Political Science 856: Field Seminar in Comparative Politics
University of Wisconsin-Madison, Fall 2016
Tuesdays, 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m., 422 North Hall (Ogg Room)

Yoshiko M. Herrera
Professor, Dept. of Political Science
University of Wisconsin-Madison
316 North Hall
Office hours: Wed. 1:30-3:00 p.m. (or by appt.)
yherrera@wisc.edu

Course Purposes

This seminar is designed to serve five goals:

(1) To acquaint students with many of the leading theories within the field of comparative politics. Students will be made aware of the relevant literatures so that they will be able to connect their own research to broad disciplinary concerns. The weekly topics primarily center on dependent variables, and the readings are oriented toward leading theories (or proposed independent variables) that account for inter-polity or inter-temporal variations on the values of those dependent variables. However, in some cases readings focus on definitions of key concepts.

(2) To provide examples of how best to prepare work for future submission to journals and top university publishers. Papers from the leading journals in the field and books from top publishers are included in the syllabus. Students should also peruse these journals, section newsletters, and publisher lists on a regular basis, not only to keep up with trends in the field, but also to learn the styles and forms of contributions to comparative politics. This is the best way to learn about what Comparative Politics "is" and what the key debates in the subfield are.

(3) To introduce and make students aware of the implications of research strategies. The seminar will emphasize the point that methodologies in the discipline are diverse, and that these methods, once chosen, have considerable import for both topic choice and the range of findings.

(4) To develop among students critical reading, writing, collaboration, and presentation skills. Students will be asked to explain core concepts from the readings to the class, and will collaboratively work on short memos and presentations based on the readings. In addition, students will write an integrated paper connecting readings with their own research interests.

(5) To substantively introduce students to UW-Madison faculty in comparative politics. For more than half of the weeks, a guest faculty member will join the class discussion.

Course Requirement Summary:

1. Reading, preparation, and participation in class
   (7.5% x 4 grades throughout semester): 30%
2. Group memo and presentation (5 times, 7% each): 35%
3. Final Project: 35%

100%
## Summary of Class Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Guest Faculty</th>
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<tr>
<td>6-Sep</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-Sep</td>
<td>Regime Types: Definitions</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-Sep</td>
<td>Regime Types: Explanations of Trajectories</td>
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<tr>
<td>27-Sep</td>
<td>The State and Civil Society</td>
<td>Michael Schatzberg</td>
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<td>4-Oct</td>
<td>Contentious Politics</td>
<td>Erica Simmons</td>
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<td>11-Oct</td>
<td>Institutions and Institutional Change</td>
<td>Nils Ringe</td>
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<td>18-Oct</td>
<td>Parties, Voters, and Elections</td>
<td>Eleanor Powell</td>
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<td>25-Oct</td>
<td>Law, Courts, and Judicial Politics</td>
<td>Kathryn Hendley</td>
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<td>1-Nov</td>
<td>Ethnicity and Nationalism</td>
<td>Nadav Shelef</td>
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<td>8-Nov</td>
<td>Social Identities, Culture, and Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>15-Nov</td>
<td>Violence and Ethnic Conflict</td>
<td>Scott Straus</td>
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<tr>
<td>22-Nov</td>
<td>No class (Tues before Thanksgiving)</td>
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<tr>
<td>29-Nov</td>
<td>Political Economy of Developed Democracies</td>
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<td>6-Dec</td>
<td>Development and Inequality</td>
<td>Rikhil Bhavnani</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-Dec</td>
<td>Economic Reform and Transition</td>
<td>Scott Gehlbach</td>
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Note: Aili Tripp is on leave in 2016-17.

**Readings:**
All readings are available as ebooks in the library or in a dropbox folder here:
https://www.dropbox.com/sh/omgt5kelwyd868b/AAB1PdBG5VRx0mZmYmyCHUVla?dl=0
Class Schedule

Week 1, Sept. 6
Introduction to course: No assigned reading.

Week 2, Sept. 13
Regime Types: Definition and Measurement


Week 3, Sept. 20
Regime Types: Explanations of Trajectories

Week 4, Sept. 27

The State and Civil Society


Week 5, Oct. 4

Contentious Politics

Week 6, Oct. 11

Institutions and Institutional Change


Week 7, Oct. 18

Parties, Voters, and Elections

Week 8, Oct. 25

**Law, Courts, and Judicial Politics**


Week 9, Nov. 1

**Ethnicity and Nationalism**

- Marquardt, Kyle L. and Yoshiko M. Herrera. 2015. "Ethnicity as a Variable: An Assessment of Measures and Data Sets of Ethnicity and Related Identities," *Social Science Quarterly* 96:3 (September), 689-716.
Week 10, Nov. 8

**Social Identities, Culture, and Gender**


Week 11, Friday Nov. 15

**Violence and Ethnic Conflict**


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**November 22nd, Thanksgiving week, NO CLASS**
Week 12, Nov. 29

**Political Economy of Developed Democracies**


Week 13, Dec. 6

**Development and Inequality**

Week 14, Dec. 13

Economic Reform and Transition


Final Project due Wed, Dec. 14th, 12:00 pm.
Disability Accommodations:
People with disabilities will be fully included in this course. Please inform me if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments of this course to enable you to participate fully. Confidentiality of the shared information will be strictly maintained. Certain accommodations may require the assistance of the McBurney Disability Office on campus. The McBurney Disability Resource Center can be reached at (608) 263-2741 or via email at mcburney@odos.wisc.edu.

Absence, Make-up and Final Grade Policy
1. Absences will be excused due to religious conflicts, medical issues, or university-related business. Contact me as soon as possible if you anticipate missing class.
2. Make-up policy for excused absences: Missed classes can be made up by writing a response paper on the readings. The response paper should be three single-spaced pages and discuss the readings, and is due one week after the missed class.
3. Policy for missing more than 3 classes: If make-up assignments are completed, missing more than 3 classes will result in a one-half reduction of the final grade. If they are not completed, it will be a full grade reduction of the final grade. In addition, un-made up assignments will receive an F.
4. Failure in any of the three course components on the first page will result in failure in the course overall.

1) Reading, Preparation, and Participation:
• This is a discussion-based class and active participation is essential. Mere attendance is not full participation. Active participation means being prepared by doing the reading and thinking about the material so that you can ask and answer questions related to the course material. All students are expected to do all readings for each class and to bring the readings to class in order to aid in discussion.
• I will call on a few students during each class meeting; you should be prepared to answer questions about each of the assigned readings.
• Students are expected to attend for the full class period; arriving late or leaving the room during class will result in a lowered participation grade.
• It is fine to use a tablet or laptop in class to take notes, but doing other work or online activity unrelated to the course during class will result in a lowered participation grade.
• Participation grades will be given 4 times during the semester, taking into account the previous 3-4 weeks of participation. The grading scheme for reading and discussion participation is:
  A = Attended and actively participated, seemed in command of readings and material; able to explain concepts to the class.
  B = Attended and spoke, demonstrating adequate engagement with the readings, but infrequently or without full understanding of the course material.
  C = Attended but did not speak, did not show evidence of having done the readings, was engaged in non-course-related activities online, arrived late, or left during class.
  F = Did not attend.
2) Group Memos and Presentations:

- To start off our discussions, each week students will work in groups of 2 or 3 to prepare a short memo and a 10-15 minute oral presentation based on the readings.
- The goal is to highlight interesting aspects of the readings and to provide points for further discussion. Presentations should be modeled on the role of a discussant at a professional conference. Through this activity, students will improve their presentation skills and the ability to concisely analyze, categorize, and write about political science literature.
- Group presentation dates will be set at the first class meeting. Each student will participate in five, from at least three different broader themes (e.g. political economy, institutions, identity, conflict).

Memos should:
- Be in bullet point format, no longer than 2 single-spaced pages (12-point font, 1-inch margins);
- Sort readings into types or categories (this is an important conceptual task);
- Highlight key arguments;
- Make connections among the readings;
- Include three discussion questions at the end;
- Be posted in the class dropbox as a PDF by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the seminar (Tuesday).

Presentations:
- Should be about 10 minutes, and must include all assigned readings;
- Students should work together to develop an integrated presentation; do not just divide up the reading. The division of the presentation should be based on substantive themes or theories, rather than different works;
- Should not include slides, unless there is a figure that needs to be shown;
- Presenters should engage with the class and not simply read notes.

Grading criteria (includes memo and presentation):

A = Meets AB criteria, and memo, presentation and questions were well-integrated, and presentation delivery was engaging (eye contact, speaks rather than reads, etc.).

AB = Memo contained original or innovative analysis of readings, included connections between readings, and provided insightful discussion questions.

B = Made connections between readings, going beyond just description of main arguments, provided insightful discussion questions, but possibly with some minor errors in memo or presentation.

C = Memo posted on time, discussed and captured the main arguments of all readings, and provided discussion questions, although possibly with some significant errors in memo or presentation.

D = Egregiously inaccurate or incomplete discussion of readings (did not include all readings) or did not provide discussion questions.

F = Did not attend or participate in presentation or memo-writing.
3) Final Project:
The final project will be a paper of no more than 2500 words (approximately 4-5 single-spaced pages), not including citations or tables/figures (if any). The goal of this paper is to draw connections between readings in the course and your research goals, which hopefully will help you develop your dissertation research question and embed your dissertation in existing literature. You should be considering your own research interests as well as sources for this project throughout the semester. The paper should have 2 sections:

- A discussion of your own research interests (500 words).
- A discussion of two topics from the course that are related to your research interests (approximately 1000 words each).

For each of these topics you should focus on readings from the course syllabus. You may go beyond the chapters that were assigned for books on the syllabus, and you also do not have to discuss all of the readings from a given week, but the expectation is nuanced engagement with the readings, and an integrated link between topics as well as with your research interests.

Project requirements:

1. Title: Give your project a title that describes your research topic. When people ask you "what are you interested in?" or "what do you work on?" this should be your answer.

2. Define your field of interest in approximately 500 words. This should describe what you plan to study. Do not just summarize a literature. Say explicitly what you plan to work on within a literature (or literatures), so that the topics in the second part follow from the description of your interests.

3. Choose at least two theoretical topics (from the 13 substantive course meetings) that are related to your research interests. For each topic, in approximately 1000 words, you should discuss the key questions that the literature on that topic addresses, including sources listed on the syllabus, and how they connects to your research interests.
   - In discussing specific sources, you should not just summarize main arguments, but explain why is it important and what it adds that other readings don’t. For example:
     - "This book is a foundational work on state formation, which is well cited in the literature. I disagree with the argument for reasons X, Y, and Z, but think it provides a useful foil for my argument."
     - "This article links civil society and violence, focusing on decentralization, and is the only one to put those three variables together, and hence is innovative."
     - "This book looks at national identity in Latin America, and I’m interested in Africa, but I thought I could learn from the Latin American experience."
     - "This article has a data set on political violence, which is unique. I want to compare it with some other case studies."

4. Other important requirements:
   - The final project is due as a PDF posted to Learn@UW on Wed, Dec. 14th, 12:00 pm.
   - 12-point font, single-spaced, 1-inch margins, include page numbers.
   - Cite all your sources fully and properly.
   - Title your file that you upload with your last name, e.g. "SmithPS856.pdf".