

Introduction to Comparative Politics

Professor Lowell Barrington

Political Science 2401, Section 103

Fall 2009, MWF 11:00-11:50

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Course Overview: This course provides an introduction to the comparative study of domestic politics in countries around the world. In this course, you will be introduced to some of the most important concepts, theories, and issues in this field of political science. There is some debate about what “comparative politics” means. Many see it simply as the study of domestic politics in countries outside the United States. Others feel that it is about comparing political systems in order to generate general statements about politics. In this course, you will be exposed to both of these ideas about comparative politics. You will learn about the domestic politics of a number of countries. But, you will also be expected to compare them to each other and to use the concepts and theories covered in the course to understand better the politics of these states and domestic politics in general.

Many introductory courses in comparative politics spend the first half of the semester on concepts and theories and the second half on specific countries, but I take a different approach. Each week of the semester, we will focus on a different topic that is important to comparative politics. During most weeks, we will also examine that topic in a group of countries representative of different types of political systems around the world: The United Kingdom (Great Britain), Germany, France, Mexico, Brazil, the Russian Federation (Russia), China, India, Nigeria, and Iran. We will also highlight the case of Canada from time to time. Most comparative courses do not discuss Canada and Mexico in detail. But just as I believe that students studying international relations should focus more on the important trends of regionalization and regionalism, so I believe that American students need a better understanding of the domestic politics of our regional neighbors. We will also focus in detail on one additional country during Week 14. You will help select that country. Your short research paper for this course will argue for a certain developing country (the choice of the country is up to you, from the list at the end of the syllabus) based on how it fits – or, perhaps more interesting, doesn't fit – with the theories and concepts presented during the semester, and on its relevance to the population of the United States. Convince me that we should study it.

POSC 40 falls under the “Individual and Social Behavior” section of Marquette's Core of Common Studies. As a result, this course will contribute to your ability to understand central concepts, theories, and methods used to explain individual and social behavior in political science; to use knowledge of social scientific methods to analyze examples of individual and social behavior; and to evaluate the applicability of social scientific knowledge for understanding individual and social behavior in particular contexts.

Requirements and Grading: You are expected to do the readings for the course on time (during the week that they are listed in the syllabus, unless I say otherwise), and there are several incentives to do so. First, lectures will be easier to follow if you have completed the readings. Second, the amount of reading is reasonable, but not small. It will not be easy to catch up if you fall behind. Third, from time to time, we will discuss readings in lecture. This is particularly true of our coverage of the topics in practice in the countries. Along with your attendance, your participation in these and other discussions can affect your final semester grade (see below). Fourth, there will be twelve quizzes covering the readings during the semester. Finally, on the midterm and final exams, those who mention specific ideas from course readings will receive higher grades – all other things equal – than those who do not.

Your final semester grade will be based on the quizzes (20% total), the paper (20%), an in-class midterm (20%), the final exam (35%), and attendance and participation (5%). Quizzes will be multiple choice; the exams will be essay-based. On your paper (but not the in-class exams), spelling, grammar, and other elements of polished writing will be taken into account in determining your grade.

Class attendance is mandatory. But, since certain situations may arise that make it difficult or impossible to attend a particular class session, you will be able to miss *six* sessions of this class during the semester. After that, I will lower your final semester grade by one letter grade (B to BC, for example) with each additional absence. In addition to attendance and participation having a direct impact on your grade, anyone ending the semester in the “gray area” between two letter grades will be bumped up or down depending on attendance and participation. The participation component of your grade can also be improved by participating in the weekly D2L discussion threads.

You should also follow day to day events, especially in our countries of focus, during the course of the semester. You can do this by reading daily papers such as *The New York Times*, weekly news publications such as *The Economist*, or reputable news outlets on the internet such as cnn.com. We will discuss current events from time to time in class.

While generally a nice person, I take academic dishonesty very seriously. Academic dishonesty violates the principles of Marquette, and it is unfair to your fellow classmates. If you are caught copying during tests/quizzes, plagiarizing on papers (representing someone else's ideas as your own, including by not adequately citing them), or helping someone do either of these, I will make every effort to ensure that you receive an F in the class as well as any other punishments that are warranted. Don't test me on this one!

Readings: There are only two books which you are required to buy: *Annual Editions: Comparative Politics 09/10* (McGraw-Hill, 2010) and Lowell Barrington, *Comparative Politics: Structures & Choices* (Wadsworth/Cengage, 2010). Additional readings will be available on the D2L website for this class. Go to <https://d2l.mu.edu/> and click on link "POSC 2401 103 Comparative Politics - 1310_5926_103," under the "2009 Fall Term" tab and the "Political Science" sub-tab. Once you reach the POSC 2401 course home page, click on the "Content" link on the taskbar at the top of the page.

LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE; *=reading on D2L

PART I: Political Science and Comparative Politics

Week 1 (Aug. 31-Sep. 4): Introduction: Science, Political Science, and Comparative Politics

Readings:

Lowell Barrington, *Comparative Politics: Structures and Choices* (hereafter, Barrington, *CPSC*), chapter 1 ("The Comparative Study of Politics").

*Evelyn Huber, "Letter from the President: The Role of Cross-regional Comparison," *APSA-CP Newsletter*, vol. 14, no. 2 (Summer 2003), 1-6.

*Collier, "The Comparative Method: Two Decades of Change," in Rustow and Erickson (eds.), *Comparative Political Dynamics: Global Research Perspectives* (1991), pp. 7-31.

Week 2 (Sep. 7-11): Key Concepts: Society, Nation, and State

Readings:

Barrington, *CPSC*, chapter 2 ("The Setting of Politics: Societies, Nations, and States").

*Lowell Barrington, "Nations and Nationalism: The Misuse of Key Concepts in Political Science," *PS: Political Science & Politics*, December 1997, pp. 712-716.

SEPTEMBER 7TH (MONDAY): NO CLASS, LABOR DAY.

PART II: Economics, Culture, and Identity

Week 3 (Sep. 14-18): Economic Structure and Political Outcomes

Readings:

Barrington, *CPSC*, chapter 3 ("Class Structure, Economic Development, and Globalization").

*"The Globalization Index," *Foreign Policy*, November/December 2006: 74-81.

Week 4 (Sep. 21-25): Political Culture and Ideology

Readings:

Barrington, *CPSC*, chapter 4 ("Ideas as Structure: Political Culture and Ideology").

Katzenstein and Keohane, "Anti-Americanisms," Reading #39, *Annual Editions: Comparative Politics 09/10* (hereafter, "*CP 09/10*").

The Economist, "Cultural Explanations," Reading #41, *CP 09/10*.

Week 5 (Sep. 28-Oct. 2): Identity and Social Divisions

Readings:

Barrington, *CPSC*, chapter 5 (Identity Structure”).

Hunt, “Let Women Rule,” Reading #24, *CP 09/10*.

Rule and Zimmerman, “Equity in Representation for Women and Minorities,” Reading #25, *CP 09/10*.

Inglehart and Norris, “The True Clash of Civilizations,” Reading #40, *CP 09/10*.

PART III: Governing Institutions

Week 6 (Oct. 5-Oct. 9): Political Systems and Their Constitutions

Readings:

Barrington, *CPSC*, chapter 6 (“Political Systems and Their Rules”).

Schmitter and Karl, “What Democracy Is ... and Is Not,” Reading #1, *CP 09/10*.

Ottaway, “Facing the Challenge of Semi-Authoritarian States,” Reading #5, *CP 09/10*.

Childress, “People Power,” Reading #6, *CP 09/10*.

Dahl, “What Political Institutions Does Large-Scale Democracy Require?,” Reading #8, *CP 09/10*.

Eickelman, “Bin Laden, the ‘Arab Street,’ and the Middle East Democracy Deficit,” Reading #7, *CP 09/10*.

Baktiari, “Iran’s Conservative Revival,” Reading #17, *CP 09/10*.

Week 7 (Oct. 12-16): Executives and Legislatures

Readings:

Barrington, *CPSC*, chapter 7 (“Legislatures and Executives”).

Allen, “The Case for a Multi-Party U.S. Parliament?” Reading #21, *CP 09/10*.

*D. Horowitz, “Comparing Democratic Systems,” *Journal of Democracy* 1, no. 4 (1990): 73-79.

*J. Linz, “Presidents vs. Parliaments: The Virtues of Parliamentarism,” *Journal of Democracy* 1, no. 4 (1990): 84-91.

Week 8 (Oct. 19-23): Courts, Bureaucracies, and Militaries

Readings:

Barrington, *CPSC*, chapter 8 (“The Unelected Components of the Government: Judiciaries, Bureaucracies, and Militaries”).

The Economist, “Judicial Review: The Gavel and the Robe,” Reading #26, *CP 09/10*.

Furlong, “Political Influence on the Bureaucracy: The Bureaucracy Speaks,” Reading #27, *CP 09/10*.

Tavernise and Arsu, “Turkish Court Calls Ruling Party Constitutional,” Reading #28, *CP 09/10*.

OCTOBER 21 (WEDNESDAY): MIDTERM EXAM, IN CLASS.

PART IV: Elites, Masses, and Political Decision Making

Week 9 (Oct. 26-30): Linking Elites and Masses I: Interest Groups and “Civil Society”

Readings:

Barrington, *CPSC*, chapter 9 (“Linking Citizens to Political Elites in Everyday Politics: Non-electoral Participation, Clientelism, and Interest Groups”).

Dalton, Scarrow, and Cain, “Advanced Democracies and New Politics,” Reading #3, *CP 09/10*.

The Economist, “Interest Groups: Ex Uno, Plures,” Reading #9, *CP 09/10*.

Justice, “Concerns Grow about the Role of Interest Groups in Elections,” Reading #12, *CP 09/10*.

*S. Berman, “Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic,” *World Politics* 49, no. 3 (1997): 401-429.

Week 10 (Nov. 2-6): Linking Elites and Masses II: Electoral Systems and Political Parties

Readings:

Barrington, *CPSC*, chapter 10 (“Linking Citizens to Political Elites through Elections: Political Parties and Electoral Systems”).

The Economist, “Referendums: The People’s Voice,” Reading #4, *CP 09/10*.

The Economist, “Political Parties: Empty Vessels?,” Reading #10, *CP 09/10*.

Romero, “Venezuela Hands Narrow Defeat to Chavez Plan,” Reading #13, *CP 09/10*.

Lawson, “How Did We Get Here? Mexican Democracy after the 2006 Elections,” Reading #18, *CP 09/10*.

Week 11 (Nov. 9-13): Political Leaders and Their Decisions

Readings:

Barrington, *CPSC*, chapter 11 (“Leadership and Individual Political Choices”).

Bogdanor, “The Historic Legacy of Tony Blair,” Reading #14, *CP 09/10*.

Janes and Szabo, “Angela Merkel’s Germany,” Reading #16, *CP 09/10*.

PART V: Understanding Particular Political Outcomes through an Examination of Structures and Choices

Week 12 (Nov. 16-20): Regime Transitions: Democratization and Democratic Breakdown

Readings:

Barrington, *CPSC*, chapter 12 (“Regime Transitions”).

Hassner, “Russia’s Transition to Autocracy,” Reading #15, *CP 09/10*.

Kahn, “Beijing Censors Taken to Task in Party Circles,” Reading #37, *CP 09/10*.

NOVEMBER 20 (FRIDAY), *PAPER DUE*, IN CLASS. THE DETAILS OF THE ASSIGNMENT ARE AT THE END OF THE SYLLABUS.

Week 13 (Nov. 23-27): Policy Outcomes and Political “Performance”

Readings:

Barrington, *CPSC*, chapter 13 (“Public Policy and Government Performance”).

*Peter Hall, “Policy Paradigms, Social Learning, and the State” *Comparative Politics: Notes and Readings*, 9th edition (Fort Worth: Harcourt, 2000), pp. 375-389.

Stearns and Almeida, “The Formulation of State Actor-Social Movement Coalitions and Favorable Policy Outcomes,” Reading #31, *CP 09/10*.

Guthrie, “China’s Quiet Revolution,” Reading #33, *CP 09/10*.

Johnson, “A Confident New Country,” Reading #34, *CP 09/10*.

NOVEMBER 25-27 (WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY): *NO CLASS*, THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY.

PART VI: Conclusion

Week 14 (Nov. 30-Dec. 4): Politics in ???

Readings: TBA.

Week 15 (Dec. 7-Dec. 11): Conclusion: From Separate Countries to Broader Understandings.

Readings:

Barrington, *CPSC*, epilogue, “Structured Choices and the Comparative Study of Politics”.

Cohen, “For Europe, A Moment to Ponder,” Reading #26, *CP 08/09*.

Johnson, “A Confident New Country,” Reading #37, *CP 08/09*.

The Economist, “Will Africa Ever Get It Right?,” Reading #35, *CP 08/09*.

Chua, “An Explosive Combination,” Reading #44, *CP 08/09*.

FINAL EXAM REVIEW: DECEMBER 9 (WEDNESDAY), IN CLASS.

FINAL EXAM: DECEMBER 17 (THURSDAY), 8:00-10:00 A.M.

Paper Assignment: Due in class, November 20 (Friday).

In approximately *five double-spaced pages* (25 lines per page, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, and 1 inch margins), answer the question below. Make sure that you refer to any readings that you use (you may use endnotes or parenthetical citation; you *must* have a reference page). Plagiarism is not acceptable in any form. Direct quotations must be in quotation marks. If you are using someone’s argument, ideas, or wording – from readings or the internet – you *must* cite the work whether directly quoting it or not.

Spelling, grammar, and overall quality of writing will be factored into this assignment’s grade. If you cannot present ideas clearly, you cannot present ideas clearly about politics. This is a political science course, not a “creative writing” course. Your arguments can certainly be creative, but your writing should be formal and free of mistakes. I challenge you to write a crisp paper without an error in spelling or punctuation. I will give you a handout with spelling and grammar tips. Read it and use it; it will help.

While short, this is a research paper. I expect you to find *current* information about the country on which you choose to write. You should look not only at news magazines like *The Economist* but also at academic journals that may carry articles on your country. Also, you can (and should) use the readings from class where appropriate.

Question: What country should we study in Week 14, and why?

In your answer, consider the topics that we have discussed in the course. How will your country help us to understand better any or all of the concepts and issues we have examined? Does it fill a void, providing an example of something important that the other countries we are looking at do not? Finally, why will it be interesting for your fellow students (and me) to examine politics in this particular state? While it will be tempting to do so, do *not* describe a lot of the country’s basic history in your paper. Cover only the history that you need to mention to make your points about the country’s value as a case. Remember, I want to know why you think that I and your fellow classmates should spend a week studying the country you choose and simply having some interesting events in its history will not distinguish it from other potential countries we could study.

There are two restrictions on the choice of countries. First, it must be a developing country. This means that states in Latin America (including the Caribbean), Africa, the Middle East, South or Southeast Asia, and Pacific Islands regions are acceptable, but Japan and countries in Europe are not. Second, the country must be in the bottom fifty in the world in population size. A list of appropriate countries per these two criteria is on the next page. See me if you have any questions on the assignment.

Antigua and Barbuda	Bahamas	Bahrain	Barbados	Belize
Bhutan	Brunei	Botswana	Cape Verde	Comoros
Djibouti	Dominica	Equatorial Guinea	Federated States of Micronesia	Fiji
Gabon	Gambia	Grenada	Guinea-Bissau	Guyana
Kiribati	Kuwait	Macau	Maldives	Marshall Islands
Martinique	Mauritius	Namibia	Nauru	Palau
Qatar	Saint Kitts and Nevis	Saint Lucia	Saint Vincent and Grenadines	Samoa
Sao Tome and Principe	Seychelles	Solomon Islands	Suriname	Swaziland
Tonga	Trinidad and Tobago	Tuvalu	Vanuatu	