

Georgia Institute of Technology  
Sam Nunn School of International Affairs

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**INTA 6202**  
**Graduate Seminar in Comparative Politics**  
**Spring 2012**  
**Wednesday 6:05-8:55 p.m.**  
**Habersham 136**

**Dr. Vicki Birchfield**  
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**Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 10:00 -11:00 a.m.**  
and by appointment

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*Without comparisons to make, the mind does not know how to proceed*  
--Alexis de Tocqueville

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“The proper study of politics requires systematic comparisons”

“Comparativists inherit their dream of theorizing about politics from the founders of social theory. Their intellectual forbears represent the pantheon of Western thought.”

“Comparativists want to understand the critical events of the day, a position that ensures that dreams of theory address the political world as it exists, not formal abstractions or utopias”

**Course Objectives:** The quotations listed above capture the essence of comparative political analysis and frame the content and structure of this seminar. The purpose of the course is to provide a general overview of the field of comparative politics. As an intellectual tradition, a subfield of political science, and general research strategy, comparative politics addresses the fundamental building blocks of political, economic and social life with a goal towards understanding and explaining the causes and consequences of the variation and diversity among different types of political systems. Some of the broad questions and themes that orient comparative analysis and will hopefully animate our class discussions are: what are the sources of political and social order and authority? What are the origins and functions of the modern state? What is the

structure and organization of the economy? How do the economy and polity interrelate and how does this relationship shape the state-society complex? What is the relationship between democracy and economic development? Why are some countries underdeveloped and what are the systemic ties between the core, the periphery and the semi-periphery (if such distinctions are valid)? How have imperialism and the biases of Western thought and social scientific theories shaped the development process and our interpretations of what human development means? And finally, what are the connections between the international system and domestic politics? In addition to acquiring knowledge of the various theories and methods that guide the comparative approach to many of these issues, the seminar aims to provide a framework within which contemporary political problems and national and global policy dilemmas may be analyzed. In this regard, the study of comparative politics should provide you with access to a powerful set of tools for critical thinking and analysis that may be applied across a wide-variety of professional and intellectual settings.

**Additional Learning Outcomes:** Acquiring general knowledge of the field of Comparative Politics as described above should enable students to exhibit a solid grasp of concepts, theories and methods that may be enlisted to understand and explain variation among countries as well as appreciate the complex interactions between domestic politics and international forces. As such the two following broad learning outcomes will be assessed independently of the other course grades during the semester.

- Learning Outcome 1: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the principal methods of comparative politics and be able to explain those methods in written and oral form
- Learning Outcome 2: Students will exhibit knowledge of the relationship between domestic and international politics

Specific goals of the course for which these outcomes will be evaluated include the capacity of students to:

- Review scholarly literature related to the economic and political development and the core institutions within the advanced capitalist democracies, emerging or transitional societies, and developing countries and apply analytical skills relevant to understanding and critiquing international affairs and political science research that has a comparative dimension;
- Identify specific methods and models in the comparative politics literature related their own research project, critically analyzing their strengths and weaknesses;
- Produce a paper in which they utilize comparative methods and theories to develop an original research puzzle, produce an appropriate research design, gather data and test their argument against the empirical evidence;
- Display critical sensitivity and knowledge of the processes of globalization in terms of its causes and consequences and its implications for convergence and divergence among countries and regions of the world.

**Assessment Instrument:** A four point scale will be implemented to measure student success in achieving these learning outcomes with a “4” indicating an excellent command of the concepts, theories and methods used in Comparative Politics and demonstrated analytical ability in understanding the interactions between domestic and international variables in both oral presentations and written work; “3” representing a solid grasp of the aforementioned facets of Comparative Politics; “2” confirming a satisfactory but somewhat rudimentary understanding of the material; and “1” revealing an incomplete understanding and unsatisfactory display of the requisite knowledge and skills described above.

**Course Requirements:** One of the most important requirements of the course is to come to class prepared to discuss and debate the assigned reading material. Each weekly meeting will consist of a brief introduction (sometimes a 30 to 45 minute mini-lecture) by the instructor followed by a presentation of the readings by one (or more) of the students not to exceed 45 minutes to one hour. Presentations should offer a detailed overview of the assigned material with elaborations of the key themes and central arguments of the work(s) under discussion. The presentation should also include a summary of the theory and methods employed by the author(s) as well as your evaluation of the contributions and/or limitations of the work. The student must prepare and distribute to each member of the seminar a three to five page summary/outline of the readings with a few specific questions, reflections, and criticisms that will help to stimulate class discussion. After a short break, the class will reconvene and open up the discussion to all members of the seminar who will be expected to comment thoughtfully and analytically on the substance of the readings.

**Written assignments:** Each student is required to submit a two to three page summary of the key points raised in the assigned readings. The objective is to help you to condense and synthesize complex material and serve as a refresher for the discussion period of the seminar. Additionally, two or three discussion questions should be included at the end of the summary. You should formulate these questions in a way that demonstrates your careful reading and comprehension of the material. For example, you may discover tensions or contradictions in a particular author’s work and/or you might play certain theoretical approaches off against another, inquire into the relevance of certain ideas for current policy debates, etc. In other words, your questions should be thought provoking and help to tease out the broader, underlying issues being addressed in the designated seminar.

**Each student is required to choose one of the following options:**

**Option 1:** Submit a critical review essay of the literature on a topic of your choice that falls broadly within one of the main themes of the course. The papers should be between 15 to 20 pages (double-spaced) in length and should include at least 15 to 20 relatively recent scholarly articles or 3 to 5 books. A combination of books and articles is also acceptable and in some cases advisable, depending on your topic. As a general rule, we

shall consider 7 or 8 articles to be equivalent to 1 book. As with standard literature reviews, your goal will be to summarize and synthesize the major arguments of each work you have read. You should include discussions of the research question and analytical strategy, the intellectual substance of the various works you select, its theoretical orientation and the methods employed in addressing its subject, etc. The second part of your essay should present an original, analytical critique of the readings in an overarching, general sense. In other words, your paper should be approached more or less as a “state of the literature or research area” project. Examples might address, but are certainly not restricted to the following types of questions: How coherent or disparate do you think the broad research you are examining is? What do you think is missing from the literature and the scholarly debates? What are the policy and theoretical implications of the works you have read? Is there one methodological approach or theoretical framework that you find most compelling? How do the works reviewed advance knowledge and/or guide policy and decision-making? What are the contributions of your reviewed works to the field of Comparative Politics and International Affairs more broadly?

The main scholarly journals in the field are: *Comparative Politics*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *American Political Science Review*, *World Politics*, and *International Studies Quarterly*. There are numerous other important journals that are regional or area specific such as *Comparative European Politics*, *African Studies*, or the *Latin American Research Review* as well as scholarly journals that target policy areas such as economic development, social policy or environmental politics, e.g. *Third World Quarterly*, *Global Social Policy*, *Environmental Politics*.

**Option 2:** Write an original research paper of 15 to 20 pages in which you formulate a testable research question, develop a logical/analytical framework and methodological strategy for providing an answer to the question or problem you identify and proceed to search for existing data, generate new data, locate useful secondary sources, etc. and then if possible present (at least tentative) evidence in support of your argument. If you choose this option, you may attempt to build on a project in the methods seminar or in any of your other classes that require an original research paper, but you must clear your topic with me and in collaboration with the other instructor. The research paper should also contain the following: statements explaining why your question is important, a literature review, construction of hypotheses and related research design, i.e. case study analysis, the comparative method, or statistical analysis. You may not be able to collect and test data but you should know where to locate or find such data and explain why these data are the most appropriate and significant for your research project. Finally, you will conclude by suggesting whether your research findings would support or invalidate your initial hypotheses. NOTE: You must engage specifically in some form of comparative analysis and the better formulated your research question or puzzle, the easier and more manageable your research process will be.

**NOTE:** By mid-term, please submit an outline of your proposed project. If you chose, option 1 please prepare the list of works you plan to review and write a paragraph or two that explains your interest in the particular topic or subject area you have chosen to read

about. Those choosing option 2 must prepare a rough draft of a research question and general statement about your methodological approach/research design as well as prepare an outline and an initial bibliography.

**Grade Distribution:**

<b>Class participation</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Summaries</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Seminar Leadership</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Written Assignment:</b>	<b>50%</b>

**Required Readings:**

**Available for purchase at the Engineer's bookstore:**

- 1) Ken Morrison (2006) *Marx, Weber, Durkheim: Formations of Modern Social Thought*
- 2) Mark I. Lichbach and Alan Zuckerman (2009) *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture and Structure*
- 3) Vicki L. Birchfield (2008) *Income Inequality in Capitalist Democracies: The interplay of Values and Institutions*
- 4) Lawrence E. Harrison and Samuel Huntington, eds. ((2000) *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*
- 5) Marc Rodwin (2011) *Conflicts of Interest and the Future of Medicine: The United States, France and Japan*
- 6) Peter Baldwin (2009) *The Narcissism of Minor Differences: How America and Europe Are Alike*

Also recommended (at least to be familiar with), but NOT required:

- Henry Brady and David Collier (2004) *Rethinking Social Inquiry*  
Peter Hall and David Soskice (2002) *Varieties of Capitalism*  
Daniel Zbiatt (2006) *Structuring the State*  
Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyne Huber Stephens and John D. Stephens (1992) *Capitalist Development and Democracy*  
Stephen Haggard (1990) *Pathways from the Periphery*  
Arend Lijphart (1999) *Patterns of Democracy*  
Robert Putnam (1993) *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*  
David Laitin (1986) *Hegemony and Culture: Politics and Religious Change Among the Yoruba*  
Inglehart, Ronald. (1997). *Modernization and Postmodernization*

Dominique Pelassy and Mattei Dogan. (1990). *How to Compare Nations*

**To be posted on T-square or obtained from JSTOR:**

Rod Hague, Martin Harrop, and Shaun Breslin (1998) "The Comparative Method" in *Political Science: A Comparative Introduction*

Atul Kohli et al. (1995) "The Role of Theory in Comparative Politics: A Symposium" in *World Politics*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (October)

Peter Gourevitch (1978) "The Second Image Reversed"

Markus Crepaz and Vicki Birchfield (1999) "Global Economics, Local Politics..."

Peter Hall (1997) "The Role of Interests, Institutions, and Ideas in the Contemporary Political Economy of Industrialized Nations"

David Rueda, (2005) "Insider-Outsider Politics in Industrialized Democracies: The Challenge to Social Democrats" in *American Political Science Review* 99:1 (February)

Barbara Geddes "The Great Transformation in the Study of Politics in the Developing World"

Immanuel Wallerstein (1979) "The rise and future demise of the world capitalist system: concepts for comparative analysis"

Mark M. Blyth. (1997) "Any More Bright ideas? The Ideational Turn of Comparative Political Economy" in *Comparative Politics* Vol. 29. No. 2 (January)

Patricia Goff (2000) "Invisible Borders: Economic Liberalization and National Identity" in *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 4

Gonic, Lev and Robert Rosh. (1988) "The Structural Constraints of the World Economy on National Political Development," *Comparative Political Studies*. (July), p. 171-199

Arat, Zehra (1988). "Democracy and Economic Development: Modernization Theory Revisited," *Comparative Politics*. (October), p. 21-36.

Burkhart, Ross and Michael Lewis-Beck. (1994). "Comparative Democracy: The Economic Development Thesis," *American Political Science Review*, 88: 903-910.

## **Class Schedule and Reading Assignments:**

### **Part I. The Foundations of Comparative Politics**

January 11: Introduction and Overview of the Course

January 18: Theories and Methods in Comparative Politics  
*Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture and Structure* (2009) Mark Irving Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman, eds. Preface and chapters 1-3

T-Square or JSTOR: Rod Hague, Martin Harrop, and Shaun Breslin (1998) "The Comparative Method" in *Political Science: A Comparative Introduction*

Arend Lijphart (1971) "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method"

Atul Kohli et al. (1995) "The Role of Theory in Comparative Politics: A Symposium" in *World Politics*, Vol. 48, No. 1

- January 25: Grand Theories, Political Economy and the Foundations of Modern Social Science
- Ken Morrison (1995) *Marx, Weber, Durkheim: Formations of Modern Social Thought*, Preface and Introduction and Karl Marx on historical materialism, ideology and capitalism, pp. 35-146.
- February 1: Grand Theories Continued  
Max Weber on Capitalism, Religion and Bureaucracy  
Morrison, pp.273-386
- T-Square: Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation”
- February 8: Durkheim on Social Order and Anomie  
Morrison, pp. 148-269

**Part II. Contemporary Comparative Research and Analysis: The Role of Interests, Ideas and Institutions**

- February 15: Research Traditions and Theory Development  
*Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture and Structure* (2009)  
Mark Irving Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman, eds., pp. 72-161
- February 22: Comparative Political Economy and the Role of the State  
*Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture and Structure* (2009)  
Mark Irving Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman, eds., pp. 162-259

**Research Assignment Proposals Due**

- February 29: Institutions, Culture and Societal Outcomes  
Vicki L. Birchfield (2008) *Income Inequality in Capitalist Democracies: The interplay of Values and Institutions*  
Introduction and Chapters 1-3  
\* For related research and optional readings, see listings under the last day of class

March 7: Birchfield continued, Chapters 4, 5 and Conclusion

### **Part III. The Role of Culture in Economic and Political Development**

- March 14: Dilemmas of Development  
T-Square, Barbara Geddes “The Great Transformation in the Study of Politics in the Developing World”  
*Culture Matters*, Parts I & II pp. 1-112  
**Optional:** Immanuel Wallerstein (1979) “The rise and future demise of the world capitalist system: concepts for comparative analysis”  
Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens, (1992) preface through page 78  
Keating Loughlin and Deschouwer (2003) *Culture, Institutions, and Development: A Study of Eight European Regions*
- March 21: **No Class/Spring Break**
- March 28: Economic and Political Development and Cultural Change  
*Culture Matters* Parts VI & VII (and Glazer’s chapter in Part V) and  
*Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture and Structure* (2009) Mark Irving Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman, Chandra’s chapter on “ethnicity” pp.,376-411.

### **Part IV. The International-National Connection and Policy Outcomes: Exploring the Nexus of Domestic Politics and State-Market Relations in Comparative and Global Perspective**

- April 4: Healthcare Policy and Medicine in The United States, France and Japan  
Marc Rodwin (2011) *Conflicts of Interest and the Future of Medicine: The United States, France and Japan*, pp. 1-160
- April 11: *Conflicts of Interest* and welfare institutions continued, pp. 161-250 and  
*Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture and Structure* (2009) Mark Irving Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman, Isabela Mares chapter on the welfare state, pp. 358-375



Optional: Simon Hix, "The Study of the European Community: The Challenge to Comparative Politics, *West European Politics* (1994) and his rejoinder to Hurrell and Menon, (vol. 19, no. 2, p. 386 April 1996) "CP, IR and the EU" in *West European Politics*, October 1996

Markus Crepaz and Vicki Birchfield (1999) "Global Economics, Local Politics..."

Linda Weiss, ed. *States in the Global Economy: Bringing Domestic Institutions Back In* pp. 1-120.

Peter Gourevitch (1978) "The Second Image Reversed"

Patricia Goff (2000) "Invisible Borders: Economic Liberalization and National Identity" in *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 4

(December) or parts of her book (2006) *Limits To Liberalization*

April 18: Competing Models of Society: Social Europe vs. Liberal America ?  
Peter Baldwin (2009) *The Narcissism of Minor Differences: How America and Europe Are Alike*, Introduction and Chapters 1-8

April 25: **Last Day of Class**  
Baldwin continued, Chapters 9- 17

Optional: Jonas Pontusson (2005) *Inequality and Prosperity*

Hall and Soskice, eds. (2001) *Varieties of Capitalism*;

Lane Kenworthy ( 2005) *Egalitarian Capitalism*

**Final Papers Due by May 2 at 5 p.m.**