An Introduction to Comparative Politics: 
*Theories, Histories, States, Societies, Cultures, and Policies Compared*

A branch of political science, comparative politics examines states and their societies by comparing them with others, as well as trying to identify and define the differences and similarities among different countries, learn about patterns, trends, and processes of their ‘politics’, and learn how to interpret hypotheses to explain these.

*An Introduction to Comparative Politics* approaches ‘the comparative method’ functionally by identifying major themes and topics and providing students an opportunity to evaluate countries’ political processes from the perspective of a selected number of major topics (e.g., state formation, political systems, democracy, nationalism, economic development, political culture). The course is also taught from an interdisciplinary perspective highlighting aspects of a country’s histories, anthropologies, sociological processes and economics, and presenting them as a basis for understanding countries’ contemporary political processes and policy orientations. While learning from the rich content of political studies in several symbolic country cases including England, France, Germany, Scandinavia, India, China, Nigeria, Brazil and Mexico, the course will focus on United States’ ‘exceptionalism’ as an important epistemological premise for comparing nations.

The course will be taught by using a highly interactive format, combining professor lecture presentations with intense student seminar colloquial sessions, dynamic multi-media sessions including online instructional learning, and the scheduling of external specialist speaker presentations. The course is writing-intensive and teaches students ‘how to compare politics’ and to conduct comparative design methodology.

This course hopes to build upon introductory survey in political science courses and provides students with a foundation for more advanced and specialized comparative politics courses in the global studies curriculum.
Course Requirements

Required Texts

1. **Comparative Politics Today: A World View**
   by Gabriel Almond, G. Bingham Powell, Russell Dalton, Kaare Strom (Editor), Russell J. Dalton (Editor) Addison Wesley, 2002

2. **Theories of Comparative Politics: the Search for a Paradigm Reconsidered** (2nd 94 Edition) by Ronald H. Chilcote
   ISBN: 0813310172 Subtitle: (the search for a paradigm reconsidered) Publisher: Westview Press

3. **Comparative Politics: Annual Editions, 04/05**
   by Christian Soe McGraw-Hill/Dushkin, 2004

Recommended Texts

4. **Only In America? The Politics of The United States in Comparative Perspective** by Graham K. Wilson University of Wisconsin-Madison


Course Grade Requirements

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Course Grade Requirements</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Assignments 1, 2, 3, 5, 6</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>(all assignments must use and cite at least three full-length text books on the country)</em></td>
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<td>2. Assignment 4 (Midterm)</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>3. Assignment 7 (Final)</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>4. Public Policy Roundtable Seminars</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>(group members BLOG, CONDUCT HARD RESEARCH,PRESENT, DEBATE, DELIBERATE, groups may also invite external dynamic specialists/speakers to address the topic/issue. see roundtable seminar instructions and group assignments)</em></td>
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<td>5. Class Participation and Attendance</td>
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<td>6. Blogger Presentation</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td><em>(put scheduled and assigned ‘concept’ or ‘phrase’ in google search. Print the no more than one/two page blogged article. Read, digest, reflect, and present thematically to class)</em></td>
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Calendar of Events

Part I

COMPARATIVE POLITICS & DESIGN INTRODUCED

Topics
1. Defining the Political System (the unit of comparison)
2. Comparing Political Systems (the basis of comparison)
3. The Question of Epistemology (perspective)
4. Comparing political processes and public policy
5. US Exceptionalism

Blogger Topics:
1. The Pilgrims and the American Tradition
2. American exceptionalism

Schedule
2/8 Orientation
2/10 Lecture on comparing politics and ranking by the United Nations (HDI)
2/15 US exceptionalism: outlined
2/17 Movie: The Foundation of American Politics 166 mins

Readings
CHAPTERS 1 & 2 Comparative Politics Today: A World View
Almond, Powell, Dalton, & Strom eds.

CHAPTERS 1, 3 & 5 Theories of Comparative Politics: the Search for a Paradigm Reconsidered
Chilcote

Recommended
CHAPTER 1 Only In America? The Politics of The United States in Comparative Perspective Wilson

PART I: Chapters 1-5 How to Compare Nations: Strategies in Comparative Politics second Dogan & Pelassy

Assignment I: (two pages) Due 2/22
- Select a country from the United Nations’ or Comparative Politics Areas Studies database (that country must not be a country listed by the course. One country per student)
• Identify and describe all aspects of the country’s ‘political system’ eg. Country indicators: polity and type and head of govt., territory, economic stats., social stats., religion, race, ethnicities.,
• What does mainstream American press say about your country: do a google search and reference your findings.

Part II
FORGING COMMUNITIES AND THE FORMATION OF NATIONS: NATIONALISM

Topics
1. Nationalisms and Revolutions
2. Old Nations
   a. The UK, France, Germany, Russia
3. New Nations and Colonialism
   a. The United States, Brazil, India

Blogger Topics:
3. The War of the Roses & The Glorious Revolution
4. 1839 – Reform Act
5. Bismarck and Germany
6. The Bolshevik Revolution
7. India’s Ghandi AND Ghana/Africa’s Pan Africanist Kwame Nkrumah
8. Toussaint Loveture and the Haitian Revolution

Schedule
2/22 Lecture on Nationalisms, Revolutions and Historical Materialism
   The British War of the Roses/Glorious Revolution, The Reform Act, the French Revolution, Bismarck and Modern Germany, the Bolshevik Revolution AND the American Revolution


3/1 Lecture on Colonialism &

   Movie on Indian Colonialism: India-Defying the Crown 30m

Readings
CHAPTERS 8-19 ‘Read Sections Titled Historical Perspectives’ Comparative Politics Today: A World View Almond, Powell, Dalton, & Strom eds.
CHPATURES 5, 219-222 ‘Development and Nationalism’ Theories of Comparative Politics: the Search for a Paradigm Reconsidered Chilcote

Recommended
PART I: Chapters 12, ‘Political Crises: Historical Events or Stages of Development’
How to Compare Nations :Strategies in Comparative Politics, second Dogan & Pelassy

Assignment II: (two pages) Due 3/3
• Is your country a new or old nation? Describe why/how
• How was the modern nation formed in your country?
• What was the process of nationalism?
• Compare your nation with one of the nations from (2 or 3); you may compare similar or different units

Part III
COMPARING MODERN STATES AND STATE FORMATION

Topics
1. Absolutism and Monarchies
   a. The UK and France
2. Totalitarian and Bureaucratic-Authoritarian
   a. Germany, The Former Soviet Union, China
3. Democracies Compared:
   American Presidentialism, British Westminster, French Mixed System
   a. France, the US, the UK
4. Unitary vs. Federal Systems
   a. The US, Germany, The Russian Federation, Brazil, Nigeria vs. UK, France, Japan

Blogger Topics
9. Lenin and the vanguard state
10. Hitler and fascist state
11. Athens and democratica
12. The French Fifth republic and de Gaulle
13. The Westphalian State
14. Henry VIII’s absolutist state Britain’s constitutional monarchy – the monarchical state
15. Napoleon
16. India’s Princely States
17. the American federalist papers: Jefferson vs Madison, the ‘polyarchy’ and Dahl

Schedule
3/3 Lecture on Theories of State
3/8       Movies on Lenin: According to Lenin - and Hitler -50m

3/10      Lecture on ‘comparative democracy’
          & Movie on ‘Athenian Democracy’ 15 mins.

3/15      Lecture on US democratic institutions AND comparative federalism

Readings
CHAPTERS 8-19 ‘Read Sections on The Structure of Govt., Political Participation and Party Systems’ Comparative Politics Today: A World View Almond, Powell, Dalton, & Strom eds.


CHAPTER 8 ‘Pluralism’ 288 Theories of Comparative Politics: the Search for a Paradigm Reconsidered Chilcote

Recommended
CHAPTER 6, ‘Institutions’ Only In America? The Politics of The United States in Comparative Perspective Wilson

Unit 2, Article 13, ‘Patterns of Democratic Atrophy? Comparative Perspectives’ Comparative Politics: Annual Editions, 04/05 by Christian Soe

Assignment III: (two pages) Due 3/17
  • Choose ONE state form associated with a country from types 1-4 and compare it with a state form that has dominated your country in its modern history.

Part IV
ECONOMIC INEQUALITY WITHIN NATIONS

Topics
1. Capitalism, Socialism, Industrialization, Pre-Capitalist Formations (Marx, Weber, Smith)

2. Rich Nations
   a. The United States, Sweden, Norway and Denmark

3. Poor Nations
   a. China, India, Mexico, Nigeria
**Blogger Topics**

18. The Industrial Revolution and Les Miserable  
19. The Cuban Revolution and Dependency  
20. The Scandinavian Welfare State, Social Democracy and Consociationalism  
21. The Mexican Debt Crisis  
22. Tanzanian Ujaama  
23. The protestant ethic and American Laissez-faire capitalism  
24. Adam Smith’s invisible hand  
25. Karl Marx’s critique of capitalism

**Schedule**

3/17 Lecture on Capitalism, Socialism, Inequality, Modernization, Underdevelopment, Dependency and Evolution of Political Economy  

3/22 Movie on the ‘Industrial Revolution’- 100mins (in 5 20 mins. Tapes) AND ‘Debt and the Developing Nation’ -44mins  

3/24 Speaker: Scandinavian Welfare State and Consociationalism

**Readings**

CHAPTERS 8-19 ‘Read Sections on Economy, Budgets, Business’ Comparative Politics Today: A World View Almond, Powell, Dalton, & Strom eds.

CHPATERS 7 and 9 ‘Modernization and Political Economy’ 222 & 346 Theories of Comparative Politics: the Search for a Paradigm Reconsidered Chilcote

**Recommended**

CHAPTER4 ‘The Size of Government’ Only In America? The Politics of The United States in Comparative Perspective Wilson

Unit 5, Article 41, ‘Capitalism and Democracy’ Comparative Politics: Annual Editions, 04/05 by Christian Soe

**Assignment IV: Midterm Assignment** Due April 5 (five pages)
• Compare the economic systems that have dominated a significant modern period of your country with a country from (2 or 3)
• Use UN economic indicators to describe whether your country is rich or poor and compare with stats from the selected comparative country
• Describe your country’s economic growth/development trajectory with the selected country

SPRING BREAK

Part V

POLITICAL CULTURE AND CULTURAL HETEROGENEITY WITHIN NATIONS

Topics
1. Race, Ethnicity, Language, Religion and the Politics of Difference

2. Culturally Plural Nations:
   b. The United States, Brazil, Nigeria

3. Homogeneous Nations:
   a. France, Germany, Japan, China

Blogger Topics
26. Barack Obama and race in contemporary America
27. Oluadah Equiano
28. Nazi’s and the KKK
29. The Native American and indigenous identity
30. Anti-puritanism, protestant reform in 16th C England and Calvinism
31. Mesticzoism and Latin American Identity
32. The Samurai in Japan
33. La pied noire: Algeria and France/and French secularism
34. Apartheid in South Africa

Schedule

4/5 Lecture on Political Culture, Pluralism, Deeply Divided Societies, Ethnicity-Race.

4/7 Lecture on US Exceptionalism: E Plubrius & Movies ‘Black, White and Angry’ -77mins

AND on ‘Biculturalism and Acculturation among Latinos’ 28 mins.
4/12 Movies on ‘The Nazis’ or The Garden of Finizzi Continis Mussolini AND ‘Art in the Cultural Revolution’ – China 33mins

4/14 Speaker on Samurai Culture or Meji Reform - Japan

Readings
CHAPTERS 8-19 ‘Read Sections on Socialization and Political Culture’ Comparative Politics Today: A World View Almond, Powell, Dalton, & Strom eds.

CHAPTER 6 ‘Theories of Political Culture’ 222 & 346 Theories of Comparative Politics: the Search for a Paradigm Reconsidered Chilcote

Recommended
CHAPTERS ‘E Pluribus’ Only In America? The Politics of The United States in Comparative Perspective Wilson

PART2: Chapters 7 and 8, ‘Political Culture and Cultural Heterogeneity’ How to Compare Nations :Strategies in Comparative Politics second Dogan & Pelassy

Assignment V (two pages) Due 4/19
- Compare the cultural constitution of your country with a country from lists (2 or 3)
- Identify culturally constituted groups in your country and compare
- Discuss identity conflicts/ tensions in your country compared

Part VI
INTERDEPENDENCE AND MUTUAL COOPERATION AMONG STATES

Topics
1. Foreign Policy, The United Nations, G-8/G-77, WTO, IMF/World Bank, the EU as a model of regional cooperation

2. Imperial Nations
   a. The UK, France, The US, Russia

3. Dependent Nations
   a. India, Brazil, Nigeria, China

Bloggers Topics
35. Woodrow Wilson and the League of Nations
36. Indian outsourcing
37. Sweatshops in the Maquiladoran basin
38. European integration
40. imperialism, neo-colonialism
41. The north-south divide
42. Brazil's Lula
43. The Washington Consensus
44. The Democratic Republic of the Congo and global resource wars
45. China- super power?
46. America and Iraq

**Schedule**

4/19   Lecture on international relations AND Movie on ‘The Summit’ -25mins

4/21   Movies on ‘Woodrow Wilson’ 180 mins AND ‘Will the Dragon Rise Again’ 58 mins


4/28   No Class

**Readings**

Unit 5, Article 42, ‘Cultural Explanations: the Man in the Baghdad Cafe’ Comparative Politics: Annual Editions, 04/05 by Christian Soe

Unit 5, Article 43, ‘Jihad vs Mc World’ Comparative Politics: Annual Editions, 04/05 by Christian Soe

**Assignment VI: (two pages)  Due May 3rd**

- Is your country an imperial or a dependent country
- Compare your country’s ‘foreign’ policies re imperial or dependent with a country from (2 or 3)
- Compare your country’s role in ‘global governance’ with your selected country
Part VII
COMPARATIVE PUBLIC POLICY:
PERFORMANCE, OUTCOME AND EVALUATION

Topics:

1. **The US: Red States vs. Blue States- Post-Election Trajectories**
   *Comparative Politics eds.* Page 103 ‘The Case for a Multi-Party America’

2. **France: From Homogeneity to Pluralism: the Islamic Factor**
   *Comparative Politics eds.* Page 43 ‘French Secularism Unwraps Far More than Headscarves’

3. **The UK: Is the Monarchy Obsolete?**
   *Comparative Politics eds.* Page 16 ‘A Constitutional Revolution in Britain’

4. **China: Embodying the Best or Worst of Asian Values?**

5. **Russia: Post-Totalitarian Blues**
   *Comparative Politics eds.* Pages 184 ‘In March toward Capitalism, China Has Avoided Russia’s Path’ AND Page 152 ‘Putin’s Way’

5. **India: Outsourcing and Neo-liberalism as a Development Goal**
   *Comparative Politics eds.* Page 187 ‘New Dimensions of Indian Democracy’

Schedule:
5/3 SEMINAR ONE
5/5 SEMINAR TWO
5/10 SEMINAR THREE
5/12 SEMINAR FOUR
5/17 SEMINAR FIVE


**Readings**

CHAPTER 7 ‘Public Policy’ *Comparative Politics Today: A World View* Almond, Powell, Dalton, & Strom eds.

*Comparative Politics eds.* Page 103 ‘The Case for a Multi-Party America’ Christian Soe

*Comparative Politics eds.* Page 43 ‘French Secularism Unwraps Far More than Headscarves’

*Comparative Politics eds.* Page 16 ‘A Constitutional Revolution in Britain’

*Comparative Politics eds.* Pages 184 ‘In March Toward Capitalism, China Has Avoided Russia’s Path’ AND Page 152 ‘Putin’s Way’

*Comparative Politics eds* Page 187 ‘New Dimensions of Indian Democracy’

**Assignment VII (7-8 pages) FINAL EXAM Due May 26**

1. Identify an important current ‘policy’ issue currently making news in your country
2. Trace the ‘policy lifeline’ (from policy origins to policy resolution.
3. Explain how and why policy is important. Locate this answer in ‘functions’ of comparative politics
4. Identify and compare ‘dimensions’ of your identified ‘policy’ with one of the ten countries’ policies debated in this section’s seminar