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.

(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, will write short memos on the readings, and will collaboratively work on presentations. 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 30%
2. Weekly memos and discussion questions 35%
3. Group presentations (4 times) 10%
4. Final Paper 25%

100%

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.

Readings:
Most readings are available online via the library; book chapters that are not available online will be posted in a shared folder.
### Summary of Class Schedule

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<td>26-Sep</td>
<td>The State and Civil Society</td>
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Note: Nils Ringe is on leave in 2017-18.
Class Schedule

**Week 1, Sept. 12**

**Introduction to course:** No assigned reading.

**Week 2, Sept. 19**

**Regime Types: Definitions and Trajectories**


**Week 3, Sept. 26**

**The State and Civil Society**

Week 4, Oct. 3

**Contentious Politics**


Week 5, Oct. 10

**Social Identities, Culture, and Gender**

Week 6, Oct. 17

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 7, Oct. 24

Violence

Week 8, Oct. 31

Institutions and Institutional Change


Week 9, Nov. 7

Parties, Voters, and Elections

Week 10, Friday Nov. 14

Law, Courts, and Judicial Politics


November 21st, Thanksgiving week, NO CLASS

Week 11, Nov. 28

Legislatures and Governance


• Bhavnani, Rikhil R. and Alexander Lee. 2017. " Local Embeddedness and Bureaucratic Performance: Evidence from India." Forthcoming in *Journal of Politics*

Week 12, Dec. 5

**Development and Growth**


Week 13, Dec. 12

**Other Economic Outcomes: Redistribution, Inequality, Investment, and Corruption**


| Final Project due Friday, Dec. 15th, 10:00 am | 8 |
Course Assignments

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 all of the readings for each class and thinking about the material so that you can ask and answer questions related to the course material. Students 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 and access readings, but doing other computer activity unrelated to the course during class will result in a lowered participation grade.

Grading criteria (graded three times per semester):
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) Memos and Discussion Questions
Each week, each student will prepare a short memo based on the readings. The goals are to figure out what the contribution of each reading is, to categorize the readings, to make connections between readings, and to provide questions for further class discussion.

All memos should:
1. Sort readings into types or categories (this is an important conceptual task) using a set of subheadings, and should briefly explain the categorization in the discussion of texts.
2. Highlight key contributions of each work; this should not be merely a restatement of the abstract.
3. Make connections among the readings; do not just discuss each text individually; explain how readings are related to each other.
4. Discuss all readings for the week; be written in prose (not bullet points); have a name, date, title and subheadings; and be no longer than 2 single-spaced pages (12-point font, 1-inch margins);
5. Be posted on the class website as a PDF by 10:00 am on Tuesday.

Discussion questions:
• Must be relevant to the course readings
• One question should be a broad question for discussion; something that would be of interest to the class and that connects to more than one of the readings
• The second question can be either broad as above, or might be a more narrow question focused on one or a couple of readings.
• Questions should be posted to the course website by 10:00 am on Tuesday.
Grading criteria for memos and discussion questions (one grade per week):

**Plus**  Memo contained original or innovative analysis of readings; categorization was reasonable, key contributions were accurately identified, discussion of readings was integrated, discussion questions were aimed at key topics for group discussion and well-connected to the content of the readings; no typos or errors.

**Check**  Categorization was reasonable, most of the key contributions were accurately identified, some of the discussion of readings was integrated, discussion questions were based on the readings; few typos or errors.

**Minus**  Categorization was not explained or did not make sense; discussion was mostly description of main arguments from abstracts and/or not integrated, discussion questions were both narrow or irrelevant; numerous errors.

Note on lateness: if a memo or questions are up to 60 minutes late, it will be marked down one grade. If it is more than 1 hour late, it will be marked down 2 grades. If it is not turned in before class it will not get credit.

3) Presentations:

- 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 orally discuss work in comparative politics.
- Students should work together to develop an integrated presentation; do not just divide up the reading. The structure of the presentation should be based on substantive themes or theories, rather than just dividing works arbitrarily;
- Presentations must include all assigned readings; should not be longer than 10 minutes; and should include slides (but no more than 5 maximum).
- Presentations should take into account the discussion questions posted by other students.
- Presenters should engage with the class and not simply read notes.
- Group presentation dates will be set at the first class meeting. Each student will participate in four (with another student), from at least three different broader themes (e.g. political economy, institutions, identity, conflict).

Grading criteria for presentations:

**Plus**  Presentation was well-organized; analysis was innovative; key points and questions for discussion were clear; delivery was engaging (made eye contact, did not read from notes or written text, clear and loud enough voice, etc.); stayed within 10 minutes.

**Check**  Organization of the presentation was somewhat clear; key contributions from readings were identified, delivery was satisfactory, stayed within time limit.

**Minus**  Unclear structure; delineation of readings based on arbitrary boundaries; some key contributions or some readings left out; delivery was not engaging or problematic (too long, too much reading, not enough eye-contact, etc.); went over the time limit.
3) Final Paper:
The final paper 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).

The expectation is nuanced engagement with the course readings, and an integrated link between your research interests and topics in the course.

Paper 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 connect to your research interests.
   - Develop subheadings for the discussion of the two or more theoretical topics; they need not be the same as on the syllabus, but should be descriptive.
   - 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:
     o "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."
     o "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.”
     o "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."
     o "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:
   - Your discussion of topics should be based on readings on the syllabus, but you may go beyond the chapters that were assigned for books on the syllabus.
   - You do not have to discuss all readings from a particular week on the syllabus, and you can choose readings from different weeks.
   - Include your name, date, and title and subheadings as described above, and cite all your sources fully and properly.
   - 12-point font, single-spaced, 1-inch margins, include page numbers.
   - Title your file that you upload with your last name, e.g. “MandelaPS856.pdf”.
   - The final project is due as a PDF posted to the class website on Friday, Dec. 15th, 10:00 am.
Grading criteria for final papers:

A  Title and subheadings are sensible; discussion of field of interest makes the potential research contribution clear; discussion of the topics and readings from the course is innovative as well as accurate in making connections between the readings and your field of interest; proper citation of sources; no typos or errors; within the word limit.

B  Title and subheadings are included; discussion of field of interest identifies a topic; discussion of the readings from the course is adequately connected to the field of interest; proper citation of sources; few typos or errors; within the word limit.

C  One or more of the following problems: Title and subheadings are missing or not clear; discussion of field of interest in muddled; readings from course are not sufficiently included and/or connections between the readings and your field of interest is not clear; improper citation of sources; typos or errors; paper goes beyond the word limit.

Note on lateness: if a paper is between 1 minute and 4 hours late, the paper will be marked down one grade. If it is between 4 and 24 hours late, it will be marked down 2 grades. If it is not turned in 24 hours after the deadline, it will not be accepted.

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 or have missed class.

2. Make-up policy for excused absences: Missed classes can be made up by writing a response paper that addresses student discussion questions (in addition to the normal memo). The response paper should be two single-spaced pages and discuss the readings in response to discussion questions. It is due one week after the missed class or end date of the excused absence. If missed classes are not made up on time, they will not be accepted.

3. Policy for missing more than 3 classes: If make-up assignments are completed, missing more than 3 classes will still 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.

4. Failure in any of the four course components on the first page will result in failure in the course overall.