Overview
This course will introduce you to the field of comparative politics. It will provide the basis for subsequent coursework and research in the comparative politics subfield. Another important aim of the class is to help you prepare for the comprehensive general examination in comparative politics.

Learning objectives
By the end of this class you should:
1. Understand the main theoretical approaches to the study of comparative politics.
2. Develop a general view of the main research areas of comparative politics.
3. Improve your ability to dissect and analyze empirical research in this field.
4. Start preparing for the comprehensive exam in comparative politics.

Requirements
(1) Two short papers. You will write two, five-page papers that critically analyze the assigned reading for a particular week. You can focus on any topic as long as you respond to the readings in some way. You also do not have to cover all the readings in a particular week, but should identify and analyze a main theme, debate, or puzzle from at least some of those readings. You need not do additional outside reading for these papers, as you should instead be developing your reactions to the readings.

The papers are due by noon on the day of class (Thursday). You can bring them to my office, put them in my mailbox, or send them as an email attachment. Late papers will be penalized.

(2) Class participation. The quality of a seminar depends heavily on the participation of its members. You are therefore expected to finish all assigned readings before class, and actively participate in discussion. Be prepared for me to regularly call upon you and ask you to summarize or analyze some of the assigned readings.

(3) Final examination. The final exam will simulate the comprehensive examination in comparative politics. It will be a take-home exam, consisting of three questions. More information will be provided about the exam during the class.

Grading
Short papers (10% each): 20%
Class participation: 30%
Final exam: 50%
**Reading**

**Books:** We will be reading portions of the following books. As a result, you may wish to purchase them, although I have not ordered them through the GW bookstore. All of these books are also on reserve, should you not wish to purchase them.

Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa.*
Donald Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot.*
Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action.*
Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy.*
Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions.*

All other readings (marked with an *) are available through Blackboard. The additional sources (listed in small type) are mere suggestions for future reading.

**Schedule and Readings:**

(1) August 29: Introduction and overview

**METHODS AND APPROACHES**

(2) September 5: The Comparative Method


**Additional Sources**

**September 12: Political Culture**


**Additional Sources**

(4) September 19: The Rational Actor Approach


Some additional sources
(5) September 26: Institutions, Path Dependence, and Institutional Change


Theda Skocpol, States and Social Revolutions, chps. 1-3 (pp. 3-157).

Some additional sources
-- Kathleen Thelen, How Institutions Evolve: The Political Economy of Skills in Germany, Britain, the United States, and Japan (Cambridge University Press 2004).

TOPICAL RESEARCH AREAS

(6) October 3: The Origins and Nature of States

* Theda Skocpol, “Introduction: Bringing the State Back In.” In Peter Evans et al., Bringing the State Back In (Cambridge: 1985), pp. 3-38.

* James Scott, Seeing Like a State, introduction and chapters 1-2 (about 80 pages).


Some additional sources
-- Thomas Ertman, Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe (1997).
-- Joel Migdal, Strong Societies and Weak States (1988).

(7) October 10: Modernization and Political Development


**Some additional sources**
-- Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*.
-- Francis Hagopian, “Political Development, Revisited,” *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 33, nos. 6/7 (August/September 2000), pp. 880-911.


**(8) October 17: Regime Types and Transitions**

* Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, chps. 21-22 (pp. 250-83).


Some additional sources
-- Valerie Bunce, Subversive Institutions: The Design and Destruction of Socialism and the State, 1999.
-- David Collier and Steven Levitsky, “Democracy with Adjectives,” World Politics.
-- Dan Slater, Ordering Power (Cambridge University Press 2010).

(9) October 24: Forms of Political Participation and Action


**Some additional sources**

-- Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

(10) **October 31: Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Violence**

* Ernst Renan (1882), “What is a Nation?”


Some additional sources
-- Fearon, James, and David Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War.” American Political Science Review. 97(1), 2003, pp. 75-90.
-- Daniel N. Posner, Institutions and Ethnic Identities in Africa

(11) November 7: Parties, Party Systems, and Political Linkages


Some additional sources
(12) November 14: Political Economy of Advanced Industrialized States


Some additional sources

-- Peter Hall and David Soskice, *The Varieties of Capitalism*.

-- Peter Katzenstein, *Small States in World Markets*


(13) **November 21: NO CLASS, PROF OUT OF TOWN**

(14) **November 28: Thanksgiving, NO CLASS**

(15) **December 5: Political Economy of Developing Nations**


**Some additional sources**


12