

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 9566a**  
**Comparative Politics**

**Fall 2012**

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**Office Hours:** W 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. or by appointment  
**Class Meeting:** M 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. SSC 4105

**Course Objectives**

This seminar introduces students to the academic study of Comparative Politics with an emphasis on examining competing conceptual, methodological and theoretical approaches to this political science subfield. We discuss the historic roots of comparative politics and examine of a variety of comparative methodological approaches including most similar and most different systems, case studies, large n, small n, and rational choice. Current substantive debates will illustrate the various approaches. Topics are explored by examining classical and contemporary contributions from leading scholars.

**Course Materials**

There is no required text for this course. Students are responsible for locating the required materials. Some course content may be accessed through the course page on the OWL system. Course content on this page may include copies of and/or links to the required readings as well as a variety of other materials including discussion group postings and course change advisories. You should plan to access the course web page on a weekly basis. Should the need arise, course materials may also be accessed via the UWO library page (utilizing available full text databases). As well, the UWO library holds print subscriptions for many of the books and journals in the reading list. Finally, some of the required readings may be put on reserve in Weldon Library. As always, please be aware of CanCopy regulations.

**Course Requirements**

Participation	40%
Class Presentations	10%
Critical Reviews	35%
Research Design	15%

## ***Participation***

This is a graduate-level seminar. As such, preparation, attendance and active participation are mandatory. Every seminar day, students will sign a register of attendance. The instructor will take note of the quality and quantity of verbal contributions and will award marks based on the intellectual content and evidence of learning contained within such remarks. The grade for this portion of the course requirements will be calculated as the average of all class sessions beyond the first class. To be perfectly clear, the minimum expectation is that **prior** to the beginning of class, students have thoroughly read and considered the assigned materials. Each student is expected to actively participate in the in-class discussions. The instructor will attempt to facilitate these discussions so that everyone has an opportunity to participate but it is the student's responsibility to actively engage in the discussion on a weekly basis.

## ***Class Presentations***

On a minimum of two and a maximum of four occasions (depending on class size), students will be responsible for introducing one or more of the assigned articles or chapters to the class. Each time, you will give a very brief summary of the material, discuss it with reference to other materials under review that day and in prior classes, evaluate its overall argumentation, and identify key weaknesses and omissions. Marks are awarded based on overall understanding of the reading's arguments, a discussion of its merits and weaknesses, as well as its context and value for studying comparative politics. Students are expected to coordinate their presentations to prevent unnecessary duplication of arguments as well to avoid ignoring portions of the assigned materials.

## ***Critical Reviews***

Students will submit a critical review of the assigned readings. The purpose of these reviews is to help you to refine your research, analytical and writing skills, as well as expose you to central material that is relevant to the subject under study and your own research interests. The reviews should consist of a maximum of five, double-spaced pages (employing appropriate font, text size and margins – to be further clarified as necessary). Students will submit a total of six critical reviews during the course of the semester. The entire class will hand in a critical review prior to the week 2 class. After week 2, students will hand in a critical review every other week (as per the schedule set during the week 1 class). Due dates for papers are not negotiable.

These papers are graded on marks accumulated in four main areas: argumentation and critical analysis, spelling and grammar; organization; and evidence of contextual understanding. The essays are to be original works that communicate your individual thoughts and insights in your own words. The professor will **NOT** pre-screen your paper ideas.

## ***Research Design Essay:***

Students will submit a research design essay on the last day of class. The exercise is designed to offer students the opportunity to synthesize an overarching understanding of the material covered across the whole term by proposing and defending a comparative research design for a research question of interest. All of the readings covered during the course form the basis for the analysis; additional research is not required or desired. Student research question areas must be approved by the professor. More detail related to form and content will be discussed in class at the end of October. The summary essay is graded in four main areas: argumentation and critical analysis, spelling and grammar; organization; and evidence of a deep and defensible understanding of the main approaches to comparative research covered in the course material.

## ***Paper Submission Issues***

For each written assignment, one hard copy and one identical electronic copy submitted to the class OWL TurnItIn site are due no later than the start of class on the assignment deadline date. Papers not received at the beginning of class will receive a mark of zero (the late penalty is thus 100%). A paper is not considered as submitted unless both the hard copy and the electronic copy are submitted. Documentation of rare and exceptional circumstances will be reviewed only to the extent legally required by the University. There is ZERO flexibility as regards due dates and times so do not bother to ask for extensions.

Written assignments are not group-authored projects and group work on any written assignment will be viewed as plagiarism. All acts of plagiarism are serious academic offences and will be dealt with as per UWO's articulated sanctions. In the case of plagiarism in a graduate-level class, my preferred recommendation regarding sanctions is a fail on the assignment, a fail on the course, and expulsion from the program. All material that is borrowed from other sources must be appropriately acknowledged through using quotations and/or proper reference citations. Be aware that The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Your essays will be reviewed via such software for the purpose of plagiarism checking. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)

## **Course Schedule**

Please be aware of the fact that the instructor reserves the right to change the weekly topics, the dates various topics are covered as well as the individual readings within a given topic. Announcements regarding changes to the course schedule will be made no later than the week before the affected class meeting.

### **Week 1: Course Introduction**

### **Week 2: What is Comparative Politics?**

This week we begin by asking what is comparative politics? The first explores the scope, objectives and methods of comparative politics. The next three readings are short response pieces to the first article. The last five readings are drawn from 'typical' second year textbooks and address the state of comparative politics. You should think about what we mean by comparative politics. Is it a subfield? Or a method? Or was it killed off by IR? Or is it something else?

Munck, G. L., and R. Snyder. "Debating the Direction of Comparative Politics: An Analysis of Leading Journals." *Comparative Political Studies* 40.1 (2007): 5-31.

Mahoney, J. "Debating the State of Comparative Politics: Views from Qualitative Research." *Comparative Political Studies* 40.1 (2007): 32-8.

Wibbels, E. "No Method to the Comparative Politics Madness." *Comparative Political Studies* 40.1 (2007): 39-44.

Munck, G. L., and R. Snyder. "Visions of Comparative Politics: A Reply to Mahoney and Wibbels." *Comparative Political Studies* 40.1 (2007): 45-7.

Ishiyama, J.T. "Introduction, Comparative Politics and Democracy," in John T. Ishiyama, *Comparative Politics: Principles of Democracy and Democratization* Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell (2012): 1-25.

Caramani, D. "Introduction to Comparative Politics," in Daniele Caramani (ed) *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (2008): 1-23.

von Beyme, K. "The Evolution of Comparative Politics," in Daniele Caramani (ed) *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (2008): 27-43.

Peters, G.P. "Approaches in Comparative Politics," in Daniele Caramani (ed) *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (2008): 44-62.

Keman, H. "Comparative Research Methods," in Daniele Caramani (ed) *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (2008): 63-82.

### Week 3: Concepts in Comparative Politics

Sartori, Giovanni, (2009), "Concept Misinformation in Comparative Politics," in (eds.), David Collier and John Gerring, *Concepts and Method in Social Science: The Tradition of Giovanni Sartori*, New York: Routledge, 13-43. H61.C565 2009 in Western Libraries.

Collier, David and Steven Levitsky, (2009), Democracy: Conceptual Hierarchies in Comparative Research," in (eds.), David Collier and John Gerring, *Concepts and Method in Social Science: The Tradition of Giovanni Sartori*, New York: Routledge, 269-288.

David Collier, James E. Mahon, Jr., "Conceptual "Stretching" Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Analysis," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 87, No. 4 (Dec., 1993), pp. 845-855

Andreas Schedler. (2010). "Concept Formation in Political Science" CIDE Working Papers  
Available at: [http://works.bepress.com/andreas\\_schedler/28](http://works.bepress.com/andreas_schedler/28)

Armony, A.C. & Schamis, H.E. (2005). Babel in Democratization Studies. *Journal of Democracy*, 16(4), 113-128.

If you are unfamiliar with the debate surrounding the definition of democracy, I would suggest doing a quick scan of the brief Diamond & Przeworski articles before you read Armony & Schamis.

Diamond, Larry. (2003). Defining and Developing Democracy. In Dahl, et. al. (eds) *The Democracy Sourcebook*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 29-39.

Przeworski, Adam. (2003). Minimalist Conception of Democracy: A Defense. In Dahl, et. al. (eds) *The Democracy Sourcebook*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 12-16.

#### **Week 4: Measurement in Comparative Politics**

This week, we start out with two theory articles. The first gives a brief overview of a symposium looking at the use of data in comparative politics and the problems we should consider. The second examines data assessment. The third looks at the issues around measurement of democracy and the problems associated with the choices we make when moving from definitions to measures. The fourth is one of the first efforts to evaluate the big democracy indices. The next four are mini-replies to the fourth (and to my mind, these four amount to less than one real article). The last is a boots-on-the-ground attempt to address problems with democracy indices.

Mudde, C. & Schedler, A. (2010). Introduction: Rational Choice Data. *Political Research Quarterly*, 63(2), 410-416.

Herrera, Y. and Kapur, D. (2007). Improving Data Quality: Actors, Incentives, and Capabilities. *Political Analysis* 15, 365-386.

Collier, D. & Adcock, R. (1999). Democracy and Dichotomies: A pragmatic approach to choices about concepts. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2, 537-565.

Munck, G. L., & Verkuilen, J. (2002). Conceptualizing and measuring democracy: Evaluating alternative indices. *Comparative Political Studies*, 35(1), 5-34.

Coppedge, M. (2002). Democracy and dimensions: Comments on Munck and Verkuilen. *Comparative Political Studies*, 35(1), 35-39.

Marshall, M. G., Gurr, T. R., Davenport, C., & Jaggers, K. (2002). Polity IV, 1800-1999: Comments on Munck and Verkuilen. *Comparative Political Studies*, 35(1), 40-45.

Ward, M. D. (2002). Green binders in cyberspace: A modest proposal. *Comparative Political Studies*, 35(1), 46-51.

Munck, G. L., & Verkuilen, J. (2002). Generating Better Data: A response to discussants. *Comparative Political Studies*, 35(1), 52-57.

Bowman, K., Lehoucq, F., & Mahoney, J. (2005). Measuring political democracy: Case expertise, data adequacy, and Central America. *Comparative Political Studies*, 38(8), 939-970.

**HAPPY (Fake) THANKSGIVING – we do not meet the week of Oct 8**

## **Week 5: Most Similar Systems/Most Different Systems Analysis**

Przeworski, Adam and Henry Teune (1970). *The Logic of Social Inquiry*. New York: Wiley-Interscience.

## **Week 6: Evaluation of MSS/MDS**

Two of the classic readings on MSS/MDS:

Meckstroth, Theodore. 1975. "Most Different Systems and Most Similar Systems." *Comparative Political Studies* 8: 132-157.

Frendreis, John P. 1983. "Explanation of Variation and Detection of Covariation: The Purpose and Logic of Comparative Analysis." *Comparative Political Studies* 16: 255- 272.

One more recent take on MSS/MDS:

Anckar, Carsten. 2008. "On the applicability of the most similar systems design and the most different systems design in comparative research." *International Journal of Social Research Methodology: Theory & Practice* 11(5): 389-401.

Two more recent articles on MSS/MDS followed by 4 short rejoinders:

Caramani, Daniele. 2010. "Of Differences and Similarities: Is the Explanation of Variation a Limitation to (Or of) Comparative Analysis?" *European Political Science: EPS* 9.1: 34-48.

Van Kersbergen, Kees. "Comparative Politics: Some Points for Discussion." *European Political Science: EPS* 9.1 (2010; 2010): 49-61.

Schneider, Gerald. "Causal Description: Moving Beyond Stamp Collecting in Political Science." *European Political Science: EPS* 9.1 (2010; 2010): 62-67.

Haverland, Markus. "If Similarity is the Challenge - Congruence Analysis should be Part of the Answer." *European Political Science: EPS* 9.1 (2010; 2010): 68-73.

Van Kersbergen, Kees. "A Rejoinder to Schneider and Haverland." *European Political Science: EPS* 9.1 (2010; 2010): 74-77.

Caramani, Daniele. 2010. "Debate on the Future of Comparative Politics: A Rejoinder." *European Political Science: EPS* 9.1 (2010; 2010): 78-82.

## **Week 7: Case Study**

Read one or the other of Gerring – MA students should read the 07 version.

Gerring, John. 2007. The Case Study: What it is and What it Does. In Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press (ch. 4).

Gerring, John. 2004. "What is a Case Study and What is it Good For?" *American Political Science Review*, 98, 341-354.

Levy, Jack S. 2008. "Case Studies: Types, Designs, and Logics of Inference." *Conflict Management and Peace Studies*, 25, 1-18.

Lees, Charles. 2006. "We Are All Comparativists Now: Why and How Single-Country Scholarship Must Adapt and Incorporate the Comparative Politics Approach." *Comparative Political Studies*, 39 (9) 1084-1108.

Flyvberg, Bent. 2006. Five Misunderstandings About Case Study Research." *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12 (2), 219-245.

Bennett, Andrew and Colin Elman. 2006. "Complex Causal Relations and Case Study Methods: The Example of Path Dependence." *Political Analysis*, 14, 250-267.

Thomas, Gary. 2011. "A Typology for the Case Study in Social Science Following a Review of Definition, Discourse, and Structure." *Qualitative Inquiry*, 17 (6), 511-521.

## **Week 8: Case Selection**

Geddes, Barbara. 1990. How the cases you choose affect the answers you get: Selection bias in comparative politics. *Political Analysis*, 2, 131-150.

Collier, David, and James Mahoney. 1996. Insights and pitfalls: Selection bias in qualitative research. *World Politics* 49 (October): 56-91.

Gerring, John. 2007. Is there A Viable Crucial Cases Method? *Comparative Political Studies* 40 (3), 231-53.

Seawright, Jason and John Gerring. 2008. Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options *Political Research Quarterly* 2008 61: 294.

Tarrow, Sidney. 2010. The Strategy of Paired Comparison: Toward a Theory of Practice. *Comparative Political Studies* 43(2), 230-259.

Mahoney, James, and Gary Goertz. 2004. The possibility principle: Choosing negative cases in comparative research. *American Political Science Review* 98(4): 653-69.

### **Week 9: Multivariate Analysis**

Schedler, Andreas, and Cas Mudde. "Data Usage in Quantitative Comparative Politics." *Political Research Quarterly* 63.2 (2010): 417,417-433.

Ray, James Lee. "Constructing Multivariate Analyses (of Dangerous Dyads)." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 22.4 (2005): 277-92.

Oneal, John, and Bruce Russett. "Rule of Three, Let it be? when More really is Better." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 22.4 (2005): 293-310.

Achen, Christopher. "Let's Put Garbage-can Regressions and Garbage-can Probits Where they Belong." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 22.4 (2005): 327-39.

Clarke, Kevin. "The Phantom Menace: Omitted Variable Bias in Econometric Research." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 22.4 (2005): 341-52.

Starr, Harvey. "Cumulation from Proper Specification: Theory, Logic, Research Design, and "Nice" Laws." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 22.4 (2005): 353-63.

### **Week 10: Experiments in Comparative Politics**

The first five papers are from the APSA Comparative Democratization Section newsletter. They are brief accounts of the issues around experimental research in democratization. Please note that these five papers only amount to 24 very short text pages. Moehler looks at the application of experiments in the study of development assistance. Dunning provides a more in-depth examination of natural experiments. Hyde is an example of a natural experiment paper. Driscolly and Hidalgoz is another example paper - Cris and I saw this paper delivered at the 2009 APSA and the authors agreed to let me use it as a class reading.

Tucker, Joshua. "Survey Experiments: What They Are, What They Can Do, and Why They Are Especially Important in New Democracies," *APSA-CD* 9.3 (October 2011), 9-33.

Hyde, Susan D. "Anybody's Luck? Natural Experiments in Democratization," *APSA-CD* 9.3 (October 2011), 9-33.

Baldwin, Kate and Rikhil R. Bhavnani, "Secondary Analyses of Experiments: Opportunities and Challenges," *APSA-CD 9.3* (October 2011), 9-33.

Humphreys, Macartan , "Ethical Challenges of Embedded Experimentation," *APSA-CD 9.3* (October 2011), 9-33.

De La O, Ana L. "Experimental Turn in the Study of Democratization," *APSA-CD 9.3* (October 2011), 9-33.

Moehler, Devra C. 2010. "Democracy, Governance, and Randomized Development Assistance." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 2010 628: 30-46.

Dunning, Thad. 2008. "Improving Causal Inference: Strengths and Limitations of Natural Experiments." *Political Research Quarterly* 61(2): 282-293.

Hyde, Susan D. 2007. "The Observer Effect in International Politics: Evidence from a Natural Experiment." *World Politics* 60(1): 37-63.

Driscolly, Jesse, and F. Daniel Hidalgo. August 25, 2011. "The Intended and Unintended Effects of Democratization Aid: Experimental Evidence from the Republic of Georgia." Prepared for the *UCSD HALBI Working Group*. Received via email from the author (Driscolly).

### **Week 11: Putting Small n to the Test**

This week we are going to read several examples of small n analysis of varying quality to put the critical lessons we have learned this semester to the test.

### **Week 12: Putting Big N to the Test**

This week we are going to read several examples of big n analysis of varying quality to put the critical lessons we have learned this semester to the test.

**(Graduate) Statement of Academic Offences**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)