

Introduction to Comparative Politics Sample Syllabus

This class presents an overview of the world political system. By engaging with many of the foundational texts in political science, students will gain an understanding of the basic concepts and forces that shape the contemporary world. This class has a general arc that begins with the causes of the rise of the West in the 17th through 19th centuries and proceeds through some of the challenges and consequences that resulted. Towards the end, we will become more speculative in looking at new challenges that are facing the contemporary, Western-centric international order.

There will be three paper assignments. Two (3-5 pages) will be due over the course of the semester, and will encourage students to think more deeply about some of the concepts we have learned. The final paper (5-7 pages) will help consolidate some of the class's major themes. Assignments will be handed out two weeks before the papers are due.

- Part I: What is Comparative Politics? Foundational Texts and Ideas (Weeks 1-3)
 - Introduction (Week 1)
 - Session 1 – Overview of the class, logistics
 - Session 2 – The comparative method
 - Machiavelli, *The Prince*, selections
 - Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the Revolution*, selections
 - Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” selections
 - J.S. Mill, “The Proper Function of Representative Bodies”
 - Foundational Ideas and the Origins of the Modern System (Weeks 2 & 3)
 - Week 2, Session 1 – Comparative method (continued), and the modern state system
 - Max Weber, “The Types of Authority and Imperative Coordination,” selections

- Robert Gilpin, *US Power and the Multinational Corporation* (New York: Basic Books, 1975), selections
- Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), selections
- Week 2, Session 2 – The modern state system (continued)
 - Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in *Bringing the State Back In*, P. B. Evans, D. Rueschemeyer and T. Skocpol, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985).
 - Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy; Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. (Boston,: Beacon Press, 1966), selections
- Week 3, Session 1 – The modern economic system
 - David Ricardo on comparative advantage
 - Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System*. (New York: Academic Press, 1974), selections
 - Stephan Haggard, *Pathways from the Periphery: The Politics of Growth in the Newly Industrializing Countries*. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), selections
- Week 3, Session 2: When the system fails
 - Jeffery F. Winters, "Determinants of Financial Crisis in Asia," in *The Politics of the Asian Economic Crisis*, T.J. Pempel, ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1999), selections
 - Astri Suhrke and Aristide R. Zolberg, "Issues in Contemporary Refugee Policies," in *Migration and Refugee Policies: An Overview*, A. Bernstein and M. Weiner, eds. (London ; New York: Pinter, 1999), 143-80.
 - Paper assignment handed out
- Part II: The West vs. the rest
 - Development of the West (Week 4)

- Session 1 – Origins of Western dominance
 - Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations* (London: Penguin Classics, 1997), Chs. 1 & 2.
 - Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (New York: Beacon, 1957) pp 40-42, 54-55, 68-76
- Session 2 – Consequences of Western dominance within the West
 - Karl Marx, *Capital*, (2000), preface to 1867 edition
 - Alexander Gerschenkron, “Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective”
- Why the West? (Week 5)
 - Session 1
 - Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs & Steel*, Episode 1, “Out of Eden” (Film: 55 mins)
 - Session 2
 - Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Ch. 2.
 - Daniel Dafoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, selections.
 - First paper due
- Challenges to the West: Communism (Week 6)
 - Session 1 – Communism
 - Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, “The Communist Manifesto,” preface and parts I-III
 - Session 2 – Maoism
 - Stuart Schram, *The Political Thought of Mao Zedong*, 110-44.
- Challenges to the West: Fascism & Nazism (Week 7)
 - Session 1
 - Benito Mussolini, *Fascism, Doctrines and Institutions*, 7-30.
 - Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 158-64, 170-75

- The Failure of the Early Challenges (Week 8)
 - Session 1 – Why did communism fail?
 - Watch *The Lives of Others* (film)
 - Slavenka Drakulic, *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed*. (New York: HarperPerennial, 1993), selections.
 - Session 2 – What followed and why?
 - Andrew Janos, “The Rise and Fall of Militarized Societies: Germany and Russia as Great Powers,” *German Politics and Society*, Vol. 14, No. 1, (1996).
 - Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press: 1991), selections
 - Paper assignment two handed out
- New Challenges
 - Globalization (Week 9)
 - Session 1 – The relative optimists
 - Thomas Friedman, *The World is Flat 3.0*. (New York: Picador, 2007), selections
 - Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*. (New York: Free Press, 1992), selections
 - Session 2 – The pessimists
 - Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Globalization and Its Discontents*. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2002), selections.
 - Susan Strange, *The Retreat of the State: The Diffusion of Power in the World Economy*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), selections
 - Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars : Organized Violence in a Global Era*. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001)., selections
 - Religious fundamentalism (Week 10)
 - Session 1 – Causes

- M. Steven Fish, "Democratization's Requisites: The Postcommunist Experience." *Post-Soviet Affairs*. Vol. 14, No. 3, (1998).
- Benjamin R. Barber, "Jihad Vs. McWorld." *Atlantic Monthly*. Vol. 269, No. 3, (Mar., 1992), 53-65.
- Paper 2 due
 - Session 2 – Consequences
 - Jessica Stern, "Al Qaeda: The Protean Enemy." *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 82, No. 4, (July/August, 2003).
- Clash of Civilizations? (Week 11)
 - Session 1 – Pessimists
 - Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3, (Summer 1993), pp. 22-49.
 - Session 2 – Optimists
 - Bruce Russett, John R. O'Neal and Michealene Cox, "Clash of Civilizations, or Realism and Liberalism Déjà vu? Some Evidence," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 37, No. 5 (2000), pp 583-608.
 - Peter Senghaas, "A Clash of Civilizations – An Idée Fixe?," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (1998), pp. 127-132.
- China's challenge (Week 12)
 - Session 1 – Authoritarianism (and Growth)
 - Andrew J. Nathan, "China's Changing of the Guard: Authoritarian Resilience." *Journal of Democracy*. Vol. 14, No. 1, (Jan.,2003), 1-17.
 - Gordon Chang, *China's Coming Collapse*. (New York: Random House, 2001), selections.
 - Jonathan Hassid, "Controlling the Chinese Media: An Uncertain Business." *Asian Survey*. Vol. 48, No. 3, (May/June,2008), 414-30.

- Final paper assignment handed out.
- Session 2 – China’s Political Ambitions
 - Kenneth Lieberthal, "Preventing a War over Taiwan." *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 4, No. 2, (March/April,2005), 53-63.
 - Avery Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge: China’s Grand Strategy and International Security*. (Stanford University Press, 2005), selections.
- Climate Change & Conclusion (Week 13)
 - Session 1 – Climate change
 - David Zweig and Bi Jianhai, “China’s Global Hunt for Energy,” *Foreign Affairs*, (Sept. 2005).
 - Thomas Homer-Dixon, "Cornucopians and Neo-Malthusians," in *International Politics: Enduring Concepts and Contemporary Issues*, R. J. Art and R. Jervis, eds. (New York: Pearson/Longman, 2005).
 - Thomas C. Schelling, "What Makes Greenhouse Sense?," in *International Politics : Enduring Concepts and Contemporary Issues*, R. J. Art and R. Jervis, eds. (New York: Pearson/Longman, 2005).
 - Session 2 – Wrap up