Overview

The goal of this course is to introduce graduate students to research in the field of Comparative Politics. The course also exposes students to fundamental methodological and substantive issues relevant for specializing in this field. To that end, the course is divided roughly into two sections. The first five meetings cover general research design and conceptual issues. The second part of the class consists of research topics tailored around the research interests of faculty in the department. For many of these meetings, a faculty member will join the class for discussion of a set of readings related to his/her research interests. I have listed the names of the faculty on the schedule.

Requirements

1. Participation: This is a seminar course and thus attendance is mandatory. Participation in course discussions will account for 10% of the grade.

2. Precis: For most weeks, each student will write a short (400 words) response paper to the readings. These writing assignments represent 15% of the grade.

3. Ph.D. Qualifying Examination Question: On November 11, please arrive at class with a possible question for the Qualifying Examination in Comparative Politics. I will then circulate these questions among all of the students. The quality of your question will account for 10% of the grade.

4. Answer to Ph.D. Qualifying Question: By December 9, please answer one of the qualifying exam questions submitted by students. There is no strict length limit, but I will provide some guidance in class. This will account for 25% of your grade.

5. Annotated Bibliography: By November 25, please submit an annotated bibliography on a literature in comparative politics of your choice (with my approval). The bibliography should cover at least 10 individual works. You will provide an introduction (about 500 words) defining the area of study, why it is important, and the general state of knowledge. This will be followed by succinct summaries of the individual works (about 250 words each). The summaries should briefly describe the central question, theoretical argument, empirical evidence and conclusion. You should conclude with an essay of no more than 500 words that synthesizes these works, points out limitations in these studies, and identifies remaining research questions. This will account for 25% of the grade.
6. **Data report:** Each student will write a report on data that are used to analyze research questions from a topic covered in the class (or, with the instructor’s approval, a related topic). The student will briefly describe the report in class. This report is due no later than November 28 and accounts for 15% of the grade.

**Readings**

The readings for each week are listed on the schedule. These readings can generally be found on-line through the library’s website or at the following depository: taguchi.wustl.edu/ps510/ (user and password = comparative). There are several books on the list that you will either need to borrow (from the library or other graduate students) or buy. Please look ahead on the schedule and be sure you make appropriate arrangements to secure these readings in advance of class meetings.
Tentative Schedule

**September 9**  *Introduction*


Wibbels, Erik. 2007. “No Method to the Comparative Politics Madness.”  *Comparative Political Studies* 40 (1): 37-44.


**September 16**  *Institutions and Political Regimes*


**September 23 The State (Parikh)**


**September 30 Culture**


**October 7 Political Geography (Tavits and Rosas)**


**October 14 Political and Legal Cultures: From Democratic Values to Institutional Legitimacy (Gibson)**


**October 21**  *Comparative Political Economy (Rosas)*


**October 28**  *Parties in Legislatures (Crisp)*


November 4 Elections and Party Competition


November 18 Violence and Civil War (Brancati)


**November 25 Democratization**


**December 2 Comparative Judicial Politics**


