

PSC256 THEORIES OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS

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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 sessions will be devoted primarily to discussions of the readings. The balance of lecture and discussion will depend on the size of the enrollment. Grades will be based on a midterm exam on Thursday October 16 (30%) and a final examination scheduled by the Registrar (70%) on December 18 at 16:00, with an additional boost 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 30%, essay 30%, final exam 40%.

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).

- . *Almond, Gabriel, R. Dalton, G.B. Powell, and K. Strom Comparative Politics Today: A Theoretical Framework. 2008.
- 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.
- * Conratt, David. The German Polity. 8th edition. 2004.
- Dalton, Russell "Cleavages..." in LeDuc, Niemi & Norris, Comparing Democracies 2.
- Duch, Raymond. "Comparative Studies of Economy and Vote." In Boix and Stokes, Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics, Ch. 33.
- Franklin, Mark "Electoral Participation" in LeDuc, Niemi & Norris, Comparing Democracies 2.
- Geddes, Barbara. "What Do We Know About Democratization," *Annual Reviews of Political Science* 2, 129-148.
- * Huntington, Samuel. The Third Wave: Democratization in the 20th Century. 1991.
- * Lijphart, Arend. Patterns of Democracy. 1999.
- Linz "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
- Rogowski, Ronald. Commerce and Coalitions. 1989. Ch. 1.
- Schedler, Andreas. "The Menu of Manipulation." *Journal of Democracy* April 2002.
- Shleifer and Treisman, "A Normal Country," *Foreign Affairs*, March-April 2004.
- Tarrow, Sidney. Power in Movement. 2nd ed. 1998, Ch. 5 and Ch. 6.
- Wilkinson, Steven. Votes and Violence. 2004. Ch. 1.

PSC256 - SYLLABUS		Fall 2008	
<u>Week</u>	<u>Lecture Topics</u>	<u>Discussion Topics</u>	<u>Required Reading</u>
Sept 2	What is comparative politics?	What is to be explained?	Almond, Ch. 1, 7
Sept 9	Regime types	Democratic and authoritarian types.	Lijphart Ch. 1-4, Geddes, Schedler
Sept 16	Economic and social Setting	Economic development and democracy	Huntington, Ch.1-4 Almond Ch. 2 Schleifer & Triesman
Sept.23	Ethnicity	Constructing cleavages?	Brown 2000, Ch. 1 Posner
Sept 30	Cultural values	Valuing regimes, policies	Norris & Inglehart Almond, Ch. 3 Conradt, Ch. 4
Oct. 7	International environment	Shocks, cleavages and constraints	Rogowski, Ch. 1 Conradt, Ch. 1-3
Oct. 14	Review for Midterm	MIDTERM EXAM Thursday October 16	
Oct. 21	Constitutional Arrangements in Democracies	Decision rules: inclusiveness, presidentialism. Germany	Almond ch 6 Conradt ch 7,9 Lijphart ch 7,10-14
Oct. 28	Constitutional Arrangements	Election rules Duverger's Law.	Almond ch 5, Conradt, ch. 5-6, Lijphart, ch. 8
Nov. 4	Interest Group Systems	Pluralism & corporatism	Almond Ch. 4 Lijphart, Ch. 9
Nov. 11	Party Systems: Consequences	Multi-party democracy, coalition formation	Lijphart, Ch. 5,6 Basu in Kohli
Nov. 18	Citizen & group participation	Voting & alternatives; deprivation & opportunity.	Franklin in LeDuc; Tarrow, ch 5,6
Nov. 25	Citizen Choices at the polls	Preference & choice, economic voting.	Duch in Boix & Stokes Dalton in LeDuc NO THURSDAY CLASS
Dec. 2	Elite power-holders Huntington, Wilkinson Ch.1	Constitutional & coercive strategies	Nordlinger, ch 3; Ch. 5,6;
Dec. 9	Choosing Policies	Democratic performance	Almond Ch. 7; Lijphart 15-17

FINAL EXAM IS THURSDAY DECEMBER 18 AT 16:00 IN OUR USUAL CLASSROOM