

Comparative Politics Core Seminar

PLCP 7000-001

Fall 2024

Mondays 2:00-4:30 PM

296 Gibson Hall

Prof. Anne Meng

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OH: Mondays after class (or by appt)

Overview. This seminar provides an introduction to salient questions and themes in the study of comparative politics. We will survey recent scholarship on questions of major significance in the field, paying particular attention to publications that build upon or challenge one another in addressing their topics of interest. The works we read together in one way or another mark important steps in the evolution of prominent research areas of the literature in comparative politics. Even so, our wide-ranging inquiry is illustrative, not exhaustive: no semester-long seminar can encompass the entirety of the field of comparative politics.

Goals. This course pursues three goals.

- Prepare for this graduate program's comprehensive exam in comparative politics. The CP exam will include questions that cover the following themes: 1) Comparative Institutions; 2) Identity in CP; 3) Comparative Political Economy; and 4) Democracy and Authoritarianism. Keep in mind that many topics fall under multiple categories!
- Acquire a relatively advanced survey of the subfield of comparative politics
- Gain an appreciation of how successful research articles address and extend scholarly debates in the subfield of comparative politics

Requirements. All class members are expected to complete the assigned readings before the class meeting for which the particular readings are assigned. That basic requirement will permit students to complete the following categories of work.

- ***In-class participation.*** Students' thoughtful comments on course readings, along with their careful consideration of others' remarks, form an essential part of our seminar. Keep in mind that good questions contribute just as much to discussion as do affirmations and answers. Class participation is worth **20%** of the course grade.

A note on physical and mental health:

Take care of yourselves throughout the semester! Your health and well-being come first. Feel free to reach out to me if you ever need help. ***If you are sick, please do not come to class.*** Stay home, rest, and take care of yourself. Thanks for being considerate of your classmates.

- ***Discussion Questions.*** In the evening prior to each class meeting (by 11:59 pm on Sunday night), all participants should post to the Discussion of our course Canvas webpage at least one discussion question. These questions should pose interesting issues that are central to the readings and that you would like to discuss further or

issues that you feel are in need of clarification. Your questions will help motivate the classroom discussion. Your cumulative questions are worth **10%** of the course grade.

- **Discussion memos.** Students will sign up twice per semester to write a discussion memo on a given session's set of readings, and to help lead class discussion on that session. The memos should be 3-4 pages each (double spaced, 12pt font). The first part of each memo should be dedicated to synthesizing and critically reviewing the assigned readings. How do the readings fit together? Where do they converge in the arguments they make, and where do they diverge? What gaps do you see? The second part of the memo should pose an original research question drawing and extending from the week's readings: what puzzle(s) do you see, and why are they interesting/important? How might scholars of comparative politics go about exploring that puzzle? Memos are due by 11:59 PM on Sunday night. During the class session, students who were assigned to write memos will also be charged with leading a portion of the discussion, stemming from their memos. Memos are worth **30%** of the course grade.
- **Take-home final exam,** open book. Your final exam will consist of an essay which focuses on themes from both the required readings and the class discussions. We will present students with a choice of topics from which to select in preparing their final essays. The final essay will mimic the field exam in structure, and your response should run from 2,500-3,000 words. The final exam will be cumulative and will challenge you to synthesize insights gained over the course of the semester. Persuasive essays on the final exam present and defend a clear thesis. The best essays will develop a cogent, convincing, and well-articulated argument in support of their thesis statements. They will be transparently and logically organized. Note that essays that stake out a creative or original approach will be rewarded. Final essays are due by 11:59 pm on **December 16**. The final essay is worth **40%** of the course grade.

Course Outline and Required Readings.

All readings are available at our course Canvas site.

September 2: What is comparative politics?

- Paxton, P. (2000). "Women's suffrage in the measurement of democracy: Problems of operationalization." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 35(3): 92-111.

September 9: The State

- Tilly, C. 1992. *Coercion, Capital, and European States: AD 990-1992*. Cambridge: Blackwell. Chapters 1 and 3.
- Jeffrey Herbst. 2000. *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 and 2.
- Wang, Yuhua. 2022. *The Rise and Call of Imperial China: The Social Origins of State Development*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 1.
- Lee, M. and Zhang, N. 2017. "Legibility and the Informational Foundations of State Capacity." *Journal of Politics* 79(1): 118-132.

September 16: Democratization and Democratic Backsliding

- Ansell, Ben and Samuels, David. 2014. *Inequality and Democratization: An Elite-Competition Approach*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1-3.
- Albertus, M. and Menaldo, V. *Authoritarianism and the Elite Origins of Democracy*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1.
- Rosenfeld, B. 2021. *The Autocratic Middle Class: How State Dependency Reduces the Demand for Democracy*. Princeton University Press. Chapters 1-2.
- Miller, Michael. 2022. *Shock to the system*. Princeton University Press. Chs 1-2.
- Little and Meng. 2024. “Measuring Democratic Backsliding.” *PS: Political Science & Politics*.

September 23: Authoritarianism

- Gandhi, Jennifer. 2008. *Political Institutions under Dictatorship*. Cambridge. Intro (Ch 0) and Ch 1.
- Svolik, Milan. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. Cambridge. Ch 1 and 2.
- Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, Erica Frantz. 2014. “Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions: A New Data Set” *Perspectives on Politics* 12(2).
- Meng, A. 2020. *Constraining Democracy: From Personalized Rule to Institutionalized Regimes*. Cambridge. Chapter 1.
- Fiona Shen-Bayh. 2018. “Strategies of Repression: Judicial and Extrajudicial Methods of Autocratic Survival.” *World Politics*. 70(3): 321-357

September 30: Civil War, Rebellion, and Coups

- Fearon, J. and Laitin, D. 2003. “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War.” *American Political Science Review* 97(1): 75-90.
- Jean Lachapelle, Steven Levitsky, Lucan Way, and Adam Casey. 2020. “Social Revolution and Authoritarian Durability.” *World Politics* 72(4)
- Meng, A. and Paine, J. 2022. “Power Sharing and Authoritarian Stability: How Rebel Regimes Solve the Guardianship Dilemma.” *American Political Science Review*
- Naunihal Singh. 2014. *Seizing Power*. Chapters 1-2
- Roessler, P. 2011. “The Enemy Within: Personal Rule, Coups, and Civil War in Africa.” *World Politics* 63(2): 300-346.

October 7: Culture and Informal Institutions

- Helmke, G., & Levitsky, S. 2004. Informal institutions and comparative politics: A research agenda. *Perspectives on politics*, 2(4), 725-740.
- Ricart-Huguet, Joan. 2022. “Why do different cultures form and persist? Learning from the case of Makerere University.” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 60(4).
- Tsai, L. L. (2007). Solidary groups, informal accountability, and local public goods provision in rural China. *American Political Science Review*, 101(2), 355-372.
- Wedeen, L. (1998). Acting “as if”: symbolic politics and social control in Syria. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 40(3), 503-523.
- Posner, Dan. 2004. “The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi,” *American Political Science Review* 98(4): 529-545.

October 14: *No class! Fall break*

October 21: *No class! Instructor traveling*

October 28: Identity

- James Fearon and David Laitin. 1996. "Explaining Interethnic Cooperation," *American Political Science Review* 90(4): 715-735.
- Choi, D. D., Poertner, M., & Sambanis, N. (2023). The hijab penalty: Feminist backlash to Muslim immigrants. *American Journal of Political Science*, 67(2), 291-306.
- Teele, Dawn. 2014. "Ordinary Democratization: The electoral strategy that won British women the vote." *Politics and Society* 42(2)
- Mala Htun. 2004. "Is Gender like Ethnicity? The political representation of identity groups." *Perspectives on Politics* 2(3)
- Suryanarayan, Pavi. 2018. "Why do the poor vote for the right wing and why: status hierarchy and vote choice in the Indian states." *Comparative Political Studies* 52(2)

November 4: Social movements

- Tarrow, Sidney. 2011. *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 0 and 1.
- Kuran, T. 1991. "Now out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989." *World Politics* 44(1): 7-48.
- Clarke, Killian and Kocak, Korhan. 2020. "Launching Revolution: Social Media and the Egyptian Uprising's First Movers." *British Journal of Political Science* 50(3).
- Fu, Diana. 2018. *Mobilizing without the masses: control and contention in China*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1
- Simmons, Erica. 2021. "Targets, Grievances, and Social Movement Trajectories." *Comparative Political Studies* 54(10).

November 11: Development, inequality, and public goods provision

- Acemoglu, D., Johnson, S., & Robinson, J. A. (2001). The colonial origins of comparative development: An empirical investigation. *American economic review*, 91(5), 1369-1401.
- Nunn, N., and Wantchekon, L. 2011. The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa. *American Economic Review* 101 (7), pp.3221-3252.
- Cruz, C., Labonne, J., & Querubín, P. (2020). Social Network Structures and the Politics of Public Goods Provision: Evidence from the Philippines. *American Political Science Review*, 114(2), pp. 486-501.
- Holland, A. C. (2016). Forbearance. *American political science review*, 110(2), 232-246.
- Wiedemann, A. 2021. *Indebted Societies: Credit and Welfare in Rich Democracies*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1-2.

November 18: Elections and voting

- Gingerich, D., & Vogler, J. 2021. Pandemics and Political Development: The Electoral Legacy of the Black Death in Germany. *World Politics*, 73(3), 393-440.

- Larreguy, H., Marshall, J. and Querubin, P., 2016. Parties, brokers, and voter mobilization: How turnout buying depends upon the party's capacity to monitor brokers. *American Political Science Review*, 110(1), pp.160-179.
- Kisara, Kimuli and Suryanarayan, Pavithra. 2020. "Bureaucratic Capacity and Class Voting: Evidence from Across the World and the United States." *The Journal of Politics* 82(3)
- Margit Tavits and Joshua D. Potter. 2015. "The Effect of Inequality and Social Identity on Party Strategies." *American Journal of Political Science*
- Cirone, A., Cox, G. W., & Fiva, J. H. (2021). Seniority-based nominations and political careers. *American Political Science Review*, 115(1), 234-251.

November 25: Parties, Participation, and Representation

- Aldrich, John. 2011. *Why Parties? The Origins and Transformation of Political Parties in America*. University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1 and 2.
- Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan. 1967. "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction," in Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, eds. *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*. New York: Free Press, pp. 1- 56.
- Kruks-Wisner, G. (2018). *Claiming the state: Active citizenship and social welfare in rural India*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 and 2.
- Gonzalez, Yanilda and Mayka, Lindsay. 2023. "Policing, Democratic Participation, and the Reproduction and Asymmetric Citizenship." *American Political Science Review* 117(1)
- Carter, Christopher. 2021. "The Representational Effects of Communal Property: Evidence from Peru's Indigenous Groups." *Comparative Political Studies*.

December 2: Methods and Approaches

- Geddes, B. (2003). *Paradigms and sand castles: Theory building and research design in comparative politics*. University of Michigan Press. Chapters 2 and 3
- Peter Hall and Rosemary Taylor. 1996. "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalism." *Political Studies* 44
- Pepinsky, T.B., 2019. The return of the single-country study. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 22, pp.187-203.

Take-home final due by 11:59 pm on Monday, December 16