Political Science 7220
Politics in the Developing World

Spring Term 2017
Friday 9:00-11:50

Professor

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Course Description

Most of the world’s population lives outside of the advanced industrialized countries, particularly in the regions of Africa, Latin America, and Asia. In the context of impoverished financial and human resources, political competition is a high stakes game. And yet, there are wide ranging differences in the nature of political life within and across world regions – from relative calm and stability to ethnic-based genocide; and from economic stagnation to rapid growth. What are the causes and consequences of such outcomes?

In this course, we will investigate the distinctive and not-so-distinctive features of political life in the developing world, attempting to understand patterns of similarity and difference across countries. In particular, we will consider the rise of the modern state, trying to understand the degree to which national governments have been able to wield effective authority over societies. In the course of this exploration, we will consider the role of various collective identities, and the role of democratic forms of government in linking states and societies, and producing the economic growth that can improve people’s lives.

We will consider a wide range of country examples in the readings, but the primary goal of the course is to introduce the main theoretical and conceptual building blocks about the causes and consequences of political interactions in the developing world. We will focus on the intellectual evolution of the field, the dominant debates and controversies, and the variety of approaches to research within comparative politics and development economics.

Assignments and Grading

1. Participation and response papers: 30% of total grade.

You will be expected to read ALL of the readings on the syllabus for each week. You must attend every class meeting and participate actively in class discussion.

You will also write six 1-page response papers on the week’s readings (for 6 of the 14 weeks in the semester; note that there are only 9 weeks with assigned reading). These are due 24 hours before class starts, submitted via email to the entire class. Please read everyone’s response papers prior to class. They should be no longer than 1 page long (single-spaced).

Response papers should answer one of the following questions:

i. What are the principal differences in the arguments of the works under study?
ii. What are the central debates in the field on the issue under consideration?
iii. What are the main empirical strengths and weaknesses of the works under study?
iv. Have the scholarly disputes/debates on this subject been resolved, and what remains to be discovered?

Note that your response papers will not be graded each week. They are intended to help you process and reflect on the readings, so I do not expect you to get the questions “right,” especially if this is your first time reading the pieces. At the end of the semester, I will grade your portfolio of response papers based on their thoughtfulness, level of detail, and quality of writing.

2. Methodology paper: 40% of total grade

The main requirement is to write a 12-15 page paper on a recent comparative politics article from a major political science journal (APSR, World Politics, Comparative Political Studies, or Comparative Politics). Indicate what you believe to be the problems involved in the research design of the article, and provide what you believe to be an improved research design. In providing your research design, use at least four of the sources on the following page to inform your discussion.

3. Paper presentation: 10% of total grade

In the last two weeks, you will submit a draft of your research design to the class. Each student will present her/his paper to the class. The presentation should be approximately 25 minutes long and should be done in the style of a traditional job talk.

4. Referee reports and discussant comments: 10% of total grade

Students will be paired up and asked to read and review a draft of the research paper written by a colleague. In addition to providing written comments, in the style of a blind referee review, each student will also share their thoughts with the full class following each respective paper presentation.

5. Referee response memo: 10% of total grade

When submitting their final drafts, students will also need to include a letter outlining the revisions they made in response to the comments received from their discussant.

Important Dates

March 24 – Bring methodology paper Precis to class. Your Precis should be a 2-page, single-space document that fully writes out your main argument and research design.

April 14 & 21 – Student presentations. Provide your discussant a draft 72 hours prior to presentation. Referee response reports due at the beginning of class.

April 28 – Submit methodology paper (via email) by 9am. Please include your referee response memo.

A Note

The syllabus may be updated from time to time as we move along through the course. The most current (and binding version) will be found on Carmen. I will announce changes by email as well.
Sources for the methodology paper


Donald Green and Ian Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice*, chapter 5.


**Course Readings**

All course readings are available through Carmen, including those listed below. However, these are the ones that I’d recommend you buy, so you can have access to the other (unassigned) chapters. Always bring readings to class, as we will make frequent reference to them.


**Course Overview and Schedule**

**Friday, January 13: Introduction**

**Friday, January 20: Concept and Classics**


Emile Durkheim. 1893. *The Division of Labor in Society*. Book One, Chapters 1-3 and 7.4; Conclusion. (In the W.D. Wells translation, p. 41-104, 177-179, and 309-318)


**Friday, January 27: Modernization theory**


Friday, February 3: Geography and natural resources


Friday, February 10: Legacy of Colonialism


Friday, February 17: Development in Democracies


**Friday, February 24: Development in Authoritarian states**


**Friday, March 3: Post-conflict development**


**Friday, March 10: Collective action and social movements**


**Friday, March 17: No Class (Spring Break)**

**Friday, March 24: Submit a précis that outlines your methodology paper. We will workshop your précis, and discuss innovations in data collection and measurement.**

**Friday, March 31: New themes in cultural analysis**


**Friday, April 7: Writing Day**

**Friday, April 14: Student presentations**

**Friday, April 21: Student presentations**