All knowledge that is about human society, and not about the natural world, is historical knowledge, and therefore rests upon judgment and interpretation. This is not to say that facts or data are nonexistent, but that facts get their importance from what is made of them in interpretation... for interpretations depend very much on who the interpreter is, who he or she is addressing, what his or her purpose is, at what historical moment the interpretation takes place.
Edward W. Said

What is not named largely remains unnoticed.
Giovanni Sartori

El original no es fiel a la traducción.
Jorge Luis Borges

Course Objectives

This course analyzes the relationship between knowledge, power and politics in the Global South. More specifically, it examines: the political and cognitive dimensions of the knowledge construction process in Comparative Politics; the ontological and epistemological assumptions of dominant theoretical interpretations of conflict, order, and change in South Asia, Africa and Latin America; the conceptual vocabulary of Comparative Politics and its capacity to represent/misrepresent the historical specificities of the societies of the Global South; the cognitive obstacles to, and opportunities for, the construction of “common horizons of significance” in Comparative Politics; and finally, the emergence and consolidation of non-Western interpretations of power and politics in the Global South.

Course Evaluation

Participation: 20%
Book Reviews: 30% (10% each)
Essay: 50%
Books Recommended for Purchase:


Assignments

Book reviews:

Participants in this course will review the following books:


The instructor will provide specific guidelines for this assignment in class. Book reviews are due on the dates indicated in the course outline.

Essay:

An essay (17-20 double-spaced pages) will be due on April 12, 2018. The essay will offer students the opportunity to identify relevant theoretical overlaps and differences among the three books that have been selected for the “Books reviews” assignment. The following are examples of the kind of overlaps and differences that can be used as the focus of your essay:

- Ontological and epistemological assumptions and positions concerning the nature of conflict, order, and change in the Global South.
- Assumptions and positions concerning the conceptual vocabulary of Comparative Politics and its capacity to represent/misrepresent the historical specificities of the societies of the Global South; and,

- Assumptions and positions about the cognitive obstacles to, and opportunities for, the identification/articulation of “common horizons of significance” in Comparative Politics.

The instructor will provide specific guidelines for this assignment in class.

**Participation:**

Students in this course will be expected to master the assigned readings and to actively participate in the discussions that will take place every week. Moreover, they will be required to post a short critical assessment (250 words max) of the assigned readings on Western’s OWL website. Critical assessments must be posted no later than 12:00 noon on the Wednesday of each week. One student will formally introduce the assigned readings each week having read the other students’ critical comments posted on OWL.
READING LIST

I: INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

January 11: Comparative Politics of the Global South: Do we Compare or do we Translate?

Rationale of the course.
Review and discussion of the course outline.
How to read in this course.


II. THE MIND OF THE COMPARATIVIST: COGNITIVE DIMENSIONS OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS

January 18: The Primacy of Perception/Experience and the Embodied Mind


January 25: Cognitive Ethnocentrism in Comparative Politics


### III. POLITICS AND THE WILL TO LIFE IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH.

#### February 1: The Will to Life in the Global South


#### February 8: Framing the will to life: Political Processes and Institutions in the Global South


#### February 15: From Modernization to Neoliberal Globalization: Instrumental Reasoning and the Will to Life


**February 22: Reading week**

**March 1: Neoliberalism, Democracy and the Will to Life: Tensions and Contradictions**


**March 8: Populism, Emotional Intelligence and the Will to Life**


**March 15: Politics, Religion and the Will to Life**


**IV. THE SEARCH FOR ALTERNATIVES: THREE EXAMPLES**

**March 22: Dependency Theory and Neostructuralism**


**March 29: Sumak Kawsay and the Philosophy of Buen Vivir**


**April 5: The Islamization of Development Knowledge**

