Core Seminar in Comparative Politics
POSC 6401-701
Dr. Susan Giaimo
Fall 2015
Marquette University

Course time and location:
Mon. 5:00-7:40 PM  Wehr Physics 138

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Wehr Physics 402
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Office hours:  MWF 1-2 PM, and by appointment

This seminar will introduce students to the field of comparative politics. It will cover the major theoretical approaches and methodologies in comparative politics and their strengths and limitations. We will read seminal works as well as survey articles of the field by contemporary scholars as well as cases that illustrate the different theoretical approaches and methods in practice. The purpose of the course is to provide you with a solid foundation in this subfield of political science and to stimulate your critical and creative analysis and writing.

Requirements

Participants are required to attend all seminar meetings and actively participate in the discussions, and complete all required readings before class. I expect you to read only the required readings; however, if you wish to explore a topic in greater depth I have included suggestions for further reading.

Written assignments include three (3) critical essays (3-4 pages double-spaced) that address that week's required readings. In these critical essays, you will present your own critical assessment of the approach at hand and the arguments of the authors and not simply summarize their work. Think of it as engaging in a dialogue with the authors in which you address the key points of the authors’ argument as well as critique such elements as their logical consistency, quality of evidence, plausibility of conclusions, and implications for the study of comparative politics. You must turn in each paper in advance of the relevant seminar meeting. In addition, each participant will write a longer seminar paper (approximately 10 pages double-spaced). The paper is due on Monday, December 14 at 6 PM. I will provide further details on the critical essays and paper assignments early in the semester.

Each student will also present in class a selection of required and/or recommended readings from among the weekly readings. I will distribute a sign-up sheet and list of articles for this assignment early in the semester.

I grade written assignments on the content and clarity of the argument, organization and evidence, use of relevant sources, and on writing style (grammar rules, punctuation, spelling, etc.). Therefore, I encourage students to seek out advice and help from the Writing Center in completing these assignments. This is a resource that is open to all students, undergraduate and graduate alike. The Writing Center is located in Raynor Library R240; tel. 288-5542. (You need to call them to make an appointment.)
Attendance at all class meetings is mandatory. If you miss more than one class, it will adversely affect your course grade. If you have more than two unexcused absences, it will be grounds for withdrawal from the course. In addition to seminar attendance, participants must actively participate in class meetings. Active participation is more than just attending class; it consists of thoughtful and regular participation in class discussions. This entails that you complete the required reading assignments in advance of class.

Be here now. During class, please turn off your cell phones or set them to silent. Please do not use the web during class unless asked to so as part of a class discussion. Such behavior may be distracting to your colleagues; it certainly is to me. If you have an emergency call that cannot wait, please leave the room discreetly to take the call, but only do this as a last resort.

The breakdown of the course grade is as follows:

3 critical essays: 30% (10% each)
Final paper: 40%
Presentation and leading class discussion on readings: 10%
Class participation: 20%

Policies on Late Assignments and Academic Dishonesty

I will not accept late assignments unless you are experiencing a genuine illness, individual or family emergency, or unless it is the result of an officially sanctioned, scheduled university activity. In such cases, I expect you to make arrangements with me in a timely fashion to complete the coursework for this class. If you turn in an assignment late without a legitimate excuse, I will downgrade it a full grade (e.g. B to BC) for each day that it is late.

I do not tolerate academic dishonesty by students (including plagiarism, copying, or cheating). I will follow all University policies on academic dishonesty. Please see the University’s Academic Integrity page for more information on such policies: http://bulletin.marquette.edu/undergrad/academicregulations/#academicintegrity.

Course materials

The following books are required for purchase. You can buy or rent them at BookMarq, or from amazon.com or directly from the publisher. Be sure you have the current editions.


Most of the required readings will consist of journal articles and book chapters. Journal articles are available electronically as pdf files on the Marquette University Raynor Library website. Required book chapters and books will be available in hard copy form on ARES library reserve. If Marquette libraries do not have the required readings, then I will post them as pdf files on the course website on D2L. I require that you submit your final seminar paper to turnitin.com. For both the ARES and turnitin.com sites, the course name is Comparative Politics (POSC 6401) and the password is comparative.
The syllabus lists **required** readings, which all seminar participants must read. It also lists **recommended** readings that will be useful for exploring a topic further or for writing the longer seminar paper.

**Additional sources and topics of interest**

I encourage you to read a daily newspaper with coverage of comparative and international politics, such as *The New York Times*, *The Economist*, *Financial Times*, or *Washington Post*. It is very useful to discuss current events and relate them to the theoretical approaches that we will be considering in class. These are in the library or available online through the Raynor Library website if not directly on the publication’s site. You can also get a student-discounted rate for subscriptions.

If you are interested in getting perspectives on comparative politics and international affairs other than those of American media, you may want to tune to some TV news programs on PBS, channel 36: "The Journal," which is broadcast by the German *Deutsche Welle*, and "BBC World News," a British production. Other PBS programs dealing with world affairs may be of interest to you. These air on channels 10 and 36 or you can stream them from the PBS website. In addition, National Public Radio stations (stations 89.7 and 90.7) broadcast news programs on comparative politics and international affairs, such as “BBC World Service” (broadcast daily) and “The World” (broadcast Friday afternoons and other times during the week).

Literature, film, and music also provide different perspectives on the world, its people, cultures, and politics. The Milwaukee Film Festival, which runs September 24–October 8, shows an excellent range of foreign films. I encourage you to attend some of these films if you can. Their website is [www.mkefilm.org/festival](http://www.mkefilm.org/festival). You might also want to attend Global Union, a global music festival that Alverno College sponsors on September 19 at Humboldt Park. The event is free and open to the public. Alverno College also sponsors a world music series, “Alverno Presents,” throughout the academic year with student tickets offered at a discount. Check their website for more information on these events.
Class Schedule and Readings

I. INTRODUCTION

Aug. 31: Course introduction. No reading assignment.

Sept. 7: No class; Labor Day

   Required:

II. MAJOR THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Sept. 21: Cultural explanations of politics (values, ideas, ideologies)
   Required:

Recommended for further reading:

Sept. 28: Politics in divided societies
   Required:
   (For a longer treatment on this subject, see Huntington’s book by the same name.)


**Recommended for further reading:**


**Oct. 5: Class analyses: Marxism and beyond**

**Required:**


**Recommended for further reading:**


**Oct. 12: Institutionalist approaches**

**Required:**


**Recommended for further reading:**


**III. STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS**

**Oct. 19: State-society relations and governance**

**Required:**


**Recommended for further reading:**


**Oct. 26: The link between electoral and party systems; continuity and change in European party systems**

**Required:**


Gerrasimos Moschonas, “Historical Decline or Change of Scale?” in What’s Left of the Left, 2011, pp. 50-85.

Recommended for further reading:

IV. COMPARING POLITICAL SYSTEMS

Nov. 2: Varieties of democracy

Required:
Arend Lijphart, 2012, Patterns of Democracy, entire (especially pay attention to chaps. 1-8, 10, 15, 17).

Nov. 9: Varieties of authoritarianism

Required:

Recommended for further reading:
J. Linz and A. Stepan, eds., 1978, The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes. See Parts II and III for country cases.
V. REGIME CHANGE: THE DIFFICULTIES OF DEMOCRATIZATION

Nov. 16: Modernization and democratization: is there a link?
Required:

Recommended for further reading:

Nov. 23: Democratic transitions: successes and failures
Required:

Recommended for further reading:
Reread Reza Aslan, No god but God, chaps. 9-10.

VI. COMPARATIVE PUBLIC POLICY

Nov. 30: Welfare regimes in capitalist democracies: origins, regime types
Required:
Recommended for further reading:

Dec. 7: Welfare regimes: adaptation and transformation in response to new challenges
Required:

Dec. 14: SEMINAR PAPER DUE to turnitin.com by 5 PM.