

*****Draft Syllabus*****

GOVT 530: Seminar in Comparative Politics

Spring 2016 Semester

Mondays, 4:30-7:10pm, Mason Hall D003

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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).
 - Robert Bates. *Markets and States in Tropical Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

- Henry E. Hale, *Patronal Politics: Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).
- Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton, 2000).
- Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, (University of Oklahoma, 1991).
- Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance* (Cambridge UP, 1990).
- Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (Cambridge UP, 1990)
- Daniel Posner, *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*, (Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- Robert D Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).
- James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (Yale University Press, 2009).
- James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (Yale University Press, 1999).
- Charles Tilly. *Coercion, Capital, and European States* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1990)
- Jeremy M. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2006).

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

1. Go to <http://mymason.gmu.edu>.
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.

Honor Code: Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code. The George Mason University Honor Code states: “Cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing of academic work and related materials constitute Honor Code violations.

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

Seminar Discussion	90
Mid-term	100
Written Précis	100
Class Leads	80
Research Paper	130
Total	500 points

Grading Scale:

A+: 490-500	A: 460-489	A-: 450-459
B+: 440-449	B: 410-439	B-: 400-409
C+: 390-399	C: 360-389	C-: 350-359
D+: 340-349	D: 310-339	D-: 300-309
F: 299 and below		

Schedule:**Week 1—Introduction to Comparative Politics**

1. Mancur Olson, "The Criminal Metaphor," pp. 1-24 in *Power and Prosperity: Outgrowing Communist and Capitalist Dictatorships* (2000).
2. Max Weber, "Politics as Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (eds. H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills). NY: Oxford University Press, 1946, pp. 77-83.
3. Select readings on workflow (Zotero, Databases and Note Management)

Week 2—The Rise and Decline of States

1. Charles Tilly. *Coercion, Capital, and European States*. Cambridge: Blackwell, 1990, pp. 1-103.
2. Hendrik Spruyt, "The Origins, Development, and Possible Decline of the Modern State," *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2002, pp. 127-149.

Week 3—States and Societies

1. Joel Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (Princeton UP, 1988), Chapters 1, 8.
2. James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (Yale University Press, 2009).

Week 4—States and Structure

1. Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton UP, 2000).
2. Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, James D. Morrow, Randolph M. Siverson and Alastair Smith, "Political Institutions, Policy Choice and the Survival of Leaders," *British Journal of Political Science* (2002), 32:4, pp. 559-590.

Week 5—States and Modernization

1. Seymour Martin Lipset "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *APSR* (1959), pp. 69-105.**
2. J. Samuel Valenzuela and Arturo Valenzuela, "Modernization and Dependency: Alternative Perspectives in the Study of Latin American Underdevelopment," *Comparative Politics* 10:4 (July 1978), pp.535-552.
3. James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (Yale University Press, 1999).

Week 6—States and Markets

1. Alexander Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962) pp. 5-30.

2. Robert Bates. *Markets and States in Tropical Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981.

Week 7—Institutions and Development

1. Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance* (Cambridge UP, 1990).
2. Peter Hall and Rosemary Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms," *Political Studies* 44 (December 1996), pp. 936-958.

Week 8—Midterm

Week 9—Collective Action and Development

1. Mancur Olson, *Logic of Collective Action* (Harvard UP, 1965), chs. 1, 2.
2. Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (Cambridge UP, 1990), chs.1, 2, 6.

Week 10—Violence and Revolutions

1. Jeremy M. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2006).
2. Timur Kuran, "Now out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989," *World Politics*, 1 (October 1991), pp. 7-48.

Week 11—Political Transitions

1. Dankwart A. Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model," *Comparative Politics*, 2:3 (1970): 337-363.
2. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, (University of Oklahoma, 1991), pp. 3-108.
3. Thomas Carothers, "The End of the Transition Paradigm," *Journal of Democracy* 13:1 (2002), pp. 5-21.

Week 12—Political Culture

1. Robert D Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).
2. Sheri Berman, "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic," *World Politics* 49:3 (April 1997), pp. 401-429.

Week 13—Nationalism and Identity

1. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Verso, 1991).
2. Keith Darden and Anna Grzymala-Busse, "The Great Divide: Literacy, Nationalism, and the Communist Collapse," *World Politics* 59 (October 2006), pp. 83-115.

Week 14—Divided Societies

1. Daniel Posner, *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*, (Cambridge University Press, 2005).
2. Horowitz, Donald L. "Democracy in Divided Societies." *Journal of Democracy* 4, no. 4 (1993): 18-38.

Week 15—Authoritarianism

1. Henry E. Hale, *Patronal Politics: Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).
2. Eric McGlinchey, “Running in Circles in Kyrgyzstan,” *The New York Times* (Op-Ed, April 10, 2010).