

V 1501: Introduction to Comparative Politics
Spring 2001 M/W 9:10-10:25
405 Milbank Hall

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“There will always be an England.” -- Andrew Sullivan

“It is the realists who are now Europeans.” -- Benjamin R. Barber

“Unfair as international relations may be, over time, economic development and political stability come to countries that work, save and organize to achieve them.” -- Charles Lane

“It’s the ‘dirty little secret’ of today’s Latin America... . While the wealthy enjoy the fruits of modernization, poverty and inequality persist and even worsen.” -- Chris Kraul and Sebastian Rotella

How can we understand these different perspectives on the 21st century’s world of nation-states? Have global forces pressed countries into one “McWorld,” or are national differences indelible? Are the increasingly intertwined national economic and political systems ultimate salvation or condemnation for the majority of citizens? This course provides the pathways, if not the final destination, for our common exploration of these pressing concerns.

This course is intended as an introduction to the basic concepts and themes in comparative politics. Comparing different countries’ political systems helps us to understand and evaluate both their historical development and how they are transforming to confront contemporary demands. It can also shed light on the workings of the US system by showing what alternative approaches have been taken to address the fundamental issues in political life.

In sections I-III, lectures and readings focus on crucial concepts and background to begin evaluating the politics of different countries. After defining our subject, we begin with a discussion of our principal unit of analysis, the “Nation-State,” and debates over the impact of culture on politics. We then move to histories of the five cases used throughout the course: the United Kingdom, Germany, India, Mexico, and Nigeria. These historical examinations are interspersed with consideration of the development of the principles and practice of democracy in the modern world.

Sections IV-IX focus on the central challenges facing the citizens of modern democracies: how to navigate the national and international economy, design structures of governance, assure the representation of diverse interests, and function as members of increasingly interdependent regions. To make these challenges concrete, we will analyze comparative information from our five cases.

Course Requirements:

Participation (20% of grade)

This includes regular attendance at lectures and mandatory discussion sections, participation as indicated by your TA in discussion sections, and presentation at poster sessions.

Country Case Study Project (40% of grade)

This independent research project will give you an opportunity to deepen your understanding of a central issue of comparative politics through the study of one country in comparative perspective.

There are three elements to the study: a 4-page background paper on your country (due February 21) for 10% of the grade; a poster presentation based on your research question (due either April 23 or 25 in class) as part of your participation grade; and a final 8-12 page paper that integrates your background material with the research on your question (due April 30) worth 30% of the grade. Questions and countries will be assigned in section; guidelines to all parts will be handed out in class. There will also be a mandatory in-class research session by a staff librarian on January 31 to get you started on your research.

Exams (40% of grade)

Midterm exam: March 7; 15% of the grade.

Final exam: May 9, 9am-12pm; 25% of the grade.

Makeup exams will ONLY be given if students provide documentation from the registrar indicating an official scheduling conflict or have a verifiable serious illness or family emergency.

Readings:

The two **textbooks** are available at Labyrinth Books, 536 W. 112 Street, between Broadway and Amsterdam. (Go with some time and browse their excellent selection!)

Kesselman, Mark, Joel Krieger, and William A. Joseph, eds. 2000. Introduction to Comparative Politics (Second Edition). Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath & Co. (on syllabus as: Kesselman et al.)

Søe, Christian, ed. 2000. Annual Editions: Comparative Politics 00/01 (Eighteenth Edition). Guilford, CT: Dushkin/McGraw-Hill. (on syllabus as: CP)

There is also a significant amount of required reading on reserve at Columbia, indicated below by a star (*). However, much of this reading can also be done directly from any computer that is linked to the Columbia University Library Web. There are three websites where it is found (these can also be accessed through the Library Web):

Columbia's Books Online project:

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/libraries/digital/texts/about.html>

Johns Hopkins' Project Muse and

The Mellon Foundation's JSTOR:

http://www.columbia.edu/cu/libraries/digital/ejournal_colls.html

Where an individual reading has its own URL, it is indicated below the reading on the syllabus.

Course Schedule:

I) Introduction

Wednesday, January 17: Introduction and review of syllabus

Monday, January 22: Why & how do we compare?

Readings:

Kesselman et al., pp. 1-25

II) The “Nation-State” and the politics of culture

Wednesday, January 24: The state

Readings:

*Jackson, Robert H. and Carl G. Rosberg. “Why Africa’s Weak States Persist: The Empirical and the Juridical in Statehood.” World Politics 35:1 (1982), pp. 1-24. On JSTOR: <http://www.jstor.org/jstor/>

*Evans, Peter. “The Eclipse of the State? Reflections on Stateness in an Era of Globalization.” World Politics 50:1 (1997) pp. 62-87. Project Muse address: http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/world_politics/v050/50.1evans.html

Monday, January 29: The nation and political culture

Readings:

CP #3, 30, 53, 54

*Yuval-Davis, Nira. “Gender and Nation.” Ethnic and Racial Studies 16:4 (1993), pp. 621-632.

Wednesday, January 31: Research Session

In-class presentation by staff librarian; mandatory

III) Historical Context

Monday, February 5: UK

Readings:

Kesselman et al., Chapter 2: Sections 1 and 5

*Burke, Edmund, Reflections on the Revolution in France, start p. 99 “Believe me, Sir, those who attempt to level, never equalize.” through p. 111. Books Online address: <https://www1.columbia.edu/sec/dlc/pm/Burke/BurRefl/z002.html>

CP #1

Wednesday, February 7: Germany

Readings:

Kesselman et al., Chapter 4: Sections 1 and 5

*Hitler, Adolph. Mein Kampf. Ch. V “Philosophy and Organization.”

CP #6, 8, 9

Monday, February 12: The ideological legacies of established democracies

Readings:

- *Mill, John Stuart. On Liberty, Ch. 4, "On the Limits of the Authority of Society over the Individual." Books Online address:
<https://www1.columbia.edu/sec/dlc/pm/Mill/MilLibe/z005.html#chapter4>
- *Tucker, Robert C. The Marx-Engels Reader. "Manifesto of the Communist Party." CP #7, 20, 21, 22

Wednesday, February 14: Contemporary democratization

Readings:

- CP # 25, 50
- *O'Donnell, Guillermo. "Delegative Democracy." Journal of Democracy 5:1 (1994), pp. 55-69.

Monday, February 19: India

Readings:

- Kesselman et al., Chapter 6: Sections 1 and 5
- *Varshney, Ashutosh. "Why Democracy Survives." Journal of Democracy 9:3 (1998) pp. 36-50. Project Muse address:
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v009/9.3varshney.html
- CP #47

Wednesday, February 21: Mexico

Readings:

- Kesselman et al., Chapter 9: Sections 1 and 5
- *Blum, Roberto E. "The Weight of the Past." Journal of Democracy 8:4 (1997) pp. 28-42
Project Muse address:
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v008/8.4blum_valenzuela.html
- CP #43

Country Study Background Paper due at beginning of class.

Monday, February 26: Nigeria

Readings:

- Kesselman et al., Chapter 12: Sections 1 and 5
- *Laitin, David D. "Hegemony and Religious Conflict: British Imperial Control and Political Cleavages in Yorubaland." In P. Evans et al., eds. Bringing the State Back In, Cambridge University Press, 1985.

IV) Economic Development

Wednesday, February 28, Monday, March 5: Developed World

Readings:

- Kesselman et al., Chapters 2 and 4: Section 2
- *Pierson, Paul. "The New Politics of the Welfare State." World Politics 48: 2 (1996) pp. 143-179. Project Muse address:
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/world_politics/v048/48.2pierson.html
- CP #51, 52

Wednesday, March 7: Midterm Exam

Monday, March 12, Wednesday, March 14: No class – Spring break.

Monday, March 19, Wednesday, March 21: Developing World

Readings:

Kesselman et al., Chapters 6, 9, and 12: Section 2

CP #41, 42, 48

*Sadasivam, Bharati. “The Impact of Structural Adjustment on Women: A Governance and Human Rights Agenda.” Human Rights Quarterly 19:3 (1997) pp. 630-665

Project Muse address:

http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/human_rights_quarterly/v019/19.3sadasivam.html

* Pastor Jr., Manuel and Carol Wise. “The Politics of Second-Generation Reform.”

Journal of Democracy 10:3 (1999) pp. 34-48. Project Muse address:

http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v010/10.3pastor.html

V) Structures of Governance

Monday, March 26, Wednesday, March 28: Political Institutions

Readings:

Kesselman et al., Chapters 2, 4, 6, 9, and 12: Section 3

CP #2, 4, 5, 28

VI) Representation of Diverse Interests

Monday, April 2: Legislatures

Readings:

Kesselman et al., Chapters 2, 4, 6, 9, and 12: Section 4

CP #26

Wednesday, April 4, Monday April 9: Legislators

Readings:

CP #19, 23, 24, 27, 29

*Fox, Jonathan. “Latin America’s Emerging Local Politics.” Journal of Democracy 5:2 (1994), pp. 105-116.

Wednesday, April 11, Monday April 16: Civil Society

Readings:

*Foley, Michael W. and Bob Edwards. “The Paradox of Civil Society.” Journal of Democracy 7:3 (1996) pp. 38-52. Project Muse address:

http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v007/7.3foley.html

CP #14

*Putnam, Robert. “Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital.” Journal of Democracy 6:1 (1995) pp. 65-78. Project Muse address:

http://muse.jhu.edu/demo/journal_of_democracy/v006/putnam.html

*Keck, Margaret E. and Kathryn Sikkink. “Transnational advocacy networks in international and regional politics.” International Social Science Journal 51:1 (1999), pp. 89-101.

VIII) Regional Integration

Wednesday April 18: Europe

Readings:

CP #12, 31, 32, 33, 34, 37

Monday, April 23: Poster Session #1

Wednesday, April 25: Poster Session #2

No discussion sections this week

IX) Conclusions

Monday, April 30

No reading!

Research Paper due at beginning of class.

Wednesday, May 9, 9am-12pm: Final exam

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