PS 5301: Seminar in Comparative Politics

Fall 2017

Class Time and Location: Online Format
Contact Information
Dr. David Watson
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Class Overview: This course serves as the core seminar in the sub-field of comparative politics. Students will be introduced to the development of comparative politics covering chronologically the major topics and methods of analysis. The course begins with the behavioral revolution and focuses on modernization theory. Then, the course turns to the various critiques of behavioralism: institutionalism, dependency theory, analysis of the state, and agency-based analysis. Finally, the course ends with various topics covered in the current, post- behavioral era.

Format: The format of this course is web-based. However, this does not mean that there will not be sufficient opportunities for interaction with both the instructor and other students. Much of class activity will take place on the class discussion board on Blackboard 9.0.

Grading:

Participation: to be assessed based on the following criteria:
15% Weekly Chapter/Article Summaries
15% Class participation exhibited through thoughtful discussion and discussion questions.

Chapter Summary and Presentation: For each week of readings, students will prepare a 1-page, single-spaced summary of the reading assignment. A paper is required for each assignment; if there are 3 articles assigned for a week, 3 summaries are due. These summaries are due the Wednesday night at midnight for each week.

Weekly Questions: One of the most underrated skills in academia is the ability to ask *good* questions. (Contrary to popular belief, there are such things as stupid questions.) This is your chance to practice. The questions should be analytical (theoretical) or methodological in nature and can focus directly on the reading or attempt to develop a tangential line of inquiry. In the latter case, these questions may be ideas for future dissertations and/or conference papers. Perhaps you were inspired by an "off hand" comment in a footnote, or would like to examine how a particular work's thesis might be updated to understand contemporary politics. You may also develop questions that "speak" to multiple readings or other regions of the world. Be creative. Questions will be graded on a +/- basis. You are required to post at least 12 sets of weekly questions/answers. You need not turn in questions for the first week of class (Jan. 22) since you won't have yet read this syllabus or the readings. You also are permitted two "bye" weeks of

your own choosing. These questions are to be posted on the discussion board of Blackboard under the appropriate week.

Term Paper: 20% of final grade: Each student will pick a topic relevant to comparative politics and write a 10-12 page research design/paper. It is important to remember that graduate school focuses on the ideas and criticisms of previous work, and this is the purpose of these papers. The responses should present testable hypotheses and an argument in favor of one particular view point and not merely summarize the readings. The student has discretion over which topic is selected; however, it is ill-advised to put this off until the final two weeks of the semester.

Midterm and Final Examinations:
25% each: These will be in-class and closed book.

Class Goals:

Behavioral and Social Sciences – MA in Public Administration
Program Learning Outcomes
The graduating student will:

- Demonstrate the ability to critique significant theoretical approaches of public administration.

- Demonstrate the ability to evaluate domestic and international administrative processes.

- Demonstrate the ability to apply appropriate statistical tools for quantitative analysis.

We will be repeatedly trying to address several objectives in this class.
1. Critique the basic literature on comparative politics.
Method of Assessment: Exams 1 and 2.
2. Analyze the development of theories in comparative politics.
Method of Assessment: Exams 1 and 2.
3. Assess the current state of comparative political theory.
Method of Assessment: Exams 1 and 2.
4. Display the ability to create independent research based critically thinking about assigned reading topics.
Method of Assessment: Exams 1, 2, and the term paper.

And addressing several questions, including:
1. What is the relationship between wealth and democracy?
2. Can political institutions mitigate ethnic conflict?
3. How do political attitudes affect regime type?
4. How does civil society affect politics?
5. Does regime type affect economic outcomes?
6. What causes democratization?

Method of Evaluation:
Participation, Discussion Questions, Examinations, Research Paper

Materials:
There is a required book for this class. You will need to order it as soon as possible, as the third class week will utilize it. It is:

Mayer, Lawrence. <u>Comparative Politics: The Quest For Theory and Explanation</u> (2007). Sloan Publishing, LLC. 2007. (ISBN 978-1597380027).

*All other reading assignments will be made available through blackboard.

Class Outline:
The following represents a <u>tentative</u> class schedule.

Week 1: January 22nd.
Topic: Course introduction and Overview**.**

Week 2: January 29th
Topic: Modernization Theory
Have Read: Articles 1, 2, and 3.

Week 3: February 5th
Topic: The State**.**
Have Read: Articles 4, 5 and 6.

Week 4: February 12th
Foundations/ Basic Concerns**.**
Have Read: Mayer Chapter 1, and assigned chapter from Mayer book.

Week 5: February 19th
Topic: Dependency Theory**.**
Have Read: Articles 7, 8, and 9.

Week 6: February 26th
Topic: Institutions**.**
Have Read: Articles 10, 11, and 12.

Week 7: March 5th
Topic: Democratic Institutions.
Have Read: Articles 13, 14, and 15.

Week 8: March 12th
No Class: Spring Break

Week 9: March 19th
Topic: Midterm Exam.

Week 10: March 26th
Topic: Ethnicity**.**
Have Read: Articles 16, 17, and 18.

Week 11: April 2nd
Topic: Globalization

Have Read: Movie Day/Just come

Week 12: April 9th
Topic: Political Parties**.**
Have Read: Articles 19, 20, and 21.

Week 13: April 16th
Topic: Civil Society**.**
Have Read: Articles 22, 23, and 24.

Week 14: April 23rd
Topic: Democratization**.**
 Have Read: Articles 25, 26, and 27.

Week 15: April 30th
Topic: Political Culture and Behavior
Have Read: Articles 28, 29, and 30.

Week 16: May 7th
Topic: Turn in Research Papers, Turn in Final Exams

Disability Policy: It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities. If you would like to request such an accommodation because of a physical, mental, or learning disability, please contact Joyce Sesters (University Center 211), the coordinator for program accessibility 837-8178.

Research Paper Assignment

       Your assignment for the class is to write a comparative research paper of the governmental systems of two countries. The specific comparative topic is flexible; you could choose political institutions, public policy outcomes, or even topics related to globalization. If you are having a hard time finding a topic, use the assigned readings materials as they are rich in generating potential research ideas. Beyond that, please come and visit during office hour; it is a good idea to have your topic approved prior to mid-semester. You'll need to use either APA or MLE citation styles (I don't care which; but one or the other!). The project should be between twelve and fifteen, double-spaced pages long; the bibliography is included in the twelve to fifteen pages.

       The protocol for the paper is below:

- ☐ Select a problem area for your topic. Select a problem that you believe needs fixing, e.g., housing shortage, drug abuse, abortion, teen pregnancy, school dropout rates. In the introduction of the problem state why the problem is important;
- ☐ After your statement to (or introduction of) the problem, present your diagram. Identify the dependent variable and then identify your field of independent variables. Use arrows, lines, and valences to show the interrelationships among the variables. You need to search the library for evidence to support why you included the variables you used;
- ☐ Give a narrative explanation of your model explaining the relationships among the variables;
- ☐ Include a bibliography page with a minimum of five citations;
- ☐ This is a formal paper so include internal documentation/citation in the text of your work;
- ☐ Use type no larger than twelve-point and have left, right, top-page, and bottom-page margins no larger than one inch.
- ☐ **Any student that does not conform to the documentation requirement will receive an F on the paper, and any student that uses enlarged type or margins without adequate increase in length of the paper will receive a grade no higher than a C on the paper.**