This is the graduate field seminar in Comparative Politics. Based on a reading list that covers what is arguably the most wide-ranging, diverse literature in any field of Political Science, the course is organized to give you an overview of the substantive themes, methodological debates, and regional variations in this field. Since comparativists themselves usually specialize in only a limited subset of the countries we will address, this seminar and the field examination linked to it may be your best opportunity in graduate school to read widely in this literature. At the same time, you will find that many of the debates in comparative politics raise the same analytical and methodological questions as in the study of American politics or International Relations. Written assignments are geared toward giving you an opportunity to synthesize and analyze parts of this literature, and develop research agendas aimed at contributing to it.

The readings combine several sorts of selections. First, I have included a number of formative works that no student of comparative politics should not know. In some instances, such as Barrington Moore’s *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, these readings are required; in others, I have included classic works as recommended readings. Second, the list also stresses some of the most prominent new work, and new directions of research that are likely to play a growing role in future comparative politics. Finally, especially in the essays of the Lichbach and Zuckerman volume, you will find a number of attempts at theoretical syntheses or intellectual histories of traditions in the literature.

The initial weeks will survey current work on the scope of the contemporary field, and the methodological concerns surrounding the comparative method as an approach to the study of politics. In the following week, the substantive readings begin with works related to the theories of modernization that dominated the field in the 1960s. Thereafter, we will consider treatments of globalization, which emerged in the 1990s with a similarly defining role in the field. Subsequent sets of readings, focused on literatures in some of the most prominent areas of research over the
last thirty years, combine excerpts from some of the most influential previous work on the subject with current selections that reflect state-of-the-art debates.

Throughout, in addition to evaluating a wide range of works on their own terms, we will consider several recurrent issues at the foundation of comparative politics as a field of study. What is the agenda of the field? How has that agenda evolved since the 1960s, and how is it evolving now? What has shaped this agenda? Where (if anywhere!) has comparative politics contributed to an improved understanding of the world? What types of analytic and methodological strategies have proven most effective in research, and for what purposes? Keeping questions of this sort explicitly in mind will better help us to evaluate the possibilities for research in the field today.

Readings:

The following required books have been ordered and should be available at the Bookstore.

All of these books will also be on reserve at Leavey Library. Additional required readings will be available either online through JSTOR or other sources noted, or in a packet available to be purchased from CopyPrint in University Village.

To comprehend the diversity and vast range of work in this field, you will find that a great deal of reading will be necessary. In most of the domains we will cover, the required readings only offer representative samplings from much more extensive bodies of work. To start you on the way beyond the required assignments, the reading list also includes a list of additional readings. These listings should prove especially useful for those interested in concentrating on a particular topic in greater depth for their written assignments and presentations.

Assignments

Requirements for the course will center around the final exam and two papers of 8-12 pages that discuss readings for one or more separate weeks.

Each of your papers should either develop a critical analytical perspective on part of the readings for the relevant week, or propose a research project to address a problem relevant to those readings. Remember that the purpose is not to summarize the readings descriptively but to make an argument about them or propose a project addressed to the concerns they raise. You will also be required to give your analysis orally in a 10-minute class presentation. The presentation and written analysis should pose general questions for seminar discussion as well as specific questions about each reading, and presenters will be expected to lead discussion on those questions. Initial sign-ups for topics will take place in our first session. These papers will be due no later than 24 hours in advance of the seminar meeting time. By this time, in addition to leaving a copy in the instructor’s mailbox, you will be expected to post the text of your paper electronically for the other seminar participants at the Blackboard website for the course (accessible using your Unix ID and password (same as for your USC e-mail) at http://learn.usc.edu). If seminar enrollment requires students to prepare more than two such analyses, only two (of your choice) will be graded.

If you choose to do a research proposal as one of your papers, the object is apply literature and concepts from the course along with additional research. The proposal should justify the project both in terms of research design and as a contribution to one of the traditions we will be examining. You will not be expected to carry out the project, but to design a project that you would carry out with the appropriate resources and time.

For those weeks in which you do not prepare a paper, you will also be expected to submit a question to the Blackboard website for discussion. These submissions will also be due no later than 24 hours in advance of the seminar meeting time.

The exam will be a 48-hour take-home exercise designed in the manner of the Field examination in the field. You will receive a list of the questions in advance.

Weighting of assignments will be as follows:

First paper: 25%
First report: 5%
Second paper: 25%
Second report: 5%
Class discussion (including .5% for each weekly question): 18%
Final Exam: 22%

This list of assignments is based on the assumption that all students will do all the required reading, attend all classes and participate regularly and constructively in discussions. Failure to do any of these tasks will be considered just cause for lowering of your final grade.

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

A Note on Other Readings

Comparative Politics as a professional field has a relatively short history, but comparative thinking about politics, its origins and its consequences goes much farther back. Much of what political scientists read today as “political theory” continues to shape the contemporary field through seminal earlier insights. This same work still furnishes both informal empirical observations and normative questions for contemporary political scientists. Although it is not required reading in this course, you will likely find it useful at some point to acquire at least passing familiarity with the array of older works that helped shape comparative politics. Examples include:

Aristotle, Politics
Emile Durkheim, The Division of Labor in Society, Rules of the Sociological Method
Madison, James; Hamilton, Alexander; and Jay, John. The Federalist Papers.
Marx, Karl. Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte
Montesquieu, Spirit of the Laws
Tocqueville, Alexis de. The Old Regime and the French Revolution, Democracy in America
Weber, Max. Economy and Society, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism

In addition, an ongoing knowledge of current world events will be helpful. To supplement the often limited information available from U.S. newspapers, most comparativists turn to international publications like the Financial Times of London or The Economist. An optional subscription to the Financial Times at a special student rate will be made available through this class.

Class Schedule and Reading List

September 4: Introduction and Organizational Meeting

4
September 11: Concepts and Approaches I: Research Traditions in Contemporary Comparative Politics


September 18: NO CLASS
TBA: Concepts and Approaches II: A “Comparative Method”?


Recommended:

September 26: Modernization


**Recommended:**
Skocpol, Theda. 1979. *States and Social Revolutions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**October 2: Globalization and International Linkages**


**Recommended:**


**October 9: The State as Institution and Cultural Artefact**


**Recommended:**


October 16: Political Regimes and Types of Democracy


*Recommended:*


October 23: Authoritarian Breakdowns and Democratic Transitions


*Geddes, Barbara. 1999. What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years? Annual Review of Political Science 2: 115-144.*

*Recommended:*


Europe and South America. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

October 30: Parties and Elections


Recommended:
University Press.

**November 6: Political Economy of (Post)Industrial Capitalism**


**Recommended:**
Schmitter, Philippe C. 1979. Still the Century of Corporatism? In Philippe C. Schmitter and


**November 13: NO CLASS**

**TBA: Political Economy of Developing and Transitional Countries**


**Recommended:**


November 20: Divided Societies and Subnational Institutions


Recommended:


November 27: Political Culture

(Reread Ross, in Lichbach and Zuckerman)

Recommended:

December 4: Social Movements and Contentious Politics

McAdam, Doug, Tarrow, Sidney and Tilly, Charles. Toward an Integrated Perspective on Social Movements and Revolution. In Lichbach and Zuckerman, pp. 142-173.

Recommended:
Kriesi, Hanspeter. 1995. The Politics of New Social Movements in Western Europe: A

**Final Exam: due Tuesday, December 16, 5:00 in instructor’s box in VKC 327**