

POLS 121--Introduction to Comparative Politics

Fall 1999

MWF 9:00- 9:50

DRM 25

Professor Scruggs

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Comparative politics is both a subject and a method for understanding politics. As a subject, comparative politics is the study of different (usually national) political systems, and their major components -- cultures, structures, and institutions. As a method, comparative politics is a way of trying to establish and test general claims about particular political phenomena, using different political units as data. Understanding comparative politics as both a subject and a method is complementary. Using political systems as "data" requires an appreciation of their similarities and differences. The purpose of this class is to introduce you to major themes and problems in comparative politics as well as provide a crash course in the analysis of social science information. These are not the only themes in the course nor are they the only important questions in comparative politics. It would be impossible to do justice to all of the issues in a course such as this one.

Requirements:

Readings:

Reading requirements are relatively light (50-70 pages a week on average). It is important to do the readings carefully for three reasons. First, it is impossible to talk about everything in class and I will assume that some stuff is clear from the reading. If you skip the reading or wait until exam time, it will be harder to keep things straight. Second, and because of the first reason, there will be occasional quizzes to "encourage" you to keep up. Third, in order to participate meaningfully in class discussions, you'll need to be familiar with the reading.

Attendance:

There is no attendance policy. However, there are no makeup quizzes or exams, information in the lectures is often not in the readings, and alterations in assignments, etc. announced in class are binding on everyone in the class.

Internet:

The Website for the class can be found at my homepage.

In order to save time (and paper), many things in class will be distributed through an email list for the class. In addition, some assignments require you to use the internet. It is your responsibility to ensure that you get on the mailing list by giving me a valid email address. (If you are unfamiliar with using email and the internet, you can get more info from the computer center help desk at 486-HELP.)

Countries for in-depth study

Lectures will look primarily at broad issues in comparative politics, and pay less attention to country details. For this reason, each student will choose a country of interest to them to study throughout the course of the semester. You be asked in both of your short paper assignments to discuss various aspects of politics in this country. Details will be provided in class and on the website.

Evaluation:

Your grade is based on:

Short Papers	20% (first-- 10%, second --10%)
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Final	30%
Participation/Quizzes	10%

Assignments-- 2 short assignments will be available from the course website. The papers are due by **5pm** on the announced due date. **I deduct 10 points from your grade for each day they are late.** Do the paper early. Last minute pleas for extensions are rarely, if ever, granted.

I prefer to get and return papers electronically as email attachments. (If you have to send in something besides a text file, Word or Word Perfect Document, please get together with me *before* the due date to ensure that I can read the document.) Of course, the regular way of turning in papers is perfectly acceptable.

Exams – Identification and explanation of key terms from lecture and readings, and an essay on the final.

Participation: The class is primarily lecture, but we all stay more interested if there is some class discussion.

Quizzes: I will give periodic quizzes throughout the semester to ensure that you are doing the reading. If you have done the reading with much care (i.e., probably not while watching *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*), you should have no problem answering the questions.

Books for purchase in the Co op

- Shively, *Power and Choice: An Introduction to Political Science*
- Dahl, *On Democracy*
- Krugman, *The Return of Depression Era Economics*
- Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel* (optional)
- These and other readings will be available via library and electronic reserve.

All students should try to keep up with current international news events while in this class. This will make participating in class (and thus improving your grade) much easier. There are a variety of sources for this, but two are particularly good.

New York Times-- daily editions plus much more are available on the web at www.nytimes.com, the library subscribes to print versions and you can subscribe yourself.

The Economist-- This British weekly has excellent coverage and analysis of key political and economic affairs. Subscriptions (even to the web edition) are pricey, but the UConn library subscribes and the website at www.economist.com provides many pieces each week for free.

Course Outline

I. Key Issues and Concepts in Comparative Politics

1. *What is comparative politics?* (15 pages) [9/3] Shively, Ch. 1 (2-16)

9/6 No Class-- Labor Day

2. *How do we Compare?* (4 pages) [9/8] Shively, Appendix
3. *The Early Fates of Societies* (66 pages) [9/10, 9/13] Diamond, pp. 9-66, 85-92 (also on reserve)

II. "Big Topics" in Comparative Politics

1. *Ideologies* [9/15] **Due date for focus country** Shively, Ch. 2
2. *States*
- History [9/17] Shively, Ch. 3, Diamond Ch. 14 (also on reserve)
 - What do states do? [9/20] Shively, Ch. 4,
 - How do states survive? [9/22] Shively, Ch. 6, pp. 134-139

How to Write a Good Paper [9/24]

3. *Development? Economic, Social and Political* Mahler, 45-69 [reserve]

Sachs, "Helping the World's Poorest" (on reserve)

- A. What do we mean by development? [9/27]
- B. What are major theories about the development process? [9/29]
- C. What does "post-modernization" refer to? [10/01]

Exam Review [10/4]

Exam 1 [10/6]

Short paper 1 due by [10/8]

4. "Forms" of government (57 pages) [10/8, 10/13] Shively, Ch. 9
Dahl, 1-43

10/11-- No Class Fall Break

5. Why Democracy? [10/15] Dahl, 44-99
Shively, pp. 139-154
6. Democracy and economic development? [10/18] Olson, 368-380 , [reserve]
Krugman, 21-37 [reserve]
7. Capitalism and Democracy: Conflict or Synthesis [10/20, 10/22] Dahl, 166-179
Almond [on reserve]
8. How policy can help development...or hurt it [10/25-10/29] Shively, Ch. 5
Handelmann, 213-244 [reserve]
9. Varieties of Democracy
- A. Parliamentary Systems [11/1] Shively, Ch. 10, 14
- B. Presidential Systems [11/3] Shively, Ch. 15

Special: Constitutional Crises in the Real World: Venezuela [11/5] Dahl, 100-129, various
reserve

- C. Electoral Systems [11/8] Shively, Ch. 11
- D. Parties and Electoral Systems [11/10] Shively, Ch. 12,
Dahl, 130-141, 181-95
- E. Party systems [11/12] --

Exam 2 [11/15]

- F. Interest Groups [11/17] Shively, Ch. 13

Short Paper 2 due [11/19]

- G. Law and Bureaucracy [11/19] Shivley, Ch. 16, 17

10. Welfare States: Why are some governments larger than others? [11/22] TBA

Class on 11/23 TBA

11. *Transitions from Socialism: China, Russia and transition?* [11/29-12/3]

Shively, Ch. 7
 Dahl, 145-165
 Ethridge and Handelman [reserve]
 McFaul, 149-153 [reserve]
 Chu, 188-190 [reserve]

12. *How has globalization affected national politics, or, "the state is dead, long live the state"?* [12/6, 12/8, 12/10]

What it is [12/6]	--
What does it mean for the nation-state [12/8]	<i>Economist</i> (on reserve)
Financial Collapse in the late 1990s [12/10]	Krugman (selection TBA)

Conclusion: *What have we learned?* [12/13] --

Final Exam date to be announced

Assignment 1 (due 10/8/99)

This exercise will help teach you to analyze information about the relationship between economic and political freedoms. You will need to do this with a PC that has some kind of spreadsheet (preferably MS Excel) and the ability to download files from the course website. If you cannot do it from your residence, you will have to go to the library computer cluster. *You are strongly encouraged to get the information and look over it well before it is due.* We'll both feel bad if you are panicking because you have problems getting or understanding a part of the assignment 24-48 hours before it is due, but it will affect your grade.

Download the File from the course homepage called Assignment 1 Data. In it you will find for a number of countries two columns of numbers--

1. a rating of the country's political freedom (**lower means more free**)
2. a rating of the country's economic freedom (**lower means more free**)

You should read more about what these numbers mean from the following websites:

Political Freedom <http://freedomhouse.org/survey99/method/>
 Economic Freedom Index <http://www.heritage.org/index/execsum.html>

Both sites explain the purpose behind the different measures and how they were arrived at. (The numbers in the data you downloaded apply for the most current year available). *Reading this information will make it much easier to do the assignment.*

Armed with this information, answer the following questions *based on the data*:

1. Are political and economic freedom positively or negatively correlated? In other words, does more political freedom tend to go with more economic freedom (positive correlation) or less economic freedom (negative correlation)? Are there countries that are "exceptions"? Why might you have expected the (lack of) relationship that you found? (Note: It will probably be helpful to plot the data on a graph, as we did in class.)
2. Where does your country fit in? Is it free on both measures? More free on some, less on others.
3. Find your country in the economic freedom tables on-line at:
<http://www.heritage.org/index/execsum.html>
 (The box on the right has a full listing of countries in groups of approximately 30.) When you find your country, look at the scores from previous years (e.g., "1998 Score", "1997 Score", etc.) Have your country's score changed much in the last 5 years, and if so, in what direction? [One way to evaluate what "changed much" means is to look at countries near it on the table and see how much they changed.]