GOVT 530: Seminar in Comparative Politics
Spring 2016 Semester
Mondays, 4:30-7:10pm, Mason Hall D003

Professor: Eric McGlinchey
Email: emcglinc@gmu.edu
Phone: 703.993.2960

Office Hours: TBA
Office: Robinson Hall A 225

Course Description:
This course provides a comprehensive introduction to the literature and methodology of comparative politics. Students will explore leading approaches to comparative politics: quantitative and qualitative analysis, state formation, new institutionalism, rational choice, political culture, regime change, revolutions, nationalism, states and markets and states and society. Student analysis of readings through written précis and weekly seminar discussions will build a strong foundation for advanced coursework in political science and a ready toolkit for designing and conducting independent research in academic and applied fields.

Course Objectives:
By the close of this course students will be able to:
• Concisely summarize and evaluate the research questions and causalities of 20+ seminal articles and books in the comparative politics field
• Critique applications of the comparative method and employ the comparative method in independent research
• Critically assess the role case selection has in theory development and hypothesis testing
• Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative approaches to political science and apply both approaches in a 15 page research paper
• Assess the role structure and agency have in political change
• Identify intersections and differences among state and society, rational choice, new institutionalism, political economy and political culture approaches to political science

Course Readings:
1. Electronic Readings available through Blackboard
2. Students are encouraged to purchase the following books.
   • Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities (Verso, 1991).
• Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, (University of Oklahoma, 1991).

**Course Requirements:**

1. This is a participant-driven, discussion-based seminar. Students are strongly encouraged to participate to the fullest extent possible.
2. Students are expected to have completed the assigned readings prior to class and to be prepared for seminar discussion.
3. Students will complete one mid-term exam.
4. All students are required to write a final 15 page research paper. We will discuss this paper in greater detail in class. Students should note the following deadlines for research and writing:
   i. Research question submitted through Blackboard by TBA
   ii. Papers submitted through Blackboard by TBA
   iii. Research questions and papers are to be submitted as .pdf or .docx files and saved in the following format:
      1. First name, underscore, last name, underscore, research_question
      2. First name, underscore, last name, underscore, final_paper
      3. For example: Eric_McGlinchey_Research_Question.pdf
5. All students are required to write 2 précis of a minimum of 1,500 words each.
   - Précis should critically analyze and synthesize the week’s readings.
   - Précis should contextualize the week’s readings within the broader comparative politics literature.
   - Précis should pay particular attention to:
i. The authors’ central arguments—what are the questions, outcomes or puzzles the authors are directly or indirectly addressing?

ii. What variables do the authors cite as the cause behind the outcome(s) under investigation?

iii. What empirical evidence do the authors provide to support their arguments?

iv. How do the articles/books relate to the literature more broadly?

v. What are some of the potential shortcomings of the authors’ arguments?

- Précis are to be submitted through the Blackboard by 11:59pm, the day before seminar.
- Students are required to submit one précis before the midterm and one following the midterm.
- Students are strongly encouraged to attend office hours to discuss individual précis.

6. Students will co-lead two seminars, one for each week in which a précis is written. Co-leaders will post 10 discussion questions to Blackboard 24 hours prior to the seminar they are assigned to lead. These questions should complement, not replicate the précis questions outlined above.

**Make-up exams and paper extensions will be given only if students have proper documentation. In place of email, please see me during office hours to discuss missed/late work.**

**This syllabus may change as the semester progresses.**

Mason EMAIL

- Mason requires that Mason email be used for all courses. I will be sending messages to your Mason email and you are responsible for making sure you have access to these messages.
- You may forward your Mason email to other accounts but always use your Mason email when communicating with me to allow verification of your identity.
- You are required to check your Mason email account regularly and to keep your mailbox maintained so that messages are not rejected for being over quota.
- When you email me, be sure to include GOVT 500 at the beginning of the subject heading to alert me that I have received a message from one of my online students.

Course Logistics

This course will meet in seminar as well as use Blackboard to facilitate discussions outside of our weekly meetings. In a typical week:

- you will read about 200 pages and discuss the material with your classmates
- accomplish on-line activities
- work on assignments to be submitted in the Blackboard assignment drop box according to the assignment schedule.
To Access Blackboard

2. Login using your NETID and password.
3. Click on the ‘Courses” tab.
4. Double-click on GOVT-530 (Spring 2016) under the course listings.

Technical Help

- If you have difficulty with accessing Blackboard, please contact the ITU Support Center at 703.993.8870 or support@gmu.edu.
- If you have trouble with using the features in Blackboard, email courses@gmu.edu.

Student Responsibilities

Academic Integrity: Students must be responsible for their own work, and students and faculty must take on the responsibility of dealing explicitly with violations. The tenet must be a foundation of our university culture.


To maintain an academic community according to these standards, students and faculty members must report all alleged violations to the Honor Committee.” Students are encouraged to read the full Honor Code: http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/ and to remain vigilant against any violation of the Code in their own work. Any cases of academic dishonesty in this course will be pursued according to the guidelines detailed in the University Catalog.

Time Conflict: George Mason University is committed to creating a welcoming, respectful and inclusive educational environment that values diversity. Students should review the syllabus at the beginning of the term to determine if there are any conflicts between class time and religious observance. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of these conflicts within the first week of the semester. http://ulife.gmu.edu/calendar/religious-holiday-calendar/

MasonLive/Email (GMU Email): Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account. [See https://masonlivelogin.gmu.edu].

Patriot Pass: Once you sign up for your Patriot Pass, your passwords will be synchronized, and you will use your Patriot Pass username and password to log in
to the following systems: Blackboard, University Libraries, MasonLive, myMason, Patriot Web, Virtual Computing Lab, and WEMS. [See https://password.gmu.edu/index.jsp].

Student Services

Writing Center
The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing. [See http://writingcenter.gmu.edu]. You can now sign up for an Online Writing Lab (OWL) session just like you sign up for a face-to-face session in the Writing Center, which means YOU set the date and time of the appointment! Learn more about the Online Writing Lab (OWL).

Counseling and Psychological Services
The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See http://caps.gmu.edu].

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), also known as the "Buckley Amendment," is a federal law that gives protection to student educational records and provides students with certain rights. [See http://registrar.gmu.edu/privacy].

Special Needs:
Please address any special needs or special accommodations with me at the beginning of the semester or as soon as you become aware of your needs. Those seeking accommodations based on disabilities should contact the Disability Resource Center (703) 993-2474, or the Equity Office (703) 993-8730.

Enrollment:
Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class. Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Registrar calendar: http://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/index.html

Grading

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<td>Seminar Discussion</td>
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<td>Mid-term</td>
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<td>Written Précis</td>
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<td>Class Leads</td>
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<td>Research Paper</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Grading Scale:

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<td>A-</td>
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Schedule:

**Week 1—Introduction to Comparative Politics**

3. Select readings on workflow (Zotero, Databases and Note Management)

**Week 2—The Rise and Decline of States**


**Week 3—States and Societies**


**Week 4—States and Structure**


**Week 5—States and Modernization**


**Week 6—States and Markets**


**Week 7—Institutions and Development**

**Week 8—Midterm**

**Week 9—Collective Action and Development**

**Week 10—Violence and Revolutions**

**Week 11—Political Transitions**

**Week 12—Political Culture**

**Week 13—Nationalism and Identity**

**Week 14—Divided Societies**
**Week 15—Authoritarianism**