Political Science 6410 (Fall 2012)  
Monday 4-6:30pm  
Friedman 3309

Instructor:  
Dr. Priscilla Lambert  
Friedman Hall Rm. 3410  
Office hours: Mondays 11:45-1, Tuesdays 1:15-2:45 pm and by appointment  
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Course Description: This is the core course for comparative politics for the doctoral program and fulfills the comparative politics requirement for the master’s program. This course is an introduction to comparative methods and theories, dominant approaches and great books in comparative politics. The main objectives of this course are to help students prepare for the comprehensive exam in comparative politics and for comparative research. This course covers a wide range of subjects but cannot cover the very large subfield of comparative politics exhaustively. Students preparing for the comprehensive exam should seek other opportunities to study these and other topics in greater detail. We will begin with a brief overview of methods in comparative research and follow up with some of the early comparative classics. The readings are then organized according to dominant approaches: political economy, cultural, and institutional approaches to comparative politics.

Books to purchase:  
Course requirements and grading:

Critical Reviews. Students will submit a total of seven short papers (up to five pages) analyzing and critiquing the week’s readings by 8 a.m. on the day class meets to the professor. These critical reviews should briefly recap the basic argument, methods and data, and offer some analysis of the strong and weak points of the books and articles assigned that week.

Final Exam. The final exam is comprehensive—students will be responsible for all the topics covered in class. The exam will take place during finals week and will be closed book, closed note. This exam will be similar to and help prepare students for MA and PhD comparative field exams.

Presentations & Participation. Students will also be responsible for leading class discussion on a rotating basis. For these presentations, students will summarize and compare the major arguments and methods in the readings on the required list and at least one from the recommended reading list. (Students are welcome to present on the topics they cover in critical reviews or in the research design). Class attendance, preparation of readings, and participation in seminar discussions are essential for a successful seminar. Students are expected to attend all classes and to participate regularly in discussions. During any seminar you may be asked to begin the discussion with some questions or to summarize key arguments of the assigned reading.

Final grades are based on the following formula:

Critical reviews  50%
Final exam  25%
Participation and oral presentations  25%

Academic Integrity:

Students are responsible for reading and understanding the policies and procedures for Student Academic Conduct in the Undergraduate (pp. 268-271) and Graduate (pp.26-28) catalogs. These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, and computer misuse. If there is reason to believe that a student have been involved in academic dishonesty, I will report the student to the Office of Student Conduct. See me if you have any questions about academic honesty prior to submitting an assignment or taking a test.

Course schedule

Week 1
September 10 (First class).

Week 2: Comparative Methods (I) and Definitions
September 17
4. Gerring, John. 2007. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices.* Ch. 2 “What is a case study?” and Ch. 3 “What is a case study good for?” (pp. 17-64).

**Recommended:**
- Lichbach, Mark and Alan Zuckerman. *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture and Structure.* New York: Cambridge University Press. chapter 1, p. 3-16.

**Weeks 3 & 4: Political Economy—Democracy and Development**

**September 24**


**October 1**


**Recommended:**

**Weeks 5 & 6: Political Economy—Rational Choice Approaches**

October 8

October 15

**Recommended:**
• Gerald Munck piece on rational choice/game theory in comparative

**Weeks 7 & 8: Political Culture**

**October 22**

**October 29**

**Recommended:**
• Tocqueville, 1848. *Democracy in America*.

**Week 9: Comparative Methods (II)**
November 5
3. ***Revisit Putnam***

**Recommended:**
• Geddes, Barbara. “How the cases you choose affect the answers you get: Selection bias in comparative politics.” *Political Analysis*. 1990.

**Week 10: Political Institutions**
November 12
5. ***Revisit Ramseyer and Rosenbluth, Ostrom.

**Recommended:**

**Week 11 &12: Institutional Design**

November 19

November 26

**Recommended:**
• Gary Cox, *Making Votes Count*.
• Lijphart, Arend. 1999. *Patterns of Democracy*. Ch.5 “Party Systems,” Ch. 15, 16

**Week 13: The Welfare State and Comparative Perspectives**

December 3


***Final Exam: Monday Dec. 10th at 5pm ***