This course offers a graduate-level introduction to the major themes and approaches in comparative politics, as applied to the advanced industrial democracies. Among the points of emphasis: states and state formation; democratic change and its causes; civil society and social capital; the organization of social interests and the ways in which they relate to the structures of the state; state policy-making in the context of the changing character of contemporary capitalism; and, the responses of political parties to the altered late-twentieth and early twenty-first century economic, social, and political environment.

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 an introduction to some (but not necessarily all) of the week’s readings as well as an additional reading component (a couple of 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 (12-15 pages for Masters students, 18-20 pages for Doctoral students) on a subject related to the themes and empirical content of the seminar. *Grade: 40%.*

**COURSE READINGS:**

I. **Methodology**

*Introducing Comparative Analysis (September 18)*


**Recommended:**
Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers, “The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* vol. 22, no. 1 (1980).

**II. The Causes and Character of Political Development in Modern Europe**

**A. Liberal Accounts (September 25)**


**Recommended:**

**B. Marxist Accounts (October 2)**


**Recommended:**


**C. Institutionalist Accounts**

i.  *War, State Formation, and Democracy* (October 9)


**Recommended:**


ii.  *The Varieties and Implications of the New Institutionalism* (October 16)


**Recommended:**


D. Voluntaryist Accounts: “Transitions to Democracy” in Southern Europe in the 1970s
(October 23)

Guillermo O’Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative
Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins

James Kurth, “A Tale of Four Countries: Parallel Politics in Southern Europe, 1815-1990,” in
James Kurth and James Petras (eds.), Mediterranean Paradoxes: Politics and Social Structure in

Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern
Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe (Baltimore and London: The Johns

Recommended:
Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern
Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe (The Johns Hopkins University Press,
1996), chapters 1-5.
Terri Lynn Karl and Philippe C. Schmitter, “The Conceptual Travels of Transitologists and
Consolidologists: How Far to the East Should They Attempt to Go? Slavic Review vol. 53, no. 1
(Spring 1994).
Valerie Bunce, “Should Transitologists Be Grounded?” Slavic Review vol. 54, no. 1 (Spring
1995).
Terri Lynn Karl and Philippe C. Schmitter, “From an Iron Curtain to a Paper Curtain: Grounding
Transitologists or Students of Postcommunism?” Slavic Review vol. 54, no. 4 (Winter 1995).

E. New Approaches: Protracted Transitions, New Structuralism, and Beyond Structuralism
(October 30)

Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson, Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy

Carles Boix, Democracy and Redistribution (Cambridge University Press, 2003), Introduction,


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:
Thomas Ertman, “The Great Reform Act of 1832 and British Democratization.” Comparative
Political Studies vol. 43, nos. 8/9 (2010).
Stephen E. Hanson, “The Founding of the French Third Republic.” Comparative Political Studies
vol. 43, nos. 8/9 (2010).
Thomas Carothers, “The ‘Sequencing’ Fallacy.” Journal of Democracy vol. 18, no. 1 (January
2007).

### III. Institutions, Interests, Ideas, and Interactions

#### A. Debating Electoral System Development (November 6)


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

#### B. Bureaucracy and Corruption (November 13)


*Recommended:*
Simona Piattoni, ed., *Clientelism, Interests, and Democratic Representation: The European Experience in Historical and Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), remaining chapters.
C. Democratic Institutions in Transition (November 20)


Recommended:

D. Comparative Political Economy (November 27)


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


Recommended:
E. Political Parties (December 4)


Recommended:

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Academic Offences (Graduate Students)
Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site:
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf