

Political Science 242
Comparative Politics Core Course
Fall 2020
Mondays 12:10-3pm (Zoom meetings)

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Office Hours: through Zoom by appointment

Course Webpage: <http://scheiner.ucdavis.edu/pol242.html>

******Please note that there is reading for the first day.***

Course Summary:

This course is not an introduction to the entire subfield of comparative politics – that is just too much to do in a single quarter. Rather, this course is an introduction to *how* to do comparative politics social science research. The aim here is not to be comprehensive. The brevity of the quarter prevents that. Also, much of the key work in comparative politics is covered in other classes.

Ultimately, this course is important for three main reasons. First, *the principles here will apply to all political science classes you take.* Second, what we cover here is critical to you becoming a good comparative political scientist. Third, it is the most important course for preparing everyone who will be taking the comparative politics exam in their third year.

The two core parts of the class will focus on 1) Research Design and Methodology and 2) Examples of Different Approaches to Comparative Politics.

Additional Comments for Grad Students:

1. A major aim of this class is to help professionalize students within the political science discipline. For this reason, we will regularly have brief discussions of “Professionalization” in class. Please see the listing for each week and **please come to class with questions about that week’s professionalization topic.** Some weeks we will also address suggestions or “Advice” on how to approach aspects of academia/Political Science.
2. The most common characteristic I have noticed among students who are not doing well in graduate school is lack of communication. **If you need/plan to turn in something late for my class, *that is fine* – just please just let me know so I’m not wondering if I’ve missed it. And if you are having problems with the program or with class, please come talk with me. There is no shame in any of that!**

Required Texts (note that most – but not all – of the texts are available online through the library):

- Adida, Claire L., David D. Laitin, and Marie-Anne Valfort. 2016. *Why Muslim Integration Fails in Christian-Heritage Societies*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0674979697
- Huber, John D., and Charles R. Shipan. 2002. *Deliberate Discretion? The Institutional Foundations of Bureaucratic Autonomy*. New York: Cambridge University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0521520706
- King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0691034713
- Thachil, Tariq. 2014. *Elite Parties, Poor Voters: How Social Services Win Votes in India*. New York: Cambridge University Press. ISBN-13: 978-1107678446
- Weinstein, Jeremy M. 2007. *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*. New York: Cambridge University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0521677974
- Also, the journal articles will be available online at JSTOR/scholar.google.com/etc.
- Other reading is posted in the Reading folder under the Files tab at Canvas

Assignments:

- Weekly reading assignments
- Class participation (10%). Keep this in mind: If the rest of your work is flawless, but you don't participate in class, the highest grade you can get in the class is an A- (i.e., 90%). **If you are nervous about answering questions/engaging in discussion, I recommend bringing in questions to ask the class about the material.**
- Take-home (6 double-spaced pages) "exam" assigned after Session 5 and due at Canvas (Assignments tab) anytime by **noon, Tuesday, November 10** (35%)
- Take-home (8 double-spaced pages) "exam," assigned after Session 10 and due at Canvas (Assignments tab) anytime by **9am, Thursday, December 17** (55%). **Please avoid turning this in late. I may not have time to grade late essays, forcing me to give you an incomplete.**

Written Assignments: **Please be sure to follow formatting instructions.** All written assignments must be double-spaced and typed in Times New Roman 12-point font, have 1-inch margins (not the MS Word default), and be carefully proofread. (I have little patience for typos/missing words/poorly constructed sentences, nouns-pronouns that don't match, etc.)

- **On a separate title page (which would come at the start of the paper) only, please put your name, course, assignment, and the date. After the title page, please do not include your name anywhere.** (I don't like to know whose papers I'm reading.)
- **Use page numbers** whenever you submit something longer than one page. (Papers without page numbers drive me insane.)
- Please do not include a page number for the title page. (To do this in Word, create a "section" break between the title page and the first page of the text of the paper, rather than a page break.) And, finally, please stick closely to the prescribed lengths. I won't read beyond the page limit.

The Evolution and Debates within Comparative Politics

1. October 5: What is Comparative Political Science?

- Gerardo Munck. 2007. "The Past and Present of Comparative Politics." Pp. 32-59 in Munck and Snyder, *Passion, Craft and Method in Comparative Politics*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Bates, Robert H. 1996. "Letter from the President: Area Studies and the Discipline." APSA-CP: Newsletter of the APSA Organized Section on Comparative Politics 7: 1-2. http://comparativenewsletter.com/files/archived_newsletters/1996_winter.pdf
- David Laitin, "Comparative Politics: The State of the Subdiscipline," in Ira Katznelson and Helen Milner, eds., *Political Science: The State of the Discipline* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002), pp. 630-59.
- Fearon, James D. 1995. "Rationalist Explanations for War." *International Organization* 49:379-414. **Just skim this article to get a sense of what a formal model within political science is.**
- Interview with David Laitin (pp. 601-48) in Munck and Snyder, *Passion, Craft and Method in Comparative Politics*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- 2015 APSA-CP Vol 25, No. 2: http://comparativenewsletter.com/files/archived_newsletters/newsletter_fall2015.pdf
 - Pp. 5-7: James Adams, "Faculty-student Research Collaboration as a Training"
 - Pp. 9-11: Barbara Geddes, "Training for Both Skills and Substance"
 - Pp. 13-15: Gretchen Helmke and G. Bingham Powell, Jr., "Balancing Trade-offs and Leveraging Experience"
 - Pp. 21-24: Leonard Wantchekon, "Training Graduate Students in Comparative Politics"

Please consider:

- *What is the "main point" of comparative politics?*
- *What was (were) the traditional approach(es) to comparative politics?*
- *What is tripartite method? Why important?*
- *The importance of theory in political science and the shifts in approaches over time.*

Homework: *Prior to Session #2: Go to the websites of your "dream jobs" – (a) a highly ranked Political Science department and (b) a less highly ranked one that for various reasons (e.g., the approach of the department, approach to teaching, or is located somewhere that you really want to live) that would be the ideal job for you. Look over the CVs and type of work being done by people in comparative politics (and your own area if different from comparative politics). In particular, look at what their records were like when they got the job (and especially look at the CVs of assistant professors). Next time, we'll talk a bit about what each of you find.*

Professionalization - Stress

- General part of grad school
 - Especially in place where not a lot of positive feedback
 - Common to experience mental health challenges in grad school: <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2018/11/anxiety-depression-mental-health-graduate-school/576769/>

- None of this (i.e., graduate school/Political Science) is THAT important!
- Keep things in perspective

Professionalization - What kind of job to go for?

- Important to know actually what you want from a job
 - Prestige?
 - Research?
 - Teaching?
 - Non-academic?
 - Location?
- Don't be swayed by others' influence on this

Research Design and Methodology

2. October 12: Theories and Mechanisms

- Lave, Charles, and James G. March. 1975. *An Introduction to Models in the Social Sciences*. New York: HarperCollins, Ch1&2: pp. 2-42.
- Elster, Jon. 1989. *Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters I & II (pp. 3-21).
- KKV, Ch1-3 (pp. 3-114).
- Dan Slater & Erica Simmons. “Informative Regress: Critical Antecedents in Comparative Politics.” *Comparative Political Studies* 43:7 (July 2010), pp. 886-917.

We will give considerable attention here to mechanisms, implications, hypotheses, unit of analysis.

Will not have time to discuss today, but for your own research and studying for exams, I recommend the following:

- Weyland, Kurt. 2008. “Toward a New Theory of Institutional Change.” *World Politics* 60:281-314.
- Grzymala-Busse, Anna. 2011. “Time Will Tell? Temporality and the Analysis of Causal Mechanisms.” *Comparative Political Studies* 44: 1267–1297.

*At the **start of this session**, we will talk briefly about the material from Day 1 and about what you learned about your dream jobs.*

*At the **end of this session**, we will also divide up the class. Prior to the next class, each of you will look at a number of issues of a specific political science journal – *American Political Science Review, American Journal of Political Science, Journal of Politics, Comparative Politics, and Comparative Political Studies* – over the past 4 years. How many articles in these journals cover a single country? A small number of countries? Large numbers of countries? Countries other than the U.S.? How many develop a theory? How many are purely empirical? How many based on field work? Experimental work? Qualitative design? Quantitative design? Based on survey of citizens? Please do not spend more than 1 hour on this task.*

Professionalization – Job Talks

Job Talks - Most Important Part of Interview

- What is the format?
- Keys to good job talk
 - Puzzle
 - Theory
 - Empirics
 - Implications
 - Hummable Tune
 - Good Q&A

More on Job Talks

- Good Q&A

- Alternative explanations
- Endogeneity
- Your tone
 - Confident and firm – willing to reject
 - Great willingness to accept suggestions of others
 - Incorporate them into the analysis
 - Likeability – you want them to want to have you around
- 35 minutes
 - ABSOLUTELY NO LONGER THAN 45 MINUTES!!!
- Practice talk (out loud!) until it is basically memorized

Final point on Job Talks

- Fit for the job?

3. October 19: Comparative Research Design

- Arend Lijphart. 1971. "Comparative Politics and Comparative Method," *APSR* 65(3):682-93.
- Robert W. Jackman, "Cross-National Statistical Research and the Study of Comparative Politics," *AJPS*, 29 (1985), 161-82.
- Stanley Lieberson. 1991 "Small N's and big conclusions: An examination of the reasoning in comparative studies based on a small number of cases." *Social Forces* 70 (December): 307-20.
- KKV, Ch4-5 (pp. 115-207).

Among other things, we will consider important differences between small-N and large-N cross-national designs. Also, in the past students have been too accepting of the strengths of large-N cross-national design. Be sensitive to the fact that there are advantages and disadvantages in all kinds of research designs.

Please also give your "reports" on the types of articles appearing in the journals.

Advice: What to do when "skimming" the reading? Look for:

- What is the question that the author is trying to answer?
- How does the author look to answer that question?
 - What is the dependent variable?
 - What are the independent variables?
 - What is the authors' theory?
 - What are the main hypotheses?
 - How do the hypotheses help address the theory?
 - What is the unit of analysis & what type of data/from where (e.g., what countries) does the author use?
- What are the findings of the study?
- What do the findings mean for the theory?
- Is the author saying something very different from previous work or largely just adding on to previous work?

Professionalization – What happens in an academic job interview (aside from the job talk)?

- One on one meetings with faculty
 - YOUR chance to ask them questions!
 - About program
 - But also ask about individuals' research!
 - What are you working on?
 - Your general research program
 - Personal too...
- Meetings with students - These can be important

4. October 26: Small Numbers of Country Cases

Lots of reading assignments today, but they are all short.

- John Gerring, “What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good for?” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 98 (2004) 2: 341-54.
- Snyder, Richard. 2001. “Scaling Down: The Subnational Comparative Method.” *Studies in Comparative International Development*, Spring 2001, Vol. 36, No. 1, pp. 93–110.
- KKV, Ch6 (208-230).
- Humphreys, Macartan, and Jeremy Weinstein. 2009. “Field Experiments and the Political Economy of Development.” *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 12: 367-78.
- Dunning, Thad. 2008. “Improving Causal Inference: Strengths and Limitations of Natural Experiments.” *Political Research Quarterly* 61 (2): 282-293.
- Dunning, Thad. 2011. “Natural Experiments.” In Bertrand Badie, Dirk Berg-Schlosser, Leonardo Morlino, eds., *International Encyclopedia of Political Science*. Sage.
http://www.thaddunning.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Dunning_IEPS_Natural-Experiments_v4.pdf

Read also the below on issues in Field Research

- Wood, Elizabeth Jean. 2007. “Field Research.” Pp. 123-146 in Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Symposium on “Should Everyone Do Fieldwork?” Pp. 8-18 in 2005 APSA-CP Vol 16, No. 2: http://comparativenewsletter.com/files/archived_newsletters/2005_summer.pdf
- Kanchan Chandra, “Redefining the Relationship with the Field: Why Graduate Students Should Avoid The Two to Four Week Model of Fieldwork” pp. 7-9 in 2015 APSA-CP Vol 25, No. 2:
http://comparativenewsletter.com/files/archived_newsletters/newsletter_fall2015.pdf

Among other things, we will consider potential advantages and pitfalls of using a small number of cases. Also, what are good approaches to using a small number of cases? What are the following and what are their advantages and disadvantages?

Field work, cases studies, area studies, field and natural experiments?

We will also consider qualitative and quantitative research designs. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each?

How does the study of Comparative Politics differ from the study of American Politics?

Advice: HOW to read a book given our scarce time? This will be important in your reading in the second half of the course.

What should do first?

- Hit the puzzle
- Hit the theory in the early chapter – this is the most important thing!
 - Why?
- See what is being argued against in literature review chapter
- See the conclusion

Next?

- Figure out why they test what they do – i.e., what is the point of the empirical chapters?
- Look at the key empirical tests
 - Focus first on intro and conclusion of empirical chpts
 - But also how well do they test what the authors say they do?
 - What should you be doing here?
 - First look at measures of independent and dep variables

5. November 2: New Approaches & Pitfalls

- Mahoney, James. 2010. "AFTER KKV: The New Methodology of Qualitative Research." *World Politics*, Vol. 62, No. 1 (January 2010): **Read pp. 120-131, 138-end.**
- Lieberman, Evan S. 2005. "Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research." *American Political Science Review* 99(3): 435-451.
- Scott Gehlbach, "The Fallacy of Multiple Methods," pp. 11-12 in 2015 APSA-CP Vol 25, No. 2:
http://comparativenewsletter.com/files/archived_newsletters/newsletter_fall2015.pdf
- Dan Slater & Daniel Ziblatt. "The Enduring Indispensability of the Controlled Comparison." *Comparative Political Studies* 46:10 (October 2013), pp. 1301-1327.
- John Huber, "Is theory getting lost in the "identification revolution"?" June 14, 2013.
<http://themonkeycage.org/2013/06/is-theory-getting-lost-in-the-identification-revolution/>

Also read the following – we will discuss:

- "Cal Tech Rules"
- Stimson Writing

Professionalization – Issues surrounding "Overcoming Barriers to Women's Advancement in Political Science" by Amy Catalinac:

- https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/catalinac_womenstalk.pdf

Professionalization – Conferences

- What happens?
- The big ones
- Smaller ones
- Invited conferences
- How you might approach them

Professionalization – Grants

- Go get them!
- Start applying as soon as possible!
 - Especially useful for dissertation time

At the end of class #5, I will assign a take-home midterm (no more than 6 double-spaced pages). It is due by noon, Tuesday, November 10.

Examples of Different Approaches to Comparative Politics

6. November 9: No class so that you can work on your essay

7. November 16: Large-ish and Actually Large N Studies

In doing this week's reading, please don't feel like you need to know the deep-dive details for each paper. I assigned each paper with a research design idea in mind. I'm hoping that as you read you will focus on trying to figure out why I assigned the paper from a research design perspective and to think about the strengths & weaknesses of the general approach of the paper.

- *Skim over Cal Tech Rules & Stimson Writing from before and think about whether the articles for today follow the structure laid out in those 2 pieces.*
- Matt Singer & Zachary Gershman District Magnitude. 2018. "Do changes in district magnitude affect electoral fragmentation? Evidence over time at the district level." *Electoral Studies* 54: 172-181.
- Karen Long Jusko, Orit Kedar, and W. Phillips Shively. 2005. "Strategies of Analysis for Multi-Country Individual-Level Data." APSA-CP (Newsletter of the American Political Science Association Organized Section in Comparative Politics) 16 (2): 5-7. http://comparativenewsletter.com/files/archived_newsletters/2005_summer.pdf
- Anderson, Christopher J., and Matthew M. Singer. 2008. "The Sensitive Left and the Impervious Right: Multilevel Models and the Politics of Inequality, Ideology, and Legitimacy in Europe." *Comparative Political Studies* 41: 564-599. **READ PP. 564-571 CAREFULLY. You can skim the rest quickly.**
- David Fortunato & Randolph Stevenson. 2013. "Perceptions of Partisan Ideologies: The Effect of Coalition Participation." *American Journal of Political Science*. 57: 459-477.
- Nathan Nunn & Leonard Wantchekon. "The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa." *American Economic Review*. 2011; 101 (7): 3221-3252.
- Amanda Lea Robinson. 2014. "National versus Ethnic Identification in Africa: Modernization, Colonial Legacy, and the Origins of Territorial Nationalism." *World Politics* 66 (4): 709-746.

Professionalization – Writing/Submitting Articles

- How submission process works
 - What happens
 - Length of time
 - Possible outcomes
- Which journal to submit to?
 - Shoot a bit high but be reasonable
 - Pecking order of journals?

Professionalization – Books

- How's that work?
- Top presses?
- Value of edited volumes?

8. November 23: Small Numbers of Countries

In doing this week's reading, please don't feel like you need to know the deep-dive details for each paper. I assigned each paper with a research design idea in mind. I'm hoping that as you read you will focus on trying to figure out why I assigned the paper from a research design perspective and to think about the strengths & weaknesses of the general approach of the paper.

- **Think about whether the articles for today follow the structure laid out in the Cal Tech Rules & Stimson Writing pieces.**
- James Habyarimana, Macartan Humphreys, Daniel N. Posner, and Jeremy M. Weinstein. 2007. "Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision?" *American Political Science Review* 101(4): 709-25.
- Daniel Posner, "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 98 (November 2004) 4: 529-45.
- O'Brien, Diana Z. and Johanna Rickne. 2016. "Gender Quotas and Women's Political Leadership." *American Political Science Review* 110(1): 112-26.
- Anna Grzymala Busse & Dan Slater. "Making Godly Nations: Church-State Pathways in Poland and the Philippines." *Comparative Politics* 50:3 (April 2018). **READ PP. 545-top of 550 & PP. 559-561 (CONCLUSION) CAREFULLY. Can skim the rest.**
- Condra, Long, Shaver, & Wright. "The Logic of Insurgent Electoral Violence." *American Economic Review* 2018, 108(11): 3199–3231.
- Beatriz Magaloni, Edgar Franco Vivanco, and Vanessa Melo. Forthcoming. "Killing in the Slums: Social Order, Criminal Governance, and Police Violence in Rio de Janeiro." *American Political Science Review*.
http://www.bmagaloni.com/storage/uploads/publications/APSR_Killing.final_01JUN2002.pdf.pdf
- Pan, Jennifer and Alexandra A. Siegel. 2020. "How Saudi Crackdowns Fail to Silence Online Dissent." *American Political Science Review* 114: 109-125.

Professionalization – Tenure

- How do you get tenure?
- What's the process?

Professionalization – Postdocs

- What are they?
- How are they useful?
- Look for postdocs in your area!

9. November 30: Studying a Single Country

- Adida, Claire L., David D. Laitin, and Marie-Anne Valfort. 2016. *Why Muslim Integration Fails in Christian-Heritage Societies*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Thachil, Tariq. 2014. *Elite Parties, Poor Voters: How Social Services Win Votes in India*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Will also discuss career strategies within comparative politics. That is, what kinds of research programs are advantageous/disadvantageous within comparative politics? Focus on specific countries? Large N? Quantitative? Value of doing fieldwork?

Also, what is endogeneity? And why is it a problem?

Professionalization – the transition from course work

- Read: <https://medium.com/@paul.niehaus/doing-research-18cb310529e0>

Professionalization – non-academic career path

- <https://medium.com/@rebeccajaynewolfe/considering-a-non-academic-career-some-musing-from-a-scholar-practitioner-4856edd5df49>

10. December 7: Exemplars of Terrific Comparative Political Science

- Huber, John D., and Charles R. Shipan. 2002. *Deliberate Discretion? The Institutional Foundations of Bureaucratic Autonomy*. New York: Cambridge University Press. *Whole book, but recommend skimming Chapters 3, 5, & 8.*
- Weinstein, Jeremy M. 2007. *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*. New York: Cambridge University Press. *Whole book, but recommend skimming Chapters 3-7 & 9.*

Professionalization – Dissertations

Dissertation Thinking

- Never too early to start thinking about it
 - Present early ideas at conferences
- If possible, write a “book style” diss
 - And try to address genuinely important issue in your field

Identifying an interesting topic

- “Contrary to the advice about looking for holes in the literature, good research in the comparative field often begins either with an intense but unfocused curiosity about why some event or process has happened or with a sense of sputtering indignation at the patent idiocy of some particular argument advanced in the literature” (Geddes 2003).

Dissertation Doing

- “Write 1 page per day”
- Set strict date deadlines for each chapter
 - Present at conferences!

- Make clear, generalizable argument
 - Make the argument of each ch clear as ch opens
 - Make clear in opening of each ch how it relates back to overall argument
- Try to use all kinds of methods
 - Case study
 - Experimental
 - Formal
 - Large-N quantitative
 - But ultimately use just what is appropriate to get at the larger problem
- Remember, it's what you are doing, but not who you are
 - Get out and have fun too!

Take-home (8 double-spaced pages) "exam," assigned after Session 10 and due at Canvas (Assignments tab) anytime by 9am, Thursday, December 17 (55%). Please avoid turning this in late. I may not have time to grade late essays, forcing me to give you an incomplete.