Course Information
Class Time: Monday 1.30-4.30
Place: 236 Pond Lab
Course Website: Canvas

Contact Information for Professor
Name: Matt Golder
Homepage: http://mattgolder.com/
E-mail: mgolder@psu.edu (preferred method of contact)
Tel: 814-867-4323
Office: 306 Pond Lab
Office Hours: Wednesday 10-11.

Course Description
This course is the core seminar for the field of comparative politics in the political science Ph.D. program. It provides an introduction to the dominant questions, theories, and empirical research in comparative politics. While international politics concerns itself with the study of political phenomena that occur predominantly between countries, comparative politics concerns itself with the study of political phenomena that occur predominantly within countries. As such, comparative politics is a vast field of research. The substantive topics covered in this course include, among other things, democracy and development, democratic performance, authoritarian politics, political institutions, culture and identity issues, civil war, elections and political parties, representation and accountability, and political economy. The course has two primary goals: (i) to prepare students for a research career in comparative politics by providing a general survey of the field, and (ii) to help prepare doctoral candidates for the comprehensive examination in comparative politics.

Course Requirements
1. Participation (10%). Attendance is mandatory. All students are required to have completed the readings for each week before class begins, and everyone should be prepared to discuss the readings during class. Intelligent participation in departmental talks and at conferences will be highly valued throughout your professional career and you should practice this ability now. I expect you to provide evidence that you have done the readings in a thoughtful and careful manner. In order to help this process along, I strongly suggest that you bring written notes to class. I recommend, but do not require, that you also attend my undergraduate comparative politics class, which is taught Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9:05-9:55 in 100 Huck Life Sciences.
2. *Discussion Leadership* (10%). Each student will be assigned two seminars to lead. The discussion leader should prepare a list of discussion questions, and email them to the rest of the class by 4pm on the day preceding the seminar (Sunday). The depth of preparation evidenced in these questions, along with the leading of the seminar itself, will determine the student’s grade. In addition to whatever specific questions the discussion leader identifies, he/she should also be prepared to discuss the following substantive and methodological topics:

**Substantive:**
- What question motivates the research? Is it clearly expressed? Why is it important?
- What is the goal of the researcher? Description, explanation, prediction?
- What is the theory? Is it clear?
- Are the concepts in the theory clearly defined?
- What is the unit of analysis?
- Are the key actors in the theory individuals, groups, states, or organizations? Does it matter?
- What are the observable implications of the theory?

**Methodological:**
- Which implications does the researcher test? What is the central empirical strategy? Is it a qualitative or quantitative design? Is it cross-sectional or over time?
- Does this strategy adequately test the theory?
- Are the theoretical concepts validly measured?
- How are the cases selected?

3. *Review* (20%). Students will write a review for an anonymous manuscript that I will provide. Writing reviews is one of our professional duties, and so the earlier you learn how to write them, the better.

4. *Final Exam* (60%). The final exam will be similar to the morning component of the doctoral comprehensive exam in comparative politics. You will be asked to answer two out of a possible four questions. Unlike the actual comprehensive exam, though, the final exam in this class will be a take-home exercise. You will receive the exam on a Friday and have the weekend to complete your response. Exams will be due in my mailbox at noon the following Monday.

No incomplete grades will be given unless there is an agreement between the instructor and the student prior to the end of the course. The instructor retains the right to determine legitimate reasons for an incomplete grade.

**Academic Dishonesty**

The Department of Political Science, along with the College of the Liberal Arts and the University, takes violations of academic dishonesty seriously. Observing basic honesty in one’s work, words, ideas, and actions is a principle to which all members of the community are required to subscribe.
All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless an instructor clearly states that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. Students uncertain about proper citation are responsible for checking with their instructor.

In an examination setting, unless the instructor gives explicit prior instructions to the contrary, whether the examination is in class or take home, violations of academic integrity shall consist but are not limited to any attempt to receive assistance from written or printed aids, or from any person or papers or electronic devices, or of any attempt to give assistance, whether the one so doing has completed his or her own work or not.

Lying to the instructor or purposely misleading any Penn State administrator shall also constitute a violation of academic integrity.

In cases of any violation of academic integrity it is the policy of the Department of Political Science to follow procedures established by the College of the Liberal Arts. More information on academic integrity and procedures followed for violation can be found here.

**Disabilities**

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University’s educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, contact the Office for Disability Services. For further information regarding policies, rights and responsibilities please visit the Office for Disability Services (ODS) Web site. Instructors should be notified as early in the semester as possible regarding the need for reasonable accommodations.

**Readings and Required Texts:**

Books marked with an asterisk are in hardback only. Please come to my office to pick up the page proofs for these books.


In addition to the books listed above, we will read a series of articles and unpublished manuscripts. You are responsible for locating the required readings.

Additional recommended readings are listed below each topic on the schedule. These readings are included in order to help guide the doctoral candidates to prepare for the comprehensive examination in comparative politics. While the list of recommended readings may appear lengthy, it should definitely not be seen as exhaustive.
Tentative Schedule

Week 1 (August 22): Introduction, Comparative Politics, Science, Logic

- **Background:**

- **Required:**

- **Recommended:**

Week 2 (August 29): Comparative Method, Qualitative Comparative Analysis, Counterfactuals

- **Required:**
Recommended:

Comparative Method, Mill’s Methods


Qualitative Comparative Analysis, Causal Complexity


### Causality and Counterfactuals


### Week 3 (September 5): No Class – Labor Day

### Week 4 (September 12): Case Selection, Process Tracing, Mixed Methods

• **Required:**
  


● Recommended:

Mixed Methods


Case Studies, Process Tracing, and Case Selection


Week 5 (September 19): State Formation, Field Research, DA-RT

- **Background:**

- **Required:**

- **Recommended:**
  
  **Field Research**
  


Data Access and Research Transparency


– Moravcsik, Andrew. 2010. “Active Citation: A Precondition for Replicable Qualitative Research.” PS: Political Science and Politics 43: 29-35.


– Qualitative Data Repository website

– Qualitative Transparency Deliberations (QTD) website.


State Making and State Failure


*Conceptualizing the State*


Nation-States and National Identity


Week 6 (September 26): Regimes, Concepts, Measurement

- **Background:**

- **Required:**


**Recommended:**

*Conceptualization, Measurement*


*Conceptualizing and Measuring Regime Type*


**Week 7 (October 3): Development and Democracy**

**Background:**


**Required:**


– Lawrence, Adria. Forthcoming. “Repression and Activism among the Arab Spring’s First Movers: Morocco’s (Almost) Revolutionaries.” *British Journal of Political Science*.


**Recommended:**

*Economic Development, Inequality, and Democracy*


– Geddes, Barbara. 1999. ‘What Do We Know About Democratization?’ Annual Review of Political Science 2: 115-144.


Resource Curse


Revolutionary Cascades and Information


Culture, Development, and Democracy


– Przeworski, Adam, José Antonio Cheibub & Fernando Limongi. 1998. ‘Culture and Democracy.’ In *Culture and Development.* Paris: UNESCO.


**Week 8 (October 10): Institutions Under Dictatorship**

- **Background:**


- **Required:**


- **Recommended:**

  **Typologies**


  **Institutions**


Little, Andrew. 2014. “Fraud and Monitoring in Noncompetitive Elections.” *Political Science Research and Methods*. 


**Coups, Coup-Proofing, Repression**


*Electoral Fraud, Election Observation, Censorship*


Week 9 (October 17): Parliamentary, Presidential, and Semi-Presidential Regimes

- **Background:**

- **Required:**

- **Recommended:**
  
  *Parliamentary, Presidential, and Semi-Presidential Regimes*
  


Week 10 (October 24): Governments

• Background:


• Required:


• Recommended:

  Government Formation


**Government Composition**


**Government and Ministerial Duration, Government Termination**


Delegation, Principal-Agent


Week 11 (October 31): Electoral Rules and Party Systems

- **Background:**

- **Required:**

**Recommended:**

*Electoral System Choice*


*Electoral Rules and Party Systems*


Week 12 (November 7): Accountability and Representation

• Background:

• **Required:**


• **Recommended:**


**Week 13 (November 14): Political economy**

*Background:*


*Required:*


• **Recommended:**

**Economic Voting**


**Partisan Economic Policy**


**Other Stuff**

Week 14 (November 21): Thanksgiving

November 28: Review Due.

Week 15 (November 28): Identity and Ethnic Conflict

• Background:

• Required:
• **Recommended:**


**Week 16 (December 5): No Class**