UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
POLITICAL SCIENCE 511A (001)
Comparative Government and Politics

Term 2, January-April 2018
Wednesdays, 9:00-12:00, BUCH C403
Professor: Lisa McIntosh Sundstrom
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Course Description

Poli 511 is designed to: (1) assist doctoral students prepare to write the comprehensive field examination in comparative politics; (2) provide doctoral students with a sense of the breadth of the field, its intellectual history, and current challenges; (3) equip research-oriented students with the background necessary to assess the state of the art in comparative politics as a precursor to developing their own theses or thesis proposals; and (4) provide doctoral students with the background necessary to teach comparative politics. Master’s students are welcome, but the workload and academic requirements are commensurate with the needs of doctoral students.

Comparative politics is a broad, evolving, and dynamic field of study, with ancient roots. The course examines current scholarship in light of the evolution of the field, and in relation to knowledge in other disciplines. Approaches to the study of comparative politics, and comparative politics as a method of analysis, will be examined. Topics vary modestly from year to year, but typically include such issues as: political order and change, constitutionalism and civic virtue, the sources of resistance and rebellion, culture and institutions, cooperation and social capital, democracy and authoritarianism, and transnational influences on domestic politics. Work will be discussed for both substantive findings and methodological contributions. Students will read some of the great books produced by the field in recent decades, as well as cutting-edge work from the journal literature. The course has a programmatic intent: encourage reflection on where the field should move in the future.

The field of comparative politics is so enormous that it is difficult to keep up with new readings that appear outside our immediate areas of expertise unless we are given this kind of opportunity to refresh our broader knowledge. The enormity of the field also demands that we under-emphasize some important areas of literature. Political economy and political behavior are areas that are underrepresented here, largely due to my relative lack of expertise in these sub-fields of comparative politics. If you are interested in further examining these topics, please be sure to take other departmental graduate courses that focus heavily on them (such as 552A and 513A).
**Required Reading**

The attached reading list contains the required readings that all students are expected to complete each week. You can find all other required readings on the syllabus electronically through the UBC Library Reserves site. Go to [https://courses.library.ubc.ca](https://courses.library.ubc.ca), and log in with your UBC CWL to access the online readings for the course. You will be able to access pdf versions of each journal article and book chapter listed as a required reading through that service. You will need to log in with your UBC CWL to access the library readings.

You should be able to access each journal article and book chapter listed as a required reading through the Connect library service (book chapters have been scanned into pdf files for download there). In a few cases where assigned sections of books are simply too long to be legally scanned into downloadable files, the relevant physical books have been placed on short-term loan in UBC Koerner Library’s Reserve Room. These readings are denoted by (K) on the reading list.

**Course Assignments and Evaluation**

1. **Class participation, 20 percent.** The success of a seminar course depends fundamentally on active and thoughtful participation by all students. Hence, there is significant weight placed on this aspect of your work in the course. I wish to make clear that I do not consider quantity of speaking, but instead the quality of comments, and evidence that the required readings have been absorbed and analyzed. Your participation mark will be derived from attendance and the quality of in-class contributions to discussion.

2. **Contribution to summary and reaction documents (SRDs), 30 percent.** For this component of the course, I have borrowed shamelessly from Professor Coleman’s core IR seminar (561A). Students will be required to develop an SRD that is shared online for each reading in every week of the course, beginning in Week 2. The initial SRD documents will be composed by the student(s) presenting each week; then all other students will be expected to comment on them. Full details below. Preliminary feedback will be given on SRD contributions midway through the term, and overall contributions will be assigned a grade at the end of the term (weighted towards the latter half following feedback). The initial SRDs are due each week by 10 am on the Monday before the class meets; all other students’ comments on the SRDs are due by 4 pm on Tuesday, the day before the class meets.

3. **Two presentations to launch class discussion, 10 percent each.** Each week, one or two students who have led writing the SRD for that week will lead off the discussion in class with a short presentation of about 10-15 minutes each, outlining their responses to the readings and raising questions for the class to discuss. These presentations should give only very brief summaries of the readings’ arguments (if at all), since all students will have read the readings and written summary and reaction documents. Instead, presenters should focus on their own reactions to the week’s readings and ideally some reactions to other students’ online commentaries from their SRDs. Each student will present on the readings twice during the term. In week 2, students will be asked to identify the weeks in they wish to write papers and make presentations.
4. **Mock comprehensive examination, 30 percent.** To be held at the end of the term, likely in the three-hour block in which the course sessions normally occur. This exam will simulate conditions of a PhD comprehensive written exam, with similar kinds of questions, closed-book format, and a time limit to write. This test will be based on the required readings from the course, but questions will be taken from old comparative politics comprehensive field examinations, as well as questions I solicit from you as suggestions near the end of the course.

**Summary and Reaction Documents (SRDs)**

Seminar participants will collectively develop one summary and reaction document (SRD) for each text on the syllabus, beginning in Week 2. The student(s) who are presenting the material each week will create the initial SRD documents on the readings, then all other students are expected to add comments to the SRDs. Each SRD will include the following:

1) Bibliographic information
2) Summary of argument
3) Theoretical approach (if applicable)
4) Methodology (if applicable)
5) Key concepts and their definitions
6) Questions/comments about concepts and/or argument
7) Links to other texts 1: Theoretical ‘allies’ – within and outside course readings
8) Links to other texts 2: Theoretical ‘opponents’ – within and outside course readings

We will use Google Docs as the tool for writing the shared SRDs. I will create and share an initial template with the whole class, and the presenting student(s) each week will customize and fill out the template for that week’s readings. A fundamental tenet is that nobody ever erases what another person has written – if you disagree with something, add a comment but leave the original statement in place. Please also begin any comment with your name (or signed in with your name on Google), so everybody knows who said what. Every SRD is a collective endeavour and all students must ‘pull their weight’ in this enterprise. The end result will be a ‘library’ of systematic notes, complete with key words and cross-references to other texts, that will hopefully be both intrinsically valuable and a useful study tool for comprehensive exams.

The initial SRDs for all the texts of a particular week must be completed by the week’s presenters by midnight on the Friday before the seminar meets. Then all other students must submit their comments on the SRDs by 4 pm on Tuesday, the day before the class meets. This is essential so that the instructor and presenters that week will have time to read and react to them. The SRDs will help structure our discussions and allow us to work through all the assigned texts more efficiently. If the SRDs show that everyone without exception understands a particular concept well, we can move on without discussing it further. Conversely, disagreements about summaries or definitions will be starting points for discussion, as will be the questions and comments raised in section (6). Note that questions can be purely informational as well as argumentative: “What does the author mean by...?” or “I don’t get the graph on p.23 because...” are as useful for structuring discussions as “is this argument compatible with...?” or “I don’t think this is very convincing...”
because...” However, please be as specific as possible: “I just don’t understand this article” is not very helpful by way of launching a discussion, so explain what exactly you’re finding hard to understand.

**Acknowledgement**

UBC’s Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on in their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

**General Academic Policies**

Read the university calendar so that you are aware of no-penalty drop dates, requirements for medical authorization (to defer an exam, for example) and other procedures that may affect you.

**Religious holidays** – UBC permits students who are scheduled to attend classes or write examinations on holy days of their religions to notify their instructor in advance of these days and their wish to observe them by absenting themselves from class or examination. Instructors provide opportunity for students to make up work or examinations missed without penalty. (Policy # 65.)

**Accommodating disabilities** – UBC is committed to the academic success of students with disabilities. UBC’s policy on Academic Accommodations for students with disabilities aims to remove barriers and provide equal access to University services, ensure fair and consistent treatment of all students, and to create a welcoming environment. Students with a disability should first meet with an Access and Diversity advisor to determine what accommodations/services you are eligible for.

**Academic Integrity and Responsibility**

Academic communities depend on their members’ honesty and integrity in representing the sources of reasoning, claims, and wordings that appear in their work. Like any other member of the academic community, you will be held responsible for the accurate representation of your sources: the means by which you produced the work you are submitting. If you are found to have misrepresented your sources and to have submitted others’ work as your own, penalties may follow. Your case may be forwarded to the Head of the department, who may decide that you should receive zero for the assignment. The Head will report your case to the Dean’s Office, where the report will remain on file. The Head may decide, in consultation with your instructor, that a greater penalty is called for, and will forward your case to the Dean’s Office. After an interview in the Dean’s Office, your case may be forwarded to the President’s Advisory Committee on Academic Misconduct. Following a hearing in which you will be asked to account for your actions, the President may apply penalties including zero for the assignment; zero for the course; suspension from the university for a period ranging from 4 to 24 months; a notation on your permanent record. The penalty may be a combination of these.
Like any academic author submitting work for review and evaluation, you are guaranteeing that the work you submit for this course has not already been submitted for credit in another course. Your submitting work from another course, without your instructor’s prior agreement, may result in penalties such as those applied to the misrepresentation of sources.

**Illness, Absence and Late Assignment Penalties**

If you experience medical, emotional, or personal problems that affect your attendance or academic performance, please notify Arts Academic Advising. If you are registered with Access and Diversity, you should notify your instructor at least two weeks before examination dates.

Unless you have discussed your inability to meet an assignment deadline in advance, or are able to document a medical or family emergency, there will be an automatic 3% grade penalty per business day for late papers. Overcommitment and burdensome workloads will not be accepted as excuses to avoid penalties for late assignments, since you are informed about the schedule of assignments and exams for your courses at the beginning of the term and have the entire term to budget your time for different assignments.

**Reach out and ask for help if you need it**

University students encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance. If you run into difficulties and need assistance, I encourage you to contact me by email or by dropping by my office. I will do my best to support your success during the term. This includes identifying concerns I may have about your academic progress or wellbeing through Early Alert. With Early Alert, faculty members can connect you with advisors who offer students support and assistance getting back on track to success. Only specialized UBC advisors are able to access any concerns I may identify, and Early Alert does not affect your academic record. For more information about Early Alert, visit [earlyalert.ubc.ca](http://earlyalert.ubc.ca). For information about addressing mental or physical health concerns, including seeing a UBC counselor or doctor, visit [students.ubc.ca/livewell](http://students.ubc.ca/livewell).

**Respectful University Environment**

UBC recognizes that “the best possible environment for working, learning and living is one in which respect, civility, diversity, opportunity and inclusion are valued.” The full UBC Statement on Respectful Environment for Students, Faculty and Staff can be found at [http://www.hr.ubc.ca/respectful-environment/files/UBC-Statement-on-Respectful-Environment-2014.pdf](http://www.hr.ubc.ca/respectful-environment/files/UBC-Statement-on-Respectful-Environment-2014.pdf). Students should read this statement carefully and take note of both the protections and the responsibilities that it outlines for all members of the UBC community. Students should also review the Student Code of Conduct, at: [http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,750,0](http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,750,0)

This course values frank discussion, healthy debate, and the free and respectful exchange of ideas. Students are welcome to voice and defend their views, which may differ from those
of other students or of the instructor. However, disrespectful behavior, including bullying and harassment, will not be tolerated. The instructor and teaching assistant will be professional and respectful in all their exchanges with students, and students will exercise similar professionalism and respect in their interactions with each other, with the teaching assistant, and with the instructor.

If you have any concerns about the class environment, please raise them with the instructor. You also have the options of contacting the Head of the Political Science Department, UBC’s Equity and Inclusion Office (http://equity.ubc.ca), or the UBC Ombudsperson for Students (http://ombudsoffice.ubc.ca/contactus/).

**Equity and Harassment**

UBC is committed to equity (including but not limited to gender equity) and fostering a safe learning environment for everyone. All peoples should be able to study, work, and learn in a supportive environment that is free from sexual violence, harassment, and discrimination. UBC’s Policy #3 on Discrimination and Harassment defines harassment as: “unwanted and unwelcome attention from a person who knows, or ought to know, that the behaviour is unwelcome. Harassment can range from written or spoken comments to unwanted jokes, gifts, and physical assault, and may be accompanied by threats or promises regarding work or study opportunities and conditions. Harassment can be either a single incident or a series of related incidents.” Such behavior is not acceptable and will not be tolerated at UBC. If you or someone you know has encountered sexual violence or harassment, you can find confidential support and resources at the AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre, (SASC), and the Equity and Inclusion Office. The SASC is an all-genders service that serves the UBC-Vancouver campus community and is committed to creating a safer campus community, free from sexualized violence. Their work is informed by feminism, anti-oppression and recognition of intersectionality. The Equity and Inclusion Office is committed to fostering a community in which human rights are respected and equity and diversity are integral to university life.

Resources are available at:
- Sexual Assault Support Centre, (SASC)
  249M, Student Union Building, UBC
  604-827-5180
  sasc@ams.ubc.ca
  [http://amssasc.ca](http://amssasc.ca)

- Equity and Inclusion Office
  2306 – 1874 East Mall (Brock Hall)
  604.822.6353
  equity@equity.ubc.ca
  [http://equity.ubc.ca](http://equity.ubc.ca)
Week-by-Week Topics and Readings

Week 1 (January 3): Introduction

Week 2 (January 10): History of Comparative Politics and the Logic of Comparison (5 readings, approx. 150 pgs)


Please note: Several readings from Poli 571A (Qualitative Methods) are salient to this discussion, in case you have not taken that course yet:

Week 3 (January 17): Comparative Methods (II) (Approaches to Comparison) (6 readings, approx. 150 pgs)


Week 4 (January 24): The State I (Approaches) (4 readings, approx 140 pgs)

Evans, Peter, et al. (eds). *Bringing the State Back In*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985. Ch.1 (Skocpol), Ch. 5 (Tilly), Ch. 11 (Evans, Rueschemeyer, Skocpol). (K)


Week 5 (January 31): The State II (Rise of the State) (4 readings, approx. 250 pgs)


**Week 6 (February 7): Institutions**
(6 readings, approx. 160 pgs)


**Week 7 (February 14): Origins of Democracy and Dictatorship**
(4 readings, approx. 250 pgs)


**NOTE: NO CLASS FEBRUARY 21 DUE TO READING WEEK BREAK**

**Week 8 (February 28): Economic Development and Democracy (including a couple of key definitional pieces)
(7 readings, approx. 160 pgs)**


**Week 9 (March 7): Democratization and De-Democratization
(4 readings, approx. 250 pgs)**


Levitsky, Steven and Lucan A. Way. 2010. *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*. Cambridge University Press (read Chapters 1, 2, and 8 plus at least one case study chapter).

**Week 10 (March 14): Democratic Institutions and their Consequences**
(5 readings, approx. 150 pgs)


**Week 11 (March 21): Culture and Norms**
(6 readings, approx. 240 pgs)


**Week 12 (March 28): Collective Action, Contention and Social Movements (7 readings, approx. 150 pgs)**


Chapter 20: Power in Movement (Sidney Tarrow)

Chapter 24: Poor People’s Movements (Frances Fox Piven & Richard A. Cloward)


**NO CLASS ON APRIL 4 AS I WILL BE AWAY AT THE INTERNATIONAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE. AS A REPLACEMENT, STUDENTS WILL WRITE A MOCK COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION DURING CLASS TIME THE FOLLOWING WEEK, APRIL 11, 9:00-12:00 (SCHEDULES PERMITTING).**