

Introduction to Comparative Politics

V1501 Fall 2010

MW 2:40-3:50

428 Pupin

Instructor

John Huber (713 IAB, Office hours: Tuesdays, 2:30-4:00 and by appointment)

Teaching Assistants

Alexandra Cirone, aec2165@columbia.edu

Brett Meyer, bam2166@columbia.edu

Tabinda Khan, tmk2107@columbia.edu/'

Introduction

The course provides a broad overview of the comparative politics subfield by focusing on important substantive questions about the world today. Particular attention will be paid to understanding differences between democracies and autocracies, on one hand, and between different forms of democracy, on the other. What influences whether countries become and/or stay democratic? On this basis, should we expect China to democratize? Why do we care if a country is democratic or not? Do democracies perform better (or worse) than non-democracies in policy areas of importance? What is “good representation” and how do political institutions affect the prospects for achieving it? How does the choice of democratic institutions influence the prospects for stable and successful democracy? Are there particular institutional forms that are appropriate in particular contexts (such as ethnically divided Iraq), or do cultural factors overwhelm institutional considerations?

In addressing these broad questions, the course has three ancillary goals. The first is to teach students how to pose and evaluate falsifiable theoretical arguments about substantive questions of interest. The second is to introduce the quantitative, formal and qualitative methodologies that political scientists use to develop and evaluate arguments. Finally, the course will require students to develop knowledge of the political systems of a number of foreign countries.

Course Requirements

Your grade will be based on the following:

- (1) Papers: Each student will write two 3-page papers, one before the midterm and one between the midterm and the final. Details of the assignments will be announced in class. Each paper is worth 20 percent of the grade.
- (2) Midterm: 25%
- (3) Final exam: 35%

Discussion sections. Discussion sections begin the second week of class. Section times and locations will be posted in the on-line course catalog and all students must enroll in a section. The purpose of the sections is to provide students an opportunity to clarify

questions they have related to the readings and lectures, and to probe more deeply topics of particular interest.

Exams. For the *two in-class exams* you will be responsible for understanding the major arguments that are discussed in class lectures (including current events discussions) and in the required readings. The final exam is cumulative. The midterm will be on October 18 and the final will be held on the date assigned by the University.

Grading.

Late papers will be downgraded by one-third of a letter grade per day, including weekends. For example, a “B” assignment due Monday but handed in Wednesday will receive a “C+”. Assignments submitted more than **four** days after the due date will not be accepted and will receive an F.

There are no make-up exams unless you have a medical excuse provided by a physician or medical office. The date of the final exam is determined by the College Registrar.

No grade of “Incomplete” will be assigned in this course, so please manage your schedule to hand in all coursework on time.

If you ever have a concern about how you have been graded, the first step is to bring your concerns to your TA. The policy for doing so is the following:

- (1) You must, in writing, describe what you feel constitutes the correct answer, or, if your concern is about a paper assignment, describe the specific qualities in a paper that would warrant the grade you believe you deserve.
- (2) You must, also in writing, describe how your work meets the standard described in 1.

Your TA will then give the materials to the TA who graded the work, who will read and evaluate your arguments for a different grade, and will reply in writing. If you ask to have the grade for your work reconsidered, *the TA has the right to change your grade to a better grade, change it to a worse grade, or leave it unchanged.*

Course materials.

Most reading are available in the Electronic Reserves section of course works. Readings marked "Ejournal" are available by going to Columbia's E-Journals search page at <http://rd8hp6du2b.search.serialssolutions.com/>. For example, the Fearon and Laitin article for the September 13/15 readings can be found by searching for the American Political Science Review and then finding the appropriate issue from one of the several available sources. Some materials are available in the "Class Files" section of Courseworks (and are marked as such below). There are no materials to purchase.

Course outline

We will try hard to stick closely to the schedule below, but inevitably, things get a bit off track...

September 8: General introduction

September 13/15: The state and political stability

Lecture topics include:

- Models of political processes
- What are states and how do they differ from nations?
- Why do we have states and where do they come from?
- Why do states fail?

Required readings:

- John Huber, "The Methodology of Formal Modeling" from *Rationalizing Parliament*, pp. 14-16 (E-Reserves)
- Kenneth Shepsle and Mark Bonchek, *Analyzing Politics*, chapters 8 and 10 (E-Reserves)
- Charles Tilly, "War Making as Organized Crime" in Peter Evans et al, *Bringing the State Back In*. pp., 169-91 (E-Reserves)
- Fearon, James D., and David D. Laitin. 2003. Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War. *American Political Science Review* 97 (1):75-90. (Ejournal)

September 20/22/27: Democracy versus autocracy

Lecture topics

- What is a democracy and how do we know if a country is democratic or not?
- How democratic are they: In-depth look at China and Russia

Readings:

Joseph Schumpeter, "Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy" from The Democracy Sourcebook, edited by Dahl, Shapiro and Cheibub, pages 5-11. (E-reserves)

Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy*, chapter 1 (E-reserves)

Adam Przeworski, et al, *Democracy and Development*, Chapter 1(E-reserves)

Patrick O'Neil et al "China" in *Cases in Comparative Politics: Third Edition*, ch. 8 (Class Files in Courseworks)

Patrick O'Neil et al "Russia" in *Cases in Comparative Politics: Third Edition*, ch. 7 (Class Files in Courseworks)

September 29/October 4: The effects of democracy

Lecture topics:

Why do we care if a country is democratic or not?
The ephemeral "will of the majority"
Democracy and redistribution
Growth, peace, corruption, inequality, happiness and other stuff

Required readings:

John Huber, "Choosing Institutions", from *Rationalizing Parliament*, pp. 38-46 (E-reserves)

Roger Congleton, "The Median Voter Model," *Encyclopedia of Public Choice* (Class files in Courseworks)

Sen, *Development as Freedom*, chapters 6-7 (E-reserves)

Przeworski, Adam, and Fernando Limongi. "Political Regimes and Economic Growth." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 7, no. 3 (1993): 51-69. (Ejournal)

October 6/11/13: Democratic transition and consolidation

Lecture topics

Democracies in the world over time.
What influences whether countries become/stay democratic?
Is Islam compatible with democracy?

Required readings:

Seymour Martin Lipset. "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy" in *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 53, No. 1.(Mar., 1959), pp. 69-105. (Ejournal)

Carles Boix, "The Roots of Democracy," *Policy Review* (Feb. and March 2006)
(Available at <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/6588>)

Dahl, *On Democracy*, Chapter 12 (E-reserves)

Thomas Carothers, "The End of the Transition Paradigm." *Journal of Democracy* 13.1 (January 2002): 5-21. (Ejournal)

Henry S. Rowen, "When Will The Chinese People Be Free?" *Journal of Democracy* 18 3 (July) 2007. (Ejournal)

M Steven Fish. "Islam and authoritarianism," *World Politics*. Baltimore: Oct 2002. Vol. 55, Iss.1; p. 4 (Ejournal)

Background readings of possible interest:

Minxin Pei, "How Will China Democratize?" *Journal of Democracy* 18 3 (July) 2007. (Ejournal)

*****October 18. MIDTERM*****

October 20/25/27. Electoral laws, party systems and voting

Lecture topics:

How do the rules for holding elections shape the nature of parties and party systems?

What factors influence the decision by individuals to vote, and their voting decisions?

Required readings:

Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy*, ch 5, 8 (E-reserves)

Gallagher, Laver and Mair, chapters 8 and 9 (E-reserves)

"Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System: A Report of the Committee on Political Parties." *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 44, No. 3, (Sep., 1950). (Ejournals). Please read:

Foreword,
Summary of Conclusions and Proposals, and
Part 1

November 1: Academic holiday, no class

November 3/8: Separation of powers and the nature of parliamentary and presidential forms of government

Lecture topics:

What are the institutional differences between parliamentary and presidential government?
Is the US president institutionally strong or weak?
How do governments form in parliamentary systems? What determines their survival?

Required readings:

Federalist papers, 47-48 (Madison) and 70 (Hamilton) (E-reserves)

Shugart and Carey, *Presidents and Assemblies*, chapters 2-3 (E-reserves)

Laver and Schofield, *Multiparty government* chapters 4-5 (E-reserves)

November 10. Federalism and decentralization

Lecture topic: How and why do central governments devolve power to subnational ones?

Required readings:

Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy*, chapter 10 (E-reserves)

Ordeshook and Shvetsova, "Federalism and Constitutional Design," *Journal of Democracy*, 8.1 (1997) 27-42 (Ejournal)

Kathleen O'Neill, "Decentralization as an Electoral Strategy", *Comparative Political Studies* 36/9 (November 2003) (Ejournal)

November 15/17. Putting the pieces together: Approaches to constitutional design

Lecture topics:

What normative criteria might be employed for thinking about the design of constitutions?

What are useful frameworks for describing how particular constitutional designs achieve particular normative objectives?

How do these frameworks help us understand the politics of the United Kingdom and Germany?

Required readings:

Lijphart, Arend *Journal of Theoretical Politics* Volume 1, Issue 1, 1989.
"Democratic Political Systems: Types, Cases, Causes, and Consequences,"
Pages: 33-48 (E-journals)

Powell, G. Bingham, Jr, *Elections as Instruments of Democracy*, chapters 1-2 (E-reserves)

George Tsebelis, "Decision Making in Political Systems: Veto Players in Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, Multicameralism and Multipartyism," *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 25, No. 3. (Jul., 1995), pp. 289-325. (Ejournal)

"United Kingdom," chapter 2 in *Cases in Comparative Politics (third edition)*, O'Neil et al., editors (Course Files)

"The German Political System," chapter 11 in *Comparative Politics: An Institutional and Cross-National Approach* (fifth edition), Gregory S. Mahler (E-reserves)

November 22. Constitutional design in the European Union

Lecture topic:

How does the European Union operate and what sort of "democracy" is it?

Required reading:

"The European Union and Representative Government," in *Representative Government in Modern Europe (fourth edition)*, Michael Gallagher, Michael Laver and Peter Mair. (Course files)

November 24. TBA

November 29. Political representation

Lecture topics:

What is "good representation" and how do political institutions affect the prospects for achieving it?

Required readings:

Manin, Przeworski and Stokes, "Elections and Representation," in *Democracy, accountability, and representation*, edited by Adam Przeworski, Susan C. Stokes, Bernard Manin (New York ; Cambridge :Cambridge University Press, 1999). (E-reserves)

Huber and Powell, "Congruence Between Citizens and Policymakers in Two Visions of Liberal Democracy." *World Politics*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (Apr., 1994), pp. 291-326 (Ejournal)

Powell and Whitten, "A Cross-National Analysis of Economic Voting: Taking Account of the Political Context," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (May, 1993), pp. 391-414 (Ejournal)

December 1. Redistribution and the welfare state

Lecture topics:

How should we conceptualize the nature and role of welfare states?
How do welfare states – and in particular the degree of redistribution -- differ across countries?
What explains these differences?

Required readings:

Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, chapters 1-3 (E-reserves)

Alesina and Glaeser, *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe*, chapters 4 and 6 (E-reserves)

Evelyn Huber, Charles Ragin, and John Stephens, “Social Democracy, Christian Democracy, Constitutional Structure, and the Welfare State,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 99, No. 3, 1993, pp. 711-49. (Ejournal)

December 6/8. Democratic institutions and stability

Lecture topics.

How does the choice of democratic institutions influence the prospects for stable and successful democracy?

Required readings:

Powell, G. Bingham. “Contemporary Democracies: Participation, Stability and Violence.” Chapter 22 in Lijphart (editor) *Parliamentary versus Presidential Government*. (E-reserves)

Lijphart, Arend. “Constitutional Design for Divided Societies,” *Journal of Democracy* 15(2): 96-109 (2004) (Ejournal)

Linz, Juan. “The perils of presidentialism” and “The Virtues of Parliamentaryism,” in Lijphart (editor) *Parliamentary versus Presidential Government*, chapters 14 and 31. (E-reserves)

December 13. Last day... overflow and review if possible

***** FINAL EXAM TO BE HELD AT TIME DETERMINED BY REGISTRAR*****