This course offers a graduate-level introduction to the major themes and approaches in comparative politics. Among the points of emphasis: states and state formation; regime change and its causes; the varied institutional character of modern democracies; political culture; and comparative political economy.

**Learning Outcomes:** Participants in this course will acquire: (a) an understanding of comparative methodology and an appreciation of its applications; (b) substantial familiarity with the major concepts and lines of theory employed in the sub-discipline of comparative politics; and (c) a strong and critical understanding of the character of economic, social, and political development.

**Requirements:**

(a) **Reading commentaries:** you will prepare two short papers of 3-4 pages in length, each of which will offer critical consideration of the assigned reading materials for a particular week. You may emphasize any theme or themes within the readings, and need not cover all of the assigned items for the week. The aim is to identify what is at stake in the selected material, evaluate the approach of the author or authors, and reflect briefly upon how the puzzle or debate in question might in your view best be addressed. These papers must be handed in before the week’s seminar begins, either electronically or in person. *Grade: 15%.*

(b) **Seminar presentation:** you will deliver one substantial presentation, of 20-25 minutes, which will offer a brief introduction to some (but not necessarily all) of the week’s readings as well as an additional reading component (two journal articles or book chapters) chosen by the presenter. In addition to effective summary and integration of the selected readings, you should raise questions and challenges in such a way as to stimulate seminar discussion in the time to follow. Your presentation and your reading commentaries should come on different weeks. *Grade: 20%.*

(c) **Seminar participation:** you will be expected to provide consistent, informed, and active participation throughout the term. *Grade: 25%.

(d) **Research paper:** you will write a research paper (15-17 pages for Masters students, 20-22 pages for Doctoral students) on a subject related to the themes and empirical content of the seminar. *Grade: 40%.*

**COURSE READINGS:**

**Comparative Theory and Method (September 14)**


**Recommended:**
Gerald Schneider, “Causal Description: Moving Beyond Stamp Collecting in Political Science.” *European Political Science* vol. 9, no. 1 (2010).
Markus Haverland, “If Similarity is the Challenge – Congruence Analysis Should Be Part of the Answer.” *European Political Science* vol. 9, no. 1 (2010).
Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers, “The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* vol. 22, no. 1 (1980).

**Economic Development and Regime Change (September 21)**


Recommended:

The State, War, and Regime Change (September 28)


Recommended:

Institutionalism and Implications (October 5)


Recommended:  
JM Carey, “Parchment, Equilibria, and Institutions.” *Comparative Political Studies* vol. 33, nos. 6-7 (2000).  

**Transitions to Democracy? (October 19)**


Recommended:  

New Approaches to Regime Change: Rational Choice, New Structuralism, and the Historical Turn (October 26)


Capoccia, Giovanni, and Daniel Ziblatt, “The Historical Turn in Democratization Studies: A New Research Agenda for Europe and Beyond.” *Comparative Political Studies* vol. 43, nos. 8/9: (2010).


Recommended:


Electoral Systems (November 2)


Alan Renwick, “Electoral Reform in Europe since 1945.” *West European Politics* vol. 34, no. 3 (May 2011).

Recommended:


**Parties and Party Systems (November 9)**


*Recommended:*


**Systems of Government (November 16)**


**Recommended:**


**Contentious Politics: Revolutions, Ethnic Conflict, and Civil Wars (November 23)**

- Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge University Press, 1979), chapter 2.

**Recommended:**

- Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge University Press, 1979), chapters 1 and 3.

**Culture and Politics (November 30)**


Recommended:

**Comparative Political Economy (December 7)**


Peter A. Hall, “Policy, Paradigms, Social Learning, and the State: The Case of Economic Policymaking in Britain.” *Comparative Politics* (April 1993).


Recommended: