiarism; be sure your essays are original and appropriately document your sources.