

Comparative Comps Exam Handbook

Political Science | Columbia University

Version 1.0 (of a live document that is liable to change)

2014

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Topic ID	Cluster Name	Topic	CP Seminar 1	CP Seminar 2
1.1	Approaches	Causal Inference and Identification	1	
1.2	Approaches	Qualitative Methods, Case Studies and Process-Tracing	1	
1.3	Approaches	Approaches	1	
2.1	Primitives	Collective Action & Applications	1	
2.2	Primitives	Bargaining & Applications	1	
2.3	Primitives	Groups & Coalitions	1	
2.4	Primitives	Identity Politics	1	
2.5	Primitives	Political Culture	1	
2.6	Primitives	Institutions	1	
3.1	Political Structures	The State, Institutions, & State Strength		1
3.2	Political Structures	Parties & Democratic Systems		1
3.3	Political Structures	Voting, Elections and Electoral Systems		1
3.4	Political Structures	Non-Democratic Systems		1
3.5	Political Structures	Bureaucracies		1
4.1	Outcomes I	Political Violence	1	
4.2	Outcomes I	Non-Electoral Participation	1	
4.3	Outcomes I	Revolutions and Regime Change	1	
4.4	Outcomes I	Democratization	1	
5.1	Outcomes II	Electoral Participation		1
5.2	Outcomes II	Accountability & Citizen/Politician Linkages		1
5.3	Outcomes II	Corruption		1
6.1	Outcomes III	Inequality & Polarization		1
6.2	Outcomes III	Growth		1
6.3	Outcomes III	Redistribution & the Welfare State		1
6.4	Outcomes III	Policy Choice & Policy Reform		1

Table 1: Clusters and Topics

1. Readings and Clusters

Students will be expected to have deep knowledge of the arguments and evidence contained in the core reading list. The reading list will generally include between about 125 readings, each of relevance to one or two topics. *In addition to the core reading list students will be expected to be familiar with all Comparative Politics articles published in the APSR in the twelve months prior to the examination in question.*

This list exposes you to a diversity of approaches, theoretical perspectives, and thematic areas. It should not however be considered a “canon” — while most of the readings have been influential this does not mean that they are uniformly compelling; nor does omission from the list suggest readings are unimportant. You are **encouraged to read well beyond this list** as you engage deeply with topics; nevertheless it will be **possible** to pass your comprehensive exams drawing solely on deep understanding of the readings on this list and your ability to reason about research strategies and cases.

All readings are available on line or on courseworks. You are encouraged to buy all books marked with a ♠ .

2. Readings, classes & exams

The readings have been roughly allocated across two semesters of the Comparative Politics Field Seminar and you can expect that one topic will be covered in each seminar in each week on average, though instructors may split or aggregate topics differently in different years and may select which readings to treat as required readings for class discussion purposes differently in different years.

The reading list is liable to be updated from year to year. Exams will be based on the reading list of the immediately preceding year. So for example exams in May and September 2015 and January 2016 will be based on the 2014-2015 academic year list.

3. How to read

The Comps reading list is not especially large. But some readings are hard. You should aim to read carefully and reflectively.

Here is a good approach. First skim over the reading to get a sense of the themes it covers. In one minute you should have a sense of the goals of the work. Before reading further, jot down what questions you hope the reading will be able to answer for you. Next, read the introduction and conclusion. This is normally enough to get a sense of the big picture. Ask yourself: Are the claims in the text surprising? Do you believe them? Can you think of examples of places that do not seem consistent with the logic of the argument? Is the reading answering the questions you hoped it would answer? If not, is it answering more or less interesting questions than you had thought of? Next ask yourself: What types of evidence or arguments would you need to see in order to be convinced of the results? Now read through the whole text, checking as you go through how the arguments used support the claims of the author. It is rare to find a piece of writing that you agree with entirely. So, as you come across issues that you are not convinced by, write them down and bring them along to class for discussion. Also note when you are pleasantly surprised, when the author produced a convincing argument that you had not thought of. In all cases when it is possible you are encouraged to download this data, replicate results and use it to probe and test the arguments you bring to class.

Here is a checklist of questions to ask yourself as you prepare to critique a piece.

Summarize the positive

- Try to articulate succinctly what you know now that you didn't know before you read the piece. Often a quick summary can draw attention to strong features you were not conscious of, or makes you realise that what you were impressed by is not so impressive after all.

Theory

- Is the theory internally consistent?
- Is it consistent with past literature and findings?
- Is it novel or surprising? How does it relate to past literature?
- Are elements that are excluded or simplified plausibly unimportant for the outcomes?
- Is the theory general or specific? Are there more general theories on which this theory could draw or contribute?

From Theory to Hypotheses

- Is the theory really needed to generate the hypotheses?
- Does the theory generate more hypotheses than considered? Why are these not considered?
- Are the hypotheses really implied by the theory? Or are there ambiguities arising from say non-monotonicities or multiple equilibria?
- Does the theory specify mechanisms?
- Does the theory suggest heterogeneous effects?

Hypotheses

- Are the hypotheses complex? (eg in fact 2 or 3 hypotheses bundled together)
- Are the hypotheses falsifiable?
- Are mechanisms implied by the hypotheses?

Evidence I: Design

- External validity: is the population examined representative of the larger population of interest?
- External validity: Are the conditions under which they are examined consistent with the conditions of interest?
- Measure validity: Do the measures capture the objects specified by the theory?
- Consistency: Is the empirical model used consistent with the theory?
- Mechanisms: Are mechanisms tested? How are they identified?
- Replicability: Has the study been done in a way that it can be replicated?
- Interpretation: Do the results admit rival interpretations?

Evidence II: Analysis and Testing

- Identification: are there concerns with reverse causality?
- Identification: are there concerns of omitted variable bias?
- Identification: does the model control for pre treatment variables only? Does it control or does it match?
- Identification: Are poorly identified claims flagged as such?
- Robustness: Are results robust to changes in the model, to subsetting the data, to changing the period of measurement or of analysis, to the addition or exclusion of plausible controls?
- Standard errors: does the calculation of test statistics make use of the design? Do standard errors take account of plausibly clustering structures/differences in levels?
- Presentation: Are the results presented in an intelligible way? Eg using fitted values or graphs? How can this be improved?
- Interpretation: Can no evidence of effect be interpreted as evidence of only weak effects?

Evidence III: Other sources of bias

- Fishing: were hypotheses generated prior to testing? Was any training data separated from test data?
- Measurement error: is error from sampling, case selection, or missing data plausibly correlated with outcomes?
- Spillovers / Contamination: Is it plausible that outcomes in control units were altered because of the treatment received by the treated?
- Compliance: Did the treated really get treatment? Did the controls really not?
- Hawthorne effects: Are subjects modifying behavior simply because they know they are under study?
- Measurement: Is treatment the only systematic difference between treatment and control or are there differences in how items were measured?
- Implications of Bias: Are any sources of bias likely to work for or against the hypothesis tested?

On Policy Implications, if any

- Do the policy implications really follow from the results?
- If implemented would the policy changes have effects other than those specified by the research?
- Have the policy claims been tested directly?
- Is the author overselling or underselling the findings?

Avoid vacuous criticisms

It should be obvious but vacuous criticism is common.

- I just dont like it
- It feels wrong
- It's answering the wrong question
- It left out a variable
- The model is too simple. That's not how the world is.

Only make criticisms like these if you can substantively articulate why it matters. Often if something feels wrong, it is wrong; your job is to figure out why.

Be creative

- Think through what could be done to improve the analysis.

4. Exam Structure

Beginning in May 2015, the exam will contain **eight** questions divided into 5 sections as described below.

1. Majors will be required to answer 3 questions from at least two different sections.
2. Minors will be required to answer 2 questions from at least two different sections.
3. Questions in each section are likely to draw on knowledge of the theoretic and empirical literatures as well as well as knowledge of cases.
4. Some questions might request commentary and critique on specific readings from the list.

Cluster Name	# of Questions on Exam	Field Seminar
Approaches	1	Fall
Primitives	2	Fall
Political Structures	2	Spring
Outcomes I	1	Fall
Outcomes II	1	Spring
Outcomes III	1	Spring

Table 2: CP Topics Structure

The structure of this exam is designed to ensure more regular and predictable coverage of the major topics covered in the survey courses. It allows students to select areas of specialization but requires minimal breadth of knowledge.

5. Writing Good Exam Answers

A good answer to a Comps exam question:

1. **Answers the question.** It is very common to write questions that are only tangentially related to the question. Students routinely fail to answer questions of the form: “Is the effect of X on Y different in A areas and in B areas”, in some cases describing only the effects of X on Y or the differences in Y between areas, or the differences in X. Very often time is lost discussing what X is and whether it is a useful concept. There are no points for those kinds of answers. Engage in conceptual clarification only to the extent that it is asked in the question and to the extent that it is necessary to make sense of your answer. If essential you can have a short paragraph early on that stipulates and/or justifies what definitions you will use.
2. **Is structured.** Don't start writing immediately. Sit back and think about the question. Jot down the three or four major points you want to make. Think about how they relate to each other and whether they can be ordered or developed in an integrated way. Note the key research you want to engage with for each point. Anticipate how others would critique your arguments and provide counter critiques. Only then start writing.
3. **Has signposting.** At the beginning say what you are going to say. Make your main points upfront and provide a structure. Put short headers in bold over various sections so that people can see quickly where the action is.
4. **Shows awareness of the big picture but goes deeper.** The hardest thing about Comps essays is that large questions are covered but space is very constrained. Should you give short overviews of a dozen approaches or should you go deeply in to one or two. The first approach risks looking shallow, the second narrow. An effective approach is to lead sections with a rapid overview, gathering contributions together analytically and then going into more depth in a small number, justified by your overview. (Of the form: “One set of authors focuses on domestic factors (a,b,c,d), others focus on the role of international pressures (e,f,g,h); more recently authors have argued that these factors interact and you cannot understand the effects of one without understanding the other (i,j,k). Since the arguments of this third group are more general than the first two I focus my discussion on two studies in this third set.”)
5. **Is not about you.** You should have a voice but this is not about you. Graders will want to see you engaging critically with the work, they want to hear your views but they are interested in your arguments not your opinions. Avoid hyperbole. Whether you find something exciting, fantastic, or boring is not relevant; whether something is seminal or groundbreaking is relevant, but you need to say why it is seminal or groundbreaking. Avoid unnecessary adjectives and avoid all adjectives that you cannot substantively defend.
6. **Says something new.** Comps essays don't have to say something new, but it is nice when they do. Closing off with some speculations or hypotheses based on the preceding discussion, or a proposal for an approach to better address some problem, can be a satisfying way to end a comps essay. You have more rope to take a risk here if the preceding discussion on the existing literature is solid.

6. Sample Exam (Largely Drawn From Jan 2014 Exam)

Majors: Please answer 3 questions from at least two different sections

Minors: Please answer 2 questions from at least two different sections

For both parts, you should:

- Include critical discussions of the theoretical and empirical literatures you deem most relevant
- Answer the question that is asked. Do not simply offer a literature review.

Section I: Approaches

1. Some argue that while case studies may be useful for generating theoretical insights, quantitative analysis is needed to test theories. Provide arguments in favor or against the proposition with illustrations from research in comparative politics.

Section II: Primitives

2. Are models of collective action useful for understanding participation in contentious politics (choose a class of political events e.g. violence, protests, strikes or other)? Discuss in the light of at least two theories and empirical evidence.
3. Describe and critique at least two theories or empirical accounts for why social conflict is sometimes organized along identity (e.g. race, class, gender) lines.

Section III: Political Structures

4. Why do electoral rules vary across countries? What arguments have authors put forward to account for this variation and which do you find most convincing? Please discuss with reference to at least two countries.
5. In different parts of the world we have seen dramatic shifts in voting patterns and party systems. Why? In your answer, draw on appropriate theory and compare two cases.

Section IV: Outcomes I

6. Do the same factors that explain participation in violence by individuals also explain onset of violence in polities?

Section V: Outcomes II

7. Why do authoritarian regimes survive in some places but not others? Discuss with reference to at least two theories and two cases or empirical analyses.

Section VI: Outcomes III

8. Under what conditions are elections most likely to result in the representation of citizens preferences? In your answer describe the logic and evidence for at least two factors that matter.

END

7. 2014-15 Comps Reading List

1. Approaches

1.1. Causal Inference and Identification

1. ♠ Alan S. Gerber and Donald P. Green. *Field Experiments: Design, Analysis, and Interpretation*. W W Norton & Company Incorporated, 2012. ISBN 9780393979954. URL <http://books.google.com/books?id=yxEGyWAACAAJ> Chapter 2.
 2. Thad Dunning. Improving causal inference: Strengths and limitations of natural experiments. *Political Research Quarterly*, 2007. URL <http://prq.sagepub.com/content/early/2007/10/03/1065912907306470.short>
 3. James Mahoney. Strategies of causal inference in small-n analysis. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 28(4):387–424, 2000. URL <http://smr.sagepub.com/content/28/4/387.abstract>
 4. ♠ Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton University Press, New Jersey, May 1994. ISBN 0691034710. Chapter 3.
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1.2. Qualitative Methods, Case Studies and Process-Tracing

1. Macartan Humphreys and Alan Jacobs. Mixing Methods: A Bayesian Unification of Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches. *Working Paper*, 2013. URL <http://www.columbia.edu/~mh2245/papers1/BIQQ.pdf>
 2. Andrew Bennett and Colin Elman. Qualitative research: Recent developments in case study methods. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 9:455–476, 2006. URL <http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.polisci.8.082103.104918>
 3. Scott E Page. Path dependence. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 1(1):87–115, 2006. URL <http://faculty.washington.edu/jwilker/571/571readings/Page.pdf>
 4. James Mahoney and Gary Goertz. A tale of two cultures: Contrasting quantitative and qualitative research. *Political Analysis*, 14(3):227–249, 2006. URL <http://pan.oxfordjournals.org/content/14/3/227.short>
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- Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton University Press, New Jersey, May 1994. ISBN 0691034710: Chapter 1
 - Barbara Geddes. How the cases you choose affect the answers you get: Selection bias in comparative politics. *Political Analysis*, 2(1):131–150, 1990. URL <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23317768>
 - Evan S. Lieberman. Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research. *American Political Science Review*, 99(03):435–452, 2005. doi: 10.1017/s0003055405051762. URL <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30038950>
 - Herbert Kitschelt. Accounting for post-communist regime diversity. *What Counts as a Good Cause*, pages 49–88, 2003. URL http://web.clas.ufl.edu/users/codwyer/z_External_Folder/Courses/Kitschelt_Postcommunist_regime_diversity.pdf

1.3. Approaches

1. John C Harsanyi. Advances in understanding rational behavior. *Foundational Problems in the Special Sciences*, 1:315, 1977 (also reprinted in ♠ Jon Elster, *Rational Choice*)
2. Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman. Rational Choice and the Framing of Decisions. *The Journal of Business*, 59(4), 1986. ISSN 00219398. doi: 10.2307/2352759. URL <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2352759>
3. Kevin A Clarke and David M Primo. Modernizing political science: A model-based approach. *Perspectives on Politics*, 5(04):741–753, 2007. URL <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=1429532&fileId=S1537592707072192>
4. Kathleen Thelen. Historical institutionalism in comparative politics. *Annual review of political science*, 2(1):369–404, 1999. URL <http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.polisci.2.1.369>

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- Kenneth J. Arrow. Methodological Individualism and Social Knowledge. *The American Economic Review*, 84(2):1–9, 1994. ISSN 00028282. doi: 10.2307/2117792. URL <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2117792>
 - Ann Swidler. Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies. *American Sociological Review*, 51(2): 273–286, 1986. URL <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2095521>
 - Daniel Diermeier and Keith Krehbiel. Institutionalism as a methodology. *Journal of theoretical politics*, 15(2):123–144, 2003. URL <http://jtp.sagepub.com/content/15/2/123.full.pdf+html>

2. Primitives

2.1. Collective Action & Applications

1. ♠ Ken A. Shepsle and Mark S. Bonchek. *Analyzing Politics: Rationality, Behavior, and Institutions*. W. W. Norton, 1 edition, December 1996. ISBN 0393971074. URL <http://www.worldcat.org/isbn/0393971074>, Chapters 8 and 9.
2. David A. Siegel. Social networks and collective action. *American Journal of Political Science*, 53(1): 122–138, 2009. ISSN 1540-5907. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-5907.2008.00361.x. URL <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2008.00361.x>
3. Timur Kuran. Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989. *World Politics*, 44(1):7–48, 1991. ISSN 00438871. doi: 10.2307/2010422. URL <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2010422>
4. James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin. Explaining Interethnic Cooperation. *The American Political Science Review*, 90(4):715–735, 1996. ISSN 00030554. doi: 10.2307/2945838. URL <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2945838>

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- Mancur Olson. *The logic of collective action: public goods and the theory of groups*. Harvard Economic Studies. Harvard University Press, 1965. ISBN 9780674041660. URL <http://books.google.com/books?id=jv8wTarzmsQC> Chapters 1 and 2

- Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly. Toward an integrated perspective on social movements and revolutions. *Comparative politics: Rationality, culture, and structure*, page 142, 1997
- Mark Granovetter. Threshold Models of Collective Behavior. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83(6):1420–1443, 1978. ISSN 00029602. doi: 10.2307/2778111. URL <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2778111>
- Peter A. Hall and David. Soskice. *Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*. Oxford University Press, 2003. ISBN 9780191647703
- Kenneth J. Arrow. Methodological Individualism and Social Knowledge. *The American Economic Review*, 84(2):1–9, 1994. ISSN 00028282. doi: 10.2307/2117792. URL <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2117792>
- James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin. Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War. *The American Political Science Review*, 97(1):75–90, 2003. ISSN 00030554. doi: 10.2307/3118222. URL <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3118222>
- Ted R Gurr. *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton University Press, 1970. URL <http://www.worldcat.org/title/why-men-rebel/oclc/55562>

2.2. Bargaining & Applications

1. Ronald Harry Coase. The problem of social cost. *Journal of Law and Economics*, 3:1, 1960. URL <http://www.jstor.org/stable/724810>
2. James D Fearon. Rationalist explanations for war. *International organization*, 49:379–379, 1995. URL <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706903>
3. Lars Calmfors, John Driffill, Seppo Honkapohja, and Francesco Giavazzi. Bargaining structure, corporatism and macroeconomic performance. *Economic Policy*, pages 14–61, 1988. URL <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1344503>
4. Andrew Kydd and Barbara F Walter. Sabotaging the peace: The politics of extremist violence. *International Organization*, 56(02):263–296, 2002. URL <http://dx.doi.org/10.1162/002081802320005487>

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- Torben Iversen. Power, Flexibility, and the Breakdown of Centralized Wage Bargaining: Denmark and Sweden in Comparative Perspective. *Comparative Politics*, 28(4):399–436, 1996. URL <http://www.jstor.org/stable/422051>
 - Isabela Mares. *Taxation, wage bargaining, and unemployment*. Cambridge University Press, 2006
 - David Austen-Smith and Timothy J. Feddersen. Deliberation, preference uncertainty, and voting rules. *American Political Science Review*, null:209–217, 5 2006. ISSN 1537-5943. doi: 10.1017/S0003055406062113. URL <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27644345>

2.3. Groups & Coalitions

1. William H. Riker. Implications from the Disequilibrium of Majority Rule for the Study of Institutions. *The American Political Science Review*, 74(2):432–446, 1980. ISSN 00030554. doi: 10.2307/1960638. URL <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1960638>

2. Michael Laver and Kenneth A. Shepsle. Coalitions and Cabinet Government. *American Political Science Review*, 84(3):873–890, 1990. URL <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1962770>
3. Michael J Hiscox. Class versus industry cleavages: inter-industry factor mobility and the politics of trade. *International Organization*, 55(01):1–46, 2001. URL <http://dx.doi.org/10.1162/002081801551405>
4. Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier. Inducements versus constraints: Disaggregating “corporatism”. *The American Political Science Review*, pages 967–986, 1979. URL <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1953982>

2.4. Identity Politics

1. Rogers Brubaker. Ethnicity without groups. *Archives Europeennes de Sociologie*, 43(2):163–189, 2002. URL <http://search.proquest.com/docview/60454710?accountid=10226>
2. Moses Shayo. A Model of Social Identity with an Application to Political Economy: Nation, Class, and Redistribution. *American Political Science Review*, 103(02):147–174, 2009. doi: 10.1017/s0003055409090194. URL <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27798495>
3. Evan Lieberman. Ethnic politics, risk, and policy-making: A cross-national statistical analysis of government responses to hiv/aids. *Comparative Political Studies*, 40(12):1407–1432, December 2007. URL <http://cps.sagepub.com/content/40/12/1407.short>
4. Robert H. Bates. Ethnic competition and modernization in contemporary africa. *Comparative Political Studies*, 6(4):457–484, 1974. URL <http://cps.sagepub.com/content/6/4/457.full.pdf+html>

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- Kanchan Chandra. *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed: Patronage and Ethnic Head Counts in India*. Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics. Cambridge University Press, 2007. ISBN 9780521891417. URL <http://tinyurl.com/kchandra-intro>: **Introduction**.
 - Raghavendra Chattopadhyay and Esther Duflo. Women as policy makers: Evidence from a randomized policy experiment in india. *Econometrica*, 72(5):1409–1443, 2004. ISSN 1468-0262. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0262.2004.00539.x. URL <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3598894>
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 - Kimuli Kasara. Tax me if you can: Ethnic geography, democracy, and the taxation of agriculture in africa. *American Political Science Review*, 101(01):159–172, 2007. URL <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=695712&fileId=S0003055407070050>

- Edward Miguel. Tribe or nation? nation building and public goods in kenya versus tanzania. *World Politics*, 56(03):328–362, 2004. URL <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=7604860&fileId=S0043887100004330>
- Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London, New York, 1983
- Keith Darden and Anna Grzymala-Busse. The great divide: literacy, nationalism, and the communist collapse. *World Politics*, 59(01):83–115, 2006. URL <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=7693668&fileId=S0043887100020736>
- Gellner Ernest. Thought and change. *London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson*, 1964

2.5. Political Culture

1. Lisa Wedeen. Conceptualizing culture: Possibilities for political science. *American Political Science Review*, 96(04):713–728, 2002. URL <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=133946&fileId=S0003055402000400>
2. Ronald Inglehart. The renaissance of political culture. *American Political Science Review*, 82(04):1203–1230, 1988. URL <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1961756>
3. H. Peyton Young. The economics of convention. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 10(2):105–122, 1996. URL <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2138484>
4. Sheri Berman. Civil society and the collapse of the Weimar Republic. *World politics*, 49(03):401–429, 1997. URL <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=7620748&fileId=S0043887100007978>

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Appendices: Syllabuses & Full Bibliography

A. Fall 2014 Comparative Politics Field Seminar Syllabus

Instructor: Macartan Humphreys | mh2245@columbia.edu

Location etc.: Monday 4:10pm-6:00pm 711 International Affairs Building.

A.1. Overview

This is the first of the two sequence comparative politics field seminar. The seminar is primarily targeted at first and second year PhD students in the department of political science. This first part in the sequence focuses on the (often micro) building blocks of comparative political analysis and begins to touch on the (largely) macro political outcomes. The course has two objectives. One is to expose you to leading work in the field. For the most part the readings focus on research that is innovative and strong. The second is to train you to think like a comparativist, honing your skills in analytical reading and critique. The second course in the sequence (taught by Tim Frye) takes this material as given and focuses on political structures as well as further topics including topics focused on developed countries.

A.2. Material

The topics for each week are described in Table 3. The primary reading for each week consists of the **numbered** items on the core 2014-15 Comps Reading List (see section 7) for the corresponding topics. The **bulleted** items on each section are also examinable readings for the topics in question but you are not expected to have read these for class. In Table 3 I also point to small numbers of additional readings that might support discussion, but which are not part of the Comps reading list. These include some segments from *Hell is Other People* (**HOP**), which can be found on courseworks

A.3. Requirements

Admission. To do now: Fill up this form before Wednesday 4 September midnight; you will not be admitted if you do not complete this form by midnight Tuesday 9 September:

<http://tinyurl.com/CP2014SS>. Note that the target size for the class is 16 and there will be a hard cap of 18. Priority is given to PhD students in political science that need to take comprehensive exams in Comparative Politics.

A.3.1. Reading and arguing [25%]

The Syllabus lists both required reading and further reading. You will be expected to have completed all the required readings before class *to the point where you can be called on to critique or defend any reading at any time*. You should contribute actively and be engaged in the discussion at *all* times. If the discussion does not make sense to you then stop the class and say so — it probably doesn't make sense to others either. Any computer use should be for note taking only and quick checking of facts directly related to class discussion; emailing, browsing, SMSing etc are strictly not allowed and you will be asked to withdraw if you wander like that.

A.3.2. Writing [75%]

You will write three papers that engage with readings or topics of the course. Each paper will be no more than 3000 words in length and count for 25% of your final grade. Topics will be provided in advance. These topics will be similar in nature to the sort of topics that you will see on comps exams. You should be prepared to move well beyond the readings of the class to address them. Each paper will be followed by a discussion (see schedule in Table 4) with the instructor in which you will be asked to defend or expand on ideas provided in your written answers.

Table 3: 2014 Fall Schedule

Approaches		
08 Sept	1.1 Causal Inference and Identification	Since this is the first class it will be more lecture style. Catch up on the readings afterwards however since these ideas will be used throughout the course. See notes on courseworks as well as http://e-gap.org/resources/guides/identification/ and http://e-gap.org/resources/guides/causality/ .
15 Sept	1.2 Qualitative Methods, Case Studies and Process-Tracing	A key idea here is that satisfactory causal accounts have to have both a <i>measurement</i> strategy and an <i>identification</i> strategy. We will focus especially on the identification strategy used in qualitative work and think through the implications of identification strategy for case selection.
22 Sept	1.3 Approaches	We will discuss multiple approaches including game theoretic approaches and alternatives. We will go over key ideas from formal theory in class; for this the Harsanyi piece is a good primer, but any other introductory text can also be used. Discussions will focus on what constitutes a theory and how theoretical work relates to empirical inquiry. Please also read: John Huber http://tinyurl.com/CPHUBER-MC
Primitives		
29 Sept	2.1 Collective Action & Applications	Also read items 1,2,3,5, 36 of HOP .
06 Oct	2.2 Bargaining & Applications	The bargaining framework can be used to understand a wide range of issues, particular ones in which outcomes are in some sense inefficient. Focus on clarifying what the moving parts are of a bargaining based explanation— what determines variation in bargaining outcomes. Also read items 26, 27, and 28 of HOP .
13 Oct	2.3 Groups & Coalitions	A key question in coalitional analysis is figuring out why we don't always see grand coalitions — why do humans divide themselves into groups? Is the existence of groups an instance of bargaining failure? Though not required reading you might find http://www.columbia.edu/~mh2245/papers1/arps_coalitions.pdf a useful review of this very wide field.
20 Oct	2.4 Identity Politics	People are often divided into various types of identity based groups. Are these special cases of coalitions or is there something distinctive about them?
27 Oct	2.5 Political Culture	It will be particularly useful to try to relate the ideas from this weeks readings to what we read in week 1.3: are cultural accounts consistent with methodological individualism or not?
03 Nov	NO CLASS	
10 Nov	2.6 Institutions	Do institutions matter? Or are outcomes driven by something more fundamental like the distribution of power and the structure of preferences? Also review Riker (1980) from section 2.3 and Young (1996) from section 2.5.
Outcomes I		
17 Nov	4.1 Political Violence	Violence is sometimes seen as an instance of bargaining failure. Is that a useful way to view it? In what ways is violent action fundamentally different from other types of political action? Review also Kydd and Walter (2002)
24 Nov	4.2 Non-Electoral Participation	We will focus especially on participation in violent collective action. Do the logics we explore also shed light on nonviolent collective action? Do explanations that account for participation in movements also explain the existence or success of those movements?
01 Dec	4.3 Revolutions and Regime Change	Review Kuran (1991) from week 2.1. Is there a difference between a revolution and any other type of political transition? What are the revolutions that have not happened, and why haven't they?
08 Dec	4.4 Democratization	What accounts for the rise and fall of democracies. Why does democratization seem to happen in waves? Do democracies get "caused" by wealth or are they just more likely to stick around in wealthy places? For a criticism of Limongi and Przeworski (1997) see Epstein et al. (2006).

Table 4: Short paper schedule

Questions provided	Due	Feedback day	Signup link
22-Sept	29-Sept	09-Oct	http://doodle.com/mna8m9nqmyn97vvr
27-Oct	10-Nov	20-Nov	http://doodle.com/px2muy3w2x5rbeyc
1-Dec	08-Dec	11-Dec	http://doodle.com/z3mnh82e2yfg7m7y

B. Spring 2015 Syllabus

Material as described in Table 2.

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