

PSC/IR 256 THEORIES OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS

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T/R 9:40 Grgn 108

Comparative politics is the study of politics within political systems. It seeks to describe and explain various features of politics in different countries. In the first week we shall discuss what political features 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. In later parts of the course we shall be explaining such features as political competition and government formation, citizen influence, participation and representation, and substantive policy outcomes—whether political systems achieve the levels of welfare, equality, security and other policy outcomes desired by their citizens.

PSC 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, 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 by seeing how they play out in some specific countries. We shall especially use politics in Germany to exemplify various theoretical features.

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

Grades will be based on a midterm exam on Thursday October 21 (40%) and a second examination scheduled by the Registrar (40%) on December 19 at 16:00, 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 30%, class discussion 20%.

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 (under Course Resources and Reserves, PSC 256). The Dalton book is available on line.

- Blais, Andre, "Political Participation" in LeDuc, et al., *Comparing Democracies 3*, ch 8.
- Brown, David. *Contemporary Nationalism*. 2000, Ch. 1.
- Basu, Amrita. "Dialectics of Hindu Nationalism" in Atul Kohli, ed., *Success of India's Democracy*. 2001, Chapter 7.
- Carter & Farrell, "Electoral Systems," in LeDuc, et al., ch. 2.
- Dalton, Russell "Ideology..." in LeDuc, et al., ch. 7.
- Dalton, Russell. *Politics in Germany*. On line <http://www.socsci.uci.edu/~rdalton/Pgermany.htm>
- Geddes, Barbara. "What Do We Know About Democratization," *Annual Reviews of Political Science* 2, 129-148.
- Hellwig, Timothy. "Elections & Economy," in LeDuc et al., Ch. 9
- * Huntington, Samuel. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the 20th Century*. 1991.
- * LeDuc, Lawrence, Niemi and Norris. *Comparing Democracies 3*. 2010.
- * Lijphart, Arend. *Patterns of Democracy*. 1999.
- Linz, J. "Perils of Presidentialism" *Journal of Democracy* 1990
- Nordlinger, Eric. *Soldiers in Politics*. 1977, Ch. 3.
- Norris & Inglehart "Islamic Culture & Democracy." *Contemporary Sociology* 2002
- Posner, Daniel. "Political Salience of Cultural Difference" *APSR* Nov. 2004
- Powell, G.B., "Consequences of Elections," in LeDuc, et al., ch. 11.
- * Powell, G. B., R. Dalton and K. Strom *Comparative Politics Today: A Theoretical Framework*. 2012.
- Rogowski, Ronald. *Commerce and Coalitions*. 1989. Ch. 1.
- Sawer, Marian "Women & Elections," in LeDuc, et al., Ch. 10.
- Schedler, Andreas. "The Menu of Manipulation." *Journal of Democracy* April 2002.
- Tarrow, Sidney. *Power in Movement*. 2nd ed. 1998, Ch. 5 and Ch. 6.
- Wilkinson, Steven. *Votes and Violence*. 2004. Ch. 1.

PSC256 - SYLLABUS		Fall 2012	
<u>Week</u>	<u>Lecture Topics</u>	<u>Discussion Topics</u>	<u>Required Reading</u>
Aug. 30	NO CLASS MEETING.	(American Political Science Association Conference)	
Sept. 4	Theories and explanations	What is to be explained?	Almond, Ch. 1-2,7
Sept.11	Regime types	Democratic and authoritarian types.	Lijphart Ch. 1-4, Geddes, LeDuc ch. 1, Schedler
Sept.18	Economic and social Setting	Economic development and democracy	Huntington, Ch.1-4 Dalton, Ch.1
Sept.25	Ethnicity & nationalism	Constructing cleavages? (Chewas & Timbukas)	Brown 2000, Ch. 1 Posner
Oct. 2	Cultural values	Valuing regimes, policies	Norris & Inglehart Almond, Ch. 3
Oct. 9	FALL BREAK		Dalton, Ch. 4-6
Oct. 11	International environment	Abundance, Trade and Political Cleavages	Rogowski, Ch. 1 Dalton, Ch. 3
Oct. 16	Review for Midterm	<u>MIDTERM EXAM Thursday October 18</u>	
Oct. 23	Constitutional Arrangements in Democracies	Inclusiveness and election rules	Almond ch 6 Dalton, Ch. 2 Lijphart ch 7,10-14 LeDuc,Ch. 2 (Carter/Farrell)
Oct. 30	Interest Groups & Policymaking	Pluralism & corporatism	Almond Ch. 4 Lijphart, Ch. 9 Dalton, Ch. 7, 9-10
Nov. 6	Party Systems: Consequences	Multi-party democracy, coalition formation	Lijphart, Ch. 5,6 Basu in Kohli Dalton, Ch. 8 Almond, Ch. 5
Nov. 13	Citizen & group participation	Deprivation & Opportunity	LeDuc, ch 8 (Blais) Tarrow, ch 5,6
Nov. 20	Citizen Choices	Thanksgiving Nov. 22	LeDuc, ch. 7, 9-11 (Dalton, Hellwig, Sawyer, Powell)
Nov. 27	Elite Choices	Coercion & Strategy	Nordlinger, ch 3; Huntington Ch. 5,6; Wilkinson Ch.1
Dec. 4	Policymaking	Policy & Performance	Almond Ch. 6-7; Lijphart 15-17
Dec. 11	Theories of Comparative Politics: Environment, Institution and Choice	Review	No additional assignment.
FINAL EXAM IS	<u>Wednesday December 19 at 1600</u>		IN OUR USUAL CLASSROOM

NOTE: PSC256W REQUIREMENTS Students taking the course as PSC 256W are required to write original essays. The PSC 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, (which we are discussing collectively as a continuing example) and discuss the way that one or more of the theories of democracy from the class relate to that country. Some features of the country's politics could be explained by the theory, or you could treat some aspect of the country's 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, Oct. 13.**

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 variable(s.) You can treat some aspect of the country's politics as something to be explained by the 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 8.** I shall correct and return it with comments within two weeks. The revised version is due on our last class, **Tuesday, December 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. A memo on appropriate source material for Essay II, will be handed out.