17.588: Field Seminar in Comparative Politics

MIT Department of Political Science

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Office Hours: By Appointment

Fridays 2-5pm (usually we will end earlier)

E 51-385

I Course Design and Objectives

This course surveys major topics in comparative politics including the origins of various types of political regimes; the origins and consolidation of democracy; the organization of collective action based on economic and ethnic identities; states; civil society; linkages between national politics and international forces; political parties; elections; and institutions. We will focus mainly on identifying the principal questions that define each field, and the answers that have been generated so far. Questions of methodology, research design, and general explanatory approaches will not be discussed separately, but will recur throughout the discussion of individual topics.

II Requirements

Participation (20% of the grade): This course is a discussion seminar. As part of discussion, the instructors will make an effort to contextualize the various works and offer readings of obscure passages. Nevertheless, the purpose of the seminar is to encourage you to engage these texts independently. Your thoughtful and well-prepared participation in class discussions will be decisive in whether or not the course is a success for you. If you are not keeping up with the readings, which are of necessity heavy, you will not enjoy or benefit from the course.

For each class session, there will be a list of "key arguments and concepts." These are compact insights that have become part of the language of comparative politics, a language in which we plan to make you fluent. Students will receive regular assignments to give oral summaries of these concepts for the class.

Assignments (40% of the grade): You will produce three short papers of 5-7 pages each. The purpose of these papers is 1) delve deeper into the structure of the individual arguments 2) draw connections across the several arguments that you encounter and 2) formulate a critical reaction to them. You may want to delineate and adjudicate a dispute between two authors, or analyze a particular argument in light of others, or relate one or more of the week's readings to earlier ones. You are encouraged to discuss your ideas for these papers with the instructors either by making an appointment or on e-mail. Please bear in mind that your task is to produce an argument of your own, and in this task summary of others' arguments is a means to an end, not an end in itself. You may choose the sessions for which you would like to write a paper. However, you must have turned in at least one paper **on or before February 27**. Please try to space the papers

throughout the semester rather than leaving them for the end. Your written work will count for 40% of your final grade.

Final Review Essay or Final Exam (40%): You may choose between two final assignments for the course. The first is a review essay evaluating three books on a related subject published in the last five years. Your essay should discuss these works against a general background of the field in which they are situated. For models, see review essays in *Comparative Politics, APSR, World Politics* and *APSA CP*.

Alternatively, you can choose to write a final exam. The exam will consist of one long essay and two shorter ones, on questions drawn from a list that will be distributed before the exam. Preparation for the exam will require a comprehensive mastery of the course material and should be particularly useful for those planning to take general exams in comparative politics.

III Professional Forums and Journals

The principal professional forms of interest to comparative political scientists include: the American Political Science Association (APSA) (www.apsanet.org); the Midwest Political Science Association, which meets in the Spring (http://www.indiana.edu/~mpsa/); the International Studies Association (http://www.isanet.org) as well as regional conferences; the Summer Methods conference (http://web.polmeth.ufl.edu/conferences.html); as well as the several conferences organized around regions or topics of interest (e.g. Association of Asian Studies (http://www.aasianst.org/); American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~aaass); African Studies Association (http://www.africanstudies.org/); Council for European Studies (http://www.europanet.org/frames/overall.html) etc. It would be a good idea to find out about these associations from faculty in your area of interest and think of attending and presenting papers at their annual conferences. The political science department provides financial support of $250.00 each year to help graduate students attend professional meetings. For more information, contact Ken Goldmith (kegol@mit.edu, E53-465) or talk to one of the instructors.

The standard professional journals/newsletters of interest to comparative political scientists include: Comparative Politics, World Politics, APSA-CP (the newsletter of the Comparative Politics Section of the American Political Science Association), the American Political Science Review, Comparative Political Studies, Politics and Society, Journal of Democracy, and several multidisciplinary journals that focus on regions or topics of interest, such as East European Politics and Societies; Asian Survey; Journal of Asian Studies; Journal of Latin American Studies etc. Some of these journals are or will be available in the fourth floor lounge in building E 53. You are encouraged to keep up with research in the journals of interest to you.

IV. Syllabus

February 6: Overview of the Field and the Course.

No assigned reading for this week.

February 13: Development and Regime Origins (Woodruff)

Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader* (2nd ed.): 465-491, 148-155, 176-193, 606-614.

Max Weber, "The Profession and Vocation of Politics," in Peter Lassman and Ronald Speirs, eds., *Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 309-369.

Seymour Lipset & Stein Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction," in Lipset and Rokkan, (eds.), *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives* (New York: Free Press, 1967), 1-14, 25-38, 46-48, 50-63.

Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Beacon 1967): 413-487

Key arguments and concepts:

- "Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life" (Marx 155)
- "Class" and "class struggle" (Marx 179 and *passim*)
- "ethic of principled conviction" [sometimes translated badly as "ethic of ultimate ends"] and "ethic of responsibility" (Weber 359)
- Weberian definition of the state (Weber 316)
- "Crucial junctures" [also known as "critical junctures"] (Lipset and Rokkan 37)
- "No bourgeois, no democracy." (Moore 418).

February 20: Democracy (Chandra)

Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market*. Cambridge University Press (1992). Chapters 1-2.

Adam Przeworski et al. *Democracy and Development*. Cambridge University Press, 2000. Chapters 1-3.

William Riker, *Liberalism Against Populism*. Waveland Press, 1981. Chapters 1, 10.

Samuel Huntington. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), Chapter 1.

February 27: Economic and Social Institutions (Woodruff)

Weber, "Protestant Sects," in Gerth & Mills, 302-322

Simmel, Georg. *The Philosophy of Money*. 2nd ed. London Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1990, 283-303

North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge 1990): 92-140.

Weingast, B. R. "The Political Foundations of Democracy and the Rule of Law." *American Political Science Review* 91, no. 2 (1997): 245-263.

Stephen Krasner, "Approaches to the State: Alternative Conceptions and Historical Dynamics," *Comparative Politics* v. 16, n.2 (January 1984): 223-246.

Spruyt, Hendrik. “Institutional Selection in International Relations: State Anarchy as Order.” *International Organization* 48, no. Autumn (1994): 527-557.

Paul Pierson, “Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics,” *The American Political Science Review* 94, no. 2 (June 2000): 251-267.

March 5: Coalitions(Chandra)

Riker, W. H. *The Theory of Political Coalitions.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962. Ch 1 -3.

Rogowski, Ronald. *Commerce and Coalitions: How Trade Affects Domestic Political Alignments.* (Princeton University Press, 1989): 3-61

David Baron and John Ferejohn, “Bargaining in Legislatures”, American Political Science Review vol. 83 no. 4, 1989: 1181-1206

March 12: Interests and their representation (David Woodruff)

Phillipe Schmitter, "Still the Century of Corporatism?" in Pike and Stritch, eds., *The New Corporatism* (University of Notre Dame Press): 85-131.

Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action; Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Harvard University Press, 1965): 5-22, 33-52, 132-167

Suzanne Berger, "Introduction" in Berger, ed., *Organizing Interests in Western Europe* (Cambridge 1981): 1-26.

Roger D. Petersen, *Resistance and Rebellion: Lessons from Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 1-79

March 19: Ethnicity (Chandra)

Robert Bates, “Ethnic Competition and Modernization in Contemporary Africa.” *Comparative Political Studies*, January 1974, pp. 457-483.

Kuran, Timur. “Ethnic Norms and Their Transformation Through Reputational Cascades.” *Journal of Legal Studies*, Vol XXCII (June 1998), pp. 623-659.

Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985. Chapters 1, 2, 4.

David Laitin, “Hegemony and Religious Conflict: British Imperial Control and Political Cleavages in Yorubaland.” In Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol eds, *Bringing the State Back In, Cambridge*: Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp 285-316.

James Fearon, “Commitment Problems and the Spread of Ethnic Conflict.” In David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild, eds. *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998. Pp. 107-126.

April 2: Institutions II (Chandra)

Michael Laver and Norman Schofield. 1990. *Multiparty Governments*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapters 1, 3, 5 6.

Laver, Michael and Kenneth A. Shepsle. "Coalitions and Cabinet Government." *APSR* 84.3 (1990): 873-890.

Tsebelis, George. *Veto Players: How Political Institutions Work.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.

Mathew S. Shugart and John Carey. 1992. *Presidents and Assemblies: Constitutional Design and Electoral Dynamics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, Chapters 1-3, 5-7, 8-12.

William Riker. *Federalism: Origin, Operation, Significance*. Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1964, pp. 1-47.

April 9: Parties and Elections (Chandra)

Gary Cox. *Making Votes Count*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1995). Parts I and II.

Adam Przeworski and John Sprague. *Paper Stones: A History of Electoral Socialism.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986, Chapters 1-3.

Stathis Kalyvas, *The Rise of Christian Democracy in Western Europe*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996. Introduction, Chapters 1-3.

Anthony Downs. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper and Row, 1957. Chapters 7 and 8.

April 16: States (Woodruff,)

Weber, "Bureaucracy," in Gerth and Mills, eds., *From Max Weber* (Oxford 1946): 196-244.

Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (Doubleday Anchor 1955):22-137; 203-211

Theda Skocpol, *States & Social Revolutions* (Cambridge UP 1979): 3-111, 154-173, 282-293.

April 23: Networks (Chandra): Putnam; Granovetter; Varshney.

Robert Putnam. *Making Democracy Work. Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993, Chapters 1, 4, 6.

Granovetter, Mark. 1973. "The Strength of Weak Ties." American Journal of Sociology, Volume 78, Issue 6(May, 1973), pp. 1360-1380

Grief, Avner, "Reputation and Coalitions in Medieval Trade: Evidence on the Maghribi Traders." Journal of Economic History (1989) 49:857-882.

April 30: National and International Context (Woodruff)

Alexander Gerschenkron, "Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective," in Granovetter and Swedberg, eds., *The Sociology of Economic Life* (Westview 1992): 85-110.

André Gunder Frank, "Sociology of Development and Underdevelopment of Sociology," in Cockcroft, Frank, and Johnson, eds. *Dependence and Underdevelopment* (Anchor 1972): 321-398

Peter Gourevitch, "The Second Image Reversed: The International Sources of Domestic Politics", *International Organization* v. 32 no. 4 (Autumn 1978), 881-912.

Richard Lowenthal, "Government in the Developing Countries: Its Functions and Its Form," in Ehrmann, ed., *Democracy in a Changing Society* (Praeger 1964).

John W. Meyer, "The World Polity and the Authority of the Nation-State," in Albert Bergesen, ed., *Studies of the Modern World-System* (Academic Press, 1980): 109-138.

Kiren Chaudhry. "Myths of the Market and the Common History of Late Developers." *Politics and Society* 21 (3), 245-274.

Andrew C. Janos, "The Politics of Backwardness in Continental Europe, 1780-1945," *World Politics* 41 (April 1989): 325-358.

Philip Cerny, "Globalization and the Changing Logic of Collective Action," *International Organization* v. 49, n. 4 (Autumn 1995): 595-626.

May 7: State of the Field and Summary

Ira Katznelson, “Structure and Configuration in Comparative Politics.” In Comparative Politics, ed., Mark Irving Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman, Comparative Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 81-112.

Jon Elster. “Introduction.” In Jon Elster ed. Rational Choice. New York: New York University Press, 1986.

Jon Elster. 2000. Rational Choice History:” A Case of Excessive Ambition. American Political Science Review 94, 3: 685-695. (And responses).

Reading Skills:

As you manage the reading for this and other graduate courses, you are likely to find, if you have not already, that there is no correlation between effort and outcome. It is entirely possible to spend several hours reading something without "getting it." And it is equally possible to spend less than a half-hour reading something else and getting to the heart of the argument. You will have to devise for yourselves ways to read efficiently. These are some devices that may help:

1. Figure out what the heart of an argument is before you read deeply: skim, read the abstracts, the jacket blurbs, often short reviews published elsewhere. When you know what the centre of gravity is, you read more efficiently.

2. Read actively: do not simply soak up the reading for what the author wants to tell you, but approach it with questions, and try to answer them for yourself as you make your way through.

3. Use other peoples' skills: you do not have to do all the work yourself. It is not "cheating" if you talk through the argument with someone else before or after you delve in, or look at reviews for explication, or form reading groups where you can discuss the argument with each other.

4. Write in order to read. The response papers for this class and the (non-graded) worksheet attached should help.

5. Use diagrams if necessary: often, the structure of an argument can be most clearly expressed if you "draw" it, using arrows and lines, than by trying to understand it in words.

6. Organize your notes in a way that makes retention and information retrieval possible: you could use index cards, annotated bibliographies, database programmes like Filemaker Pro etc.

These rules may be obvious to some and not to others. Basically do whatever works for you. But be self-conscious about the reading process as a skill that has to be learned and not necessarily as an ability that either comes naturally or does not.

Reading Worksheet

For each book, chapter, or article assigned in this course, students should fill out the following (non-graded) worksheet (adapted from the second year colloquium taught by James Snyder and Joshua Cohen) . Many of these points can be addressed in a sentence or two (e.g. Questions 1 and 2; in some cases answers will not need even to be full sentences (e.g., Question); and in some cases the answers may overlap. These worksheets should be retained: they will be useful for future reference.

1. State the central question that the reading addresses.

2. State the central argument(s) defended in the paper in response to this question.

3. What type of reasoning or evidence is used to support these arguments? If it is an analytical paper, what is the logic that undergirds the argument? If an empirical paper, what type of data is employed? Are there other data sources that you think might be more appropriate?

4. Do you find the claims of the reading convincing? What do you see as the main gaps that need to be filled?

5. Why (if at all) is the reading interesting?

6. Do you agree with the main claims? What are your hesitations? (This may simply involve restatement of previous points.)

7. Identify one or two implicit premises or background assumptions in the paper that you think are especially controversial or objectionable.

8. In light of your answers to the previous questions, write an abstract for the article of no more than 100 words. (Feel free to repeat formulations given in response to earlier questions.)