I. Course Purposes

This seminar is designed to serve four goals:

1. To acquaint students with many of the leading theories within the field of comparative politics. This course will cover six themes in the Comparative Politics subfield as defined at UW Madison: State and Society; Social Identities and Culture; Contentious Politics and Violence; Regime Types and Transitions; Political Institutions; and Political Economy. Students will be made aware of the relevant literatures so that they will be able to connect their own research work 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 and presentation skills. Students will be asked to explain core concepts from the readings to the class, and will collaboratively work on short presentations based on the readings. In addition, students will be asked to develop their own annotated list of readings in connection with their own research interests.

II. Course Requirements:

Preparation and participation in class discussions: 20%
In-class explanation of concepts (5 times, 5%) 25%
Discussion leader (2 times, 10%) 20%
Final Project 35%
Total 100%
(1) Preparation and participation in class discussions:

a. **Reading:** This syllabus should be considered as a compass for navigating the field, and hence there is a lot of reading. Supplementary readings (which are not required) will be available in a separate document. These readings, which are sometimes further divided into sub-topics, are a resource for students who want to follow up on a topic in later work, including the prelim exams. They may also be used as the basis for the final project.
   i. All readings will be available on Dropbox or as e-books downloadable in the library. The Dropbox link is:
      https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ya2xib2l0pcq1q1/pFqG2GzxOi
   ii. Read in order that material appears on the syllabus.

b. **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 in class.
   • Absences will only be excused due to religious conflicts or medical issues; contact me as soon as possible, should a medical issue or religious conflict arise.
   • 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 for the day.
   • It is acceptable to use a laptop in class to take notes, but engaging in other work or online activity unrelated to the course during class will result in a lowered participation grade for the day.
   • The grading scheme for discussion participation is:
     A = Attended and actively participated (e.g. raised hand, and seemed in command of readings and material)
     B = Attended and spoke, but without evidence of preparation
     C = Attended for the full period but did not speak
     F = Did not attend
     Note that there is no "D" reflecting the large gap between attending and not attending. Also, there are no A/B or B/C grades, but those liminal grades will appear in the final course grades.

(2) In-class explanation of concepts:
There are no traditional lectures in this course; instead each week I will randomly choose five students and ask each of them to explain a concept from the week's readings. Student explanations should be based on mastery of the required reading and will be graded according to the following criteria:
   A = Outstanding explanation of concept, going beyond just description of text and offering original analysis.
   B = Good explanation of concept, demonstrating adequate engagement with the text.
   C = Minimally able to explain or describe concept, but only in the broadest terms.
   D = Unable to explain concept with any accuracy, suggesting a lack of familiarity with the reading.
   F = Did not attend
(3) **Discussion leader:**
Each week students will work in groups of 2 to prepare a 10-15 minute presentation based on the readings. The presentation should be modeled on the role of a discussant at a professional conference. Some guidelines:

- **The goal is to highlight interesting aspects of the readings and to provide points for further discussion**
- **Presentations must include all readings and should not veer too far into reading that was not assigned (just as a discussant on a panel should primarily discuss the papers on the panel rather than other work, although other relevant work might be cited)**
- **Students should work together to develop an integrated presentation; do not just divide up the reading. Both students should be able to discuss all readings, and the division of the presentation should be based on substantive themes or theories, rather than different works.**
- **Four discussion questions should be posted to Learn@UW by 12:00 pm on the day before the seminar (Monday).**
- **Presentations should not include slides, unless there is a figure that needs to be shown.**
- **Presentations will not be allowed to go past 15 minutes.**
- **Discussion leader dates will be set at the first class meeting. Students should choose weeks from at least two different themes (out of six).**
- **Grading criteria:**
  - A = Outstanding analysis of readings, including original or innovative insights, in a well-integrated presentation and set of discussion questions
  - B = Made connections between readings, going beyond just description of main arguments, and provided insightful discussion questions
  - C = Accurately captured the main arguments or critical points in all of the readings and provided relevant discussion questions
  - D = Egregiously inaccurate or incomplete discussion of readings (did not include all readings) or did not provide discussion questions
  - F = Did not attend

(4) **Final project:** The final project will be to develop an annotated bibliography on a topic of your choice related to comparative politics. This could eventually be your "focus field" or ideally, your chosen area of dissertation research. This project will include a title, a descriptive paragraph, 3-5 subheadings, and an annotated list of 20 sources. The main point is to draw connections between readings in the course and your research goals. You should be considering sources for this project throughout the semester.

**Project requirements:**

a. 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.
b. Define a field of interest to you in a paragraph of approximately 200 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 rest of the subheadings and sources follow from that (see discussion of those below).
   i. For example, let's say you're interested in "the relationship between nationalism and xenophobia in Russia." Don't just describe the nationalism or xenophobia literatures; say what you plan to do. E.g. say something like, "the post-Soviet nationalism literature focuses mainly on explaining nationalist movements among non-Russian groups, but I am interested in what it has to say, if anything, about xenophobia among ethnic Russians. I plan to consider the literature on violence, and the literature on identity (in particular class and ethnic identity) in comparison with the
nationalism literature.” Then your subheadings would be something like: nationalism; political violence, specifically violence against individuals; class; and ethnic identity.

c. Compile a list of 3-5 subheadings. These subheadings should be of use to your project and reflect aspects of your field of interest, not just the headings found on the syllabus.
   i. They should neither be too broad nor too narrow.
   ii. They should reflect the sources that follow.
      • You are free to innovate and connect things from different areas, but if it is not obvious how a source is related to a sub-heading topic, then make that clear in your description of the sources.

d. Compile a list of 20 sources that you plan to use in your future research and describe why each is important.
   i. Each source description should be only 50-150 words.
   ii. For each source you should make a specific argument for why the work is included on your list, e.g. why is it important, what does it add that other readings don’t, etc. Do not just summarize the argument of the work. Here are examples:
      • "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 book includes gender, and is the only one on this topic to do so, but it leaves out class, so I want to build on it."
      • "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."

e. Other important requirements:
   i. The final project is due as a .pdf posted to Learn@UW on Wed., December 12th, 10:00 am.
   ii. Cite all your sources fully and properly.
   iii. For each annotation and the descriptive paragraph, list the number of words in parentheses at the end.
   iv. There needs to be significant content in your sources from the course; at least 5 of your sources must come from the syllabus, 10 must come from the syllabus or the supplemental reading list, with the remaining 5 from either the syllabus, supplemental reading list, or comparative politics more generally. Put a star “*” next to any sources not from the syllabus or supplemental reading list.
   v. You should sign up for my office hours to discuss your final project topic.
## Class Schedule

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<td>Political Economy of Developed Democracies: Varieties of Capitalism and Worlds of Welfare</td>
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<td>Economic Reform and Transition</td>
<td>Scott Gehlbach</td>
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**Class Schedule**

**Week 1, Sept. 4**

**Introduction to Comparative Politics:**

No assigned reading. Discussion of six themes in the Comparative Politics subfield:

- State and Society
- Social Identities and Culture
- Contentious Politics and Violence
- Regime Types and Transitions
- Political Institutions
- Political Economy
State and Society

Week 2, Sept. 11
The State: Modern States, Strong States, Weak States, Divided States, Collapsed States


Week 3, Sept. 18
Civil Society

Social Identities and Culture

Week 4, Sept. 25

Social Identities, Culture and Gender


Week 5, Oct. 2

Ethnicity, the Nation and Nationalism

Regime Types and Transitions

Week 6, Oct. 9
Regime Types: Democracy and Authoritarianism


• Review websites of Freedom House and Polity to see how they measure democracy:

Week 7, Oct. 16
Foundations of Democracy and Dictatorship

Week 8, Oct. 23

Institutions and Institutional Change


Week 9, Oct. 30

Law, Courts, and Judicial politics

Week 10, Nov. 6

Parties, Voters and Electoral Alignments


Contentious Politics and Violence

Week 11, Friday Nov. 9, 12:00-2:00 pm, 574 Van Hise

Collective Action, Social Movements and Contentious Politics

Week 12, Nov. 20

Violence and Ethnic Conflict


Political Economy

Week 13, Nov. 27

Political Economy of Developed Democracies: Varieties of Capitalism and Worlds of Welfare

Week 14, Dec. 4
Development and Inequality


Week 15, Dec. 11
Economic Reform and Transition