Course Description and objectives

As the title indicates, this is an introductory course in a sub-field of political science that tends to study the “politics,” and “government” of various countries—including the United States—“comparatively.” The quotes around some of the words above indicate that we will be collectively thinking a bit more deeply than perhaps usual about these terms. So for instance we shall be asking about both, what constitutes “politics” or “government,” and why we need to “compare” to understand politics and government. We will discover that the study of comparative politics includes the investigation of questions such as, “why are certain states ‘democratic,’ and others ‘authoritarian?’” and “why do certain countries have governments that can easily tax people, educate, and even relatively swiftly punish citizens, while others struggle to do all three?” and a final example, “why is the difference between the rich and the poor greater in some countries than others?” in each of these examples—as in many others—we aim to derive some general propositions about (roughly speaking) the causes of, respectively, democracy and authoritarianism, strength or capacity of governments to do things, and income and wealth inequality. It further turns out that comparing is an especially good—perhaps even natural—way of answering certain general questions about the social and political world. We shall therefore also try to learn what it means to rigorously and systematically compare, and perhaps start developing the habit ourselves when we ask similar questions.

None of the above precludes learning about particular countries; indeed it allows one to ask “good” questions about the countries one is interested in, and as such provides a framework for learning. It is for this reason that instead of focusing on a particular group of countries, we will range widely across time and space in ways that illuminate the questions we ask.

Requirements

Reading assignments should be completed by the date listed on the syllabus. You are expected to attend every lecture. Note that the lectures are very important because many of the readings are not necessarily self-explanatory.

Your grade will be based on the following assignments:

1. 10% of your grade will be based on a weekly/biweekly writing assignment. These assignments will not be graded; that is, you will get full credit as long as you complete them in the manner described as follows. You are required to write a brief (about one page) summary of the readings marked below with an asterisk. These summaries should be tightly compressed, concise summaries of the main arguments of the readings. In your own words, you should state the main claim of the reading: what is the phenomenon being discussed? What are the main concepts employed? And what are the main hypotheses proposed by the author? I think you will find that writing these short papers is excellent exercise: it will force you to concentrate while reading, and you will find that, with practice, you can distinguish between central and peripheral material and focus on the former, even while reading difficult articles. And, if all that were not enough, when it comes time to study for examinations, you will have summaries of many of the readings at your fingertips. As long as you
make a good faith effort to capture the essence of the readings, you will receive full credit. You are to hand these to your teaching assistant at the beginning of the lecture under which it is listed. Finally note that you don’t have to do the assignment every week (i.e. you have to do it only for the readings marked with asterisks, and there are no such readings some of the weeks).

2. **10%** of your grade will be based on 2 take home quizzes (5% each). These will be due in class on **February 15, and April 1**. The teaching assistant will email you the quizzes a day before they are due.

3. **25%** of your grade will depend on a take home midterm exam due on **March 13 (the teaching assistant will email you the exam on March 8)**

4. **25%** of your grade will be based on a 5-page paper due on **April 10**(the topic/question for the paper will be distributed on **April 3**)

5. **30%** of your grade will depend on a take home, cumulative final exam, which is to be handed in (in the classroom) between 10:10 am and 12:10pm, on Wednesday, May 1. The teaching assistant will email you the exam on **April 27**.

**Readings**

The following books have been ordered through the bookstore. All other readings will be available on moodle under the corresponding date/week listed in the schedule below.


Walter C. Opello, and Steven J. Rosow, *The Nation State and Global Order* (Lynne Reinner, 1999)

**Office Hours**

You are all welcome-- even encouraged--to stop by, introduce yourselves, discuss any problems you might be having, talk about course material, and even, hopefully, argue about course material. I will also address specific questions sent to me by email. Please keep in mind, however, that I cannot summarize in an email the lecture that you missed.

**Disability Services**

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction by supporting collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you have a disability that requires an accommodation, contact either of us at the beginning of the semester so that proper accommodations can be provided. Please contact Disability Services for Students if you have questions, or call Disability Services for Students (DSS) for voice/text at 406.243.2243. You may also fax the Lommasson Center 154 for more information at 406.243.5330.

**Academic Honesty**

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the university. All students need to be familiar with the student conduct code: [http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php](http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php)
Schedule

Part I: Basic Approaches to Comparative Politics (and the social sciences in general)

January 11: introduction and overview of the class

January 14: Political or social ‘science’


January 16: Comparative politics and the comparative Method

- O’Neil and Rogowski, 3-7, 9-12, 18-22

Part II: The State

January 18: What is the “state” and why is it important?

- O’Neil and Rogowski, 26-39

January 21: No Class, MLK Day

January 23: More about the state

- O’Neil and Rogowski, 39-57
- Walter C. Opello, and Steven J. Rosow, The Nation State and Global Order (Lynne Reinner, 1999), Introduction, and Chapter 4

January 25: Sovereignty, a closer look

- Walter C. Opello, and Steven J. Rosow, The Nation State and Global Order (Lynne Reinner, 1999), Chapters 8 and 10.
- O’Neil and Rogowski, 68-74

January 28: Subjects/citizens and the state: exertion of power

- John Gaventa, Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley (Urbana Champaign: University of Illionis press, 1982) 3-32
January 30: How states make citizens, and (sometimes) vice-versa


February 1: Nationalism

- O’Neil and Rogowski, 77-85
- Michael Hechter, Containing Nationalism (Oxford University Press, 2000) 24-33, 56-69

**Part III: The State and the Regime**

February 4: Democratization, how and why?

- O’Neil and Rogowski, 203-12
- Walter C. Opello, and Steven J. Rosow, The Nation State and Global Order (Lynne Reinner, 1999), Chapter 5.

February 6: Democratization: The historical background (in Europe)


February 8: Historical background, continued


February 11: Some general propositions

- O’Neil and Rogowski, 405-430

February 13: Authoritarianism, a closer look

- Walter C. Opello, and Steven J. Rosow, The Nation State and Global Order (Lynne Reinner, 1999), Chapter 6.
- O’Neil and Rogowski, 267-90

February 15: Contemporary authoritarianism (**Hand in first quiz before class**)

- O’Neil and Rogowski, 303-12

February 18: **No Class, President’s Day**

February 20: Democratization and authoritarianism, some puzzles
• *Jason Brownlee, “The Transnational Challenge to Arab Freedom,”* *Current History* (November 2011)

February 22: Puzzles, continued
• O’Neil and Rogowski, 250-64

**Part IV: Challenges to the state and regime**

February 25: Revolutions
• *O’Neil and Rogowski, 316-30*

February 27: Revolutions, continued
• O’Neil and Rogowski, 349-63, 366-72

March 1: Civil wars
• Stathis N. Kalyvas, “Civil Wars,” in Boix & Stokes: *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*

March 4: Civil wars continued
• O’Neil and Rogowski, 86-94

March 6 **Review session for midterms**

March 8: *Midterms posted*

**Part V: The state and the economy**

March 11: Catch up day, no readings

March 13: “Rich” states and their economies (*Midterms due*)
• Walter C. Opello, and Steven J. Rosow, *The Nation State and Global Order* (Lynne Reinner, 1999), Chapter 7
• O’Neil and Rogowski, 440-48

March 15: Continued
March 18: The wealth and poverty of nations
  • O’Neil and Rogowski, 137-59

March 20: Institutions and development, an example
  • *O’Neil and Rogowski, 160-80

March 22: Some finance
O’Neil and Rogowski, 134-36, 184-85

Spring Break, March 25-29

April 1: Development and development strategies and another view on how the “rich” got “rich”
(Hand in second quiz before class)
  • Ha-Joon Chang, “Kicking Away the Ladder”

April 3: Continued (Paper topic posted)

April 5: Development strategies, successes, and failures
  • Vivek Chibber, Locked in Place: State Building and Late Industrialization in India (Princeton, 2003), chapter 1

April 8: Development, underdevelopment and growth
  • O’Neil and Rogowski, 547-69

April 10: Continued (paper due in class)

Part VI: Globalization
April 15: What is globalization?
  • O’Neil and Rogowski, 595-608

April 17: Is globalization “new?”

April 19: A critical view of globalization-talk

April 22: Globalization and the state
  • Walter C. Opello, and Steven J. Rosow, *The Nation State and Global Order* (Lynne Reinner, 1999), Chapters 11 and 12

April 24: Catch up day and/or wrap up

April 26: **Review session for final exam**

**Final Exam: To be handed in (in class) on Wednesday, May 1**