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; the varied institutional character of modern democracies; the organization of social interests and the ways in which they relate to the structures of the state; and state policy-making in the context of the changing character of capitalism.

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 sense of the character of ‘western’ economic, social, and political development, among other things as a basis for comparison with other global regions.

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 (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 pages for Masters students, 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 15)*


**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 22)*


**Recommended:**


B. Marxist Accounts (September 29)


*Recommended:*


C. Institutionalist Accounts

i. War, State Formation, and Democracy (October 6)


*Recommended:*


ii. The Varieties and Implications of the New Institutionalism (October 13)


Recommended:

D. Voluntarist Accounts: “Transitions to Democracy” in Southern Europe and Beyond (October 20)


Recommended:

E. New Approaches: Rational Choice, New Structuralism, and the Historical Turn (November 3)


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:*

### III. Modern Democracies: Institutions, Interests, Ideas, and Interactions

#### A. *Debating Electoral System Change* (November 10)


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

*Recommended:*

#### B. *Bureaucracy and Clientelism* (November 17)


and Democratic Representation: The European Experience in Historical and Comparative Perspective (Cambridge University Press, 2001).


Recommended:
Simona Piattoni, ed., Clientelism, Interests, and Democratic Representation: The European Experience in Historical and Comparative Perspective (Cambridge University Press, 2001), remaining chapters.
Bo Rothstein, Quality of Government: Corruption, Social Trust, and Inequality in International Perspective (University of Chicago Press, 2011).

C. Changing Patterns of Democratic Institutions (November 24)


Recommended:

D. Approaches to Comparative Political Economy (December 1)


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

Recommended:

(Graduate) Statement of Academic Offences
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