

GOVT 6053
Comparative Methods in International and Comparative Politics
Spring 2012

Class Time

Wednesday
2:00 – 4:25
Stimson Hall 119

Office Hours

Monday
1:00 – 3:00 (or by appt.)
White Hall 322
(Sign up at <http://goo.gl/MUtmw>)

Overview

This seminar introduces PhD students to the study of politics through the procedures of science. It will familiarize students with methodological challenges encountered in research, such as concept formation, theory development and testing, case selection, variable operationalization and measurement, and descriptive and causal inference. Students will learn to assess research designs and causal claims as both consumers and producers of research. We will not learn how to carry out particular research methodologies (how to go to the field, how to read history, how to estimate an IV regression), but rather how to craft research that makes the best use of these methodologies.

The seminar focuses on contemporary debates in political methodology and their implications for research on comparative and international politics. The list of topics should not be considered exhaustive. In our discussions, we will consider what a comparative methods syllabus from twenty years ago would have looked like, and ask what a comparative methods syllabus twenty years in the future might look like.

Course Goals

The course has two primary goals. First, the material covered in this course, along with material from Government 6353, prepares PhD students to take the comparative politics A exam. Second, the course will prepare students to conduct original research for their A paper and dissertation. Students, therefore, will apply concepts and techniques to their own research questions as the semester progresses.

Requirements

Prerequisites: There are no formal prerequisites, but enrollment is at the instructor's discretion, and priority will be given to PhD students in the Government department. The maximum enrollment will be 15.

Assignments and Grading: You are required to attend all class meetings, to come to seminar having read and thought about the assigned material for the week, and to participate actively in class discussions. Class participation will compose 30% of the final grade.

The remainder of your course grade is comprised of several written exercises

1. *Peer review* (10% of the final grade). All students must write a “peer review” of the research design and causal claims in one paper presented this academic year in the PSAC workshop, which students are strongly encouraged to regularly attend. Your review is due by April 28th, but may be completed at any time during the semester. The PSAC schedule is available at: <http://government.arts.cornell.edu/departement/related/psac/calendar/>
2. *Research design* (40% of the final grade). Complete all five research design assignments described below, and be prepared to discuss these ideas in class. All assignments are due Sundays at 7:00 PM to pepinsky@cornell.edu, on the following dates.

Assignment 1: February 5

Assignment 2: February 19

Assignment 3: March 11

Assignment 4: April 1

Assignment 5: April 22

3. *Final presentation* (20% of the final grade). Present to the class a 15 minute summary of your research question, theory and observable implications, case selection, and research strategy.

Finally, students are expected to give one another regular feedback on their written work. Before the second assignment is due, the class will be divided into small research support groups. You should read the written assignments of the other members of your group as you receive them and e-mail constructive comments to them. Alternatively, groups can choose to meet weekly to discuss ideas.

Course Policies

Cheating and Plagiarism: Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student’s own work. Cheating and plagiarism will be treated according to Cornell University regulations, which I will strictly observe. The penalty for violating the Code of Academic Integrity (<http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html>) is an F for the assignment. Students may consult <http://digitalliteracy.cornell.edu/tutorial/dp13320.html> for more information, and should visit <http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/index.cfm> for a tutorial on plagiarism. For further information on how to cite materials properly, please consult Joseph Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (New York: MLA).

University Policies: I respect and uphold Cornell University policies and regulations pertaining to the observation of religious holidays; assistance available to the physically handicapped, visually and or/hearing impaired student; sexual harassment; and racial or ethnic discrimination.

Students with Disabilities: In compliance with the Cornell University policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for student with disabilities. Students are encouraged to register with Student Disability Services to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations. Students seeking accommodations should submit to me an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services within the first two weeks of the semester.

- *Religious Observances:* Students may ask for reasonable and timely accommodations for sincerely held religious beliefs. Please review the syllabus closely to determine if your religion will present any scheduling conflicts with any of the assignments. You must inform me of any conflicts within the first two weeks of the semester.
- *Classroom Behavior:* Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students will treat one another with respect and courtesy. I will ask disruptive students to leave the class.

I will not grant incompletes in this class, except as a consequence of extraordinary personal circumstances.

Texts

Our readings will come from four books (available for purchase at the Cornell Bookstore) and a series of articles and book chapters (all of which are available as PDF files or external links at the Blackboard course website: <http://blackboard.cornell.edu>).

BOOKS:

1. King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press (ISBN 0691034710). “KKV”
2. Geddes, Barbara. 2003. *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press (ISBN 0472068350). “Geddes”
3. Brady, Henry E., and David Collier, eds. 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. 2nd edition. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. (ISBN 1442203447). “B&C”
4. Morgan, Stephen L., and Christopher Winship. 2007. *Counterfactuals and Causal Inference: Methods and Principles for Social Research*. New York: Cambridge University Press. (ISBN 0521671934). “M&W”

ALL OTHER READINGS: All other readings are book chapters and articles, which I have placed on Blackboard (course ID: govt6053-Pepinsky-Spring2012). You can access them all by

clicking the “Readings” tab from our course homepage. You may read these articles and chapters online, or you may print them out. Please read the selections in the order that they are presented below.

Course Schedule

January 25: Introduction

- Keohane, Robert O. 2009. “Political Science as a Vocation.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 42, 2: 359-363.
- Laitin, David D. 2002. “Comparative Politics: The State of the Subdiscipline.” In *Political Science: State of the Discipline*, eds. Ira Katznelson and Helen Milner. New York: Norton. pp. 630-659.
- Monroe, Kristin Renwick. 2007. “The Perestroika Movement, its Methodological Concerns, and the Professional Implications of These Methodological Issues.” *Qualitative & Multi-Method Research* 5, 1.

February 1: Puzzles and Questions

- KKV, chapter 1 (pp. 3-33)
- Smith, Rogers M. 2007. “Systematizing the Ineffable: A Perestroikan’s Methods for Finding a Good Research Topic.” *Qualitative & Multi-Method Research* 5, 1.
- Shapiro, Ian. 2002. “Problems, Methods, and Theories in the Study of Politics, or What’s Wrong with Political Science and What to Do about It.” *Political Theory* 30, 4: 596-619.
- Lake, David A. 2011. “Why ‘isms’ Are Evil: Theory, Epistemology, and Academic Sects as Impediments to Understanding and Progress.” *International Studies Quarterly* 55, 2: 465-480.
- Krugman, Paul. 1993. “How I Work.” *The American Economist* 37, 2: 25-31.

February 8: Theories and Models

- Lakatos, Imre. 1970. “Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes.” *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, ed. Imre Lakatos. New York: Cambridge University Press. pp. 91-138 and 173-180.
- Wagner, R. Harrison. 2001. “Who’s Afraid of Rational Choice Theory?” Unpublished Manuscript. Department of Government, University of Texas, Austin.
- Geddes, chapter 5 (pp. 175-211)
- Clarke, Kevin A., and David M. Primo. 2007. “Modernizing Political Science: A Model-Based Approach.” *Perspectives on Politics* 5, 4: 741-753.
- Friedman, Milton. 1953. “The Methodology of Positive Economics,” in *Essays in Positive Economics*, ed. Milton Friedman. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. pp. 3-43.
- Bernstein, Steven, Richard Ned Lebow, Janice Gross Stein, and Steven Weber. 2000. “God Gave Physics the Easy Problems: Adapting Social Science to an Unpredictable World.” *European Journal of International Relations* 6, 1: 43-76.

February 15: Descriptive Inference

- KKV, chapter 2 (pp. 34-74)
- Kratchowil, Friedrich. 2007. “Evidence, Inference, and Truth a Problems of Theory Building in the Social Sciences,” and Hopf, Ted. 2007. “The Limits of Interpreting Evidence.” In *Theory and Evidence in*

Comparative Politics and International Relations, eds. Richard Ned Lebow and Mark Irving Lichbach. New York: Palgrave. pp. 25-84.

- Przeworski, Adam, and Henry Teune. 1970. *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*. New York: John Wiley & sons, Inc. pp. 3-46.
- Eckstein, Harry. 1975. "Case Study and Theory in Political Science." In *Handbook of Political Science Volume 7*, eds. Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley. pp. 79-137.
- Gerring, John. 2004. "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good for?" *American Political Science Review* 98, 2 (May): 341-354.

February 22: Concepts and Measurement

- Sartori, Giovanni. 1970. "Concept Misinformation in Comparative Politics." *American Political Science Review* 64, 4: 1033-1053.
- Adcock, Robert, and David Collier. 2001. "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research." *American Political Science Review* 95, 3: 529-546.
- Collier, David, Jody LaPorte, and Jason Seawright. Forthcoming 2012. "Putting Typologies to Work: Concept-Formation, Measurement, and Analytic Rigor". *Political Research Quarterly* 65, 2.
- Goertz, Gary. 2006. *Social Science Concepts: A User's Guide*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. pp. 27-94.
- Munck, Gerardo L., and Jay Verkuilen. 2002. "Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices." *Comparative Political Studies* 35, 1 (February): 5-34.

February 29: Counterfactuals

- KKV, chapter 3 (pp. 75-114)
- Lewis, David. 1973. "Causation." *Journal of Philosophy* 70, 17: 556-567.
- Levy, Jack S. "Counterfactuals and Case Studies." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, eds. Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 627-644.
- Fearon, James D. 1991. "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science." *World Politics* 43, 2 (January): 169-195.
- M&W, chapters 1, 2, and 5 (pp. 3-57, 123-166—skim 142-158)

March 7: Case Selection

- KKV, chapters 4-6 (pp. 115-230)
- George, Alexander L., and Andrew Bennett. 2004. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Chapter 3, "The Methods of Structured, Focused Comparison." pp. 67-72.
- Gerring, John. 2008. "Case selection for case-study analysis: qualitative and quantitative techniques." In Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 645-684.
- Geddes, chapter 3 (pp. 89-129)
- Snyder, Richard. 2001. "Scaling Down: The Subnational Comparative Method." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 36, 1: 93-110.
- Multiple authors. 2008. "Symposium: Case Selection, Case Studies, and Causal Inference." *Qualitative & Multi-Method Research* 6, 2.

March 14: Natural and Quasi Experiments

- B&C, chapter 14 (Dunning, pp. 273-311)
- Sovey, Allison J., and Donald P. Green. 2011. “Instrumental Variables Estimation in Political Science: A Readers’ Guide.” *American Journal of Political Science* 55, 1: 188-200.
- Sekhon, Jasjeet S. 2009. “Opiates for the Matches: Matching Methods for Causal Inference.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 12:487-508.
- M&W, chapters 4, 7, and 9 (*further reading, not required*)

Exemplars (Read for Logic and Assumptions)

- NATURAL EXPERIMENT 1: Posner, Daniel N. 2004. “The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi.” *American Political Science Review* 98, 4:529-545.
- NATURAL EXPERIMENT 2: Hyde, Susan D. 2007. “The Observer Effect in International Politics: Evidence from a Natural Experiment.” *World Politics* 60, 1: 37-63
- INSTRUMENTAL VARIABLES: Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson. 2001. “The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation.” *American Economic Review* 91, 5: 1369-1401.
- MATCHING AND RD: Eggers, Andrew C. and Jens Hainmueller. 2009. “MPs for Sale? Returns to Office in Postwar British Politics.” *American Political Science Review* 103, 4: 513-533.

March 21: Spring Break

March 28: Field, Lab-in-the-Field, and Survey Experiments

- Stokes, Susan. 2010. “The Opportunities and Limits of Field Experiments.” *APSA-CP* 21, 1.
- Malesky, Edmund J. 2008. “Battling Onward: The Debate Over Field Research in Developmental Economics and its Implications for Comparative Politics.” *Qualitative & Multi-Method Research* 6, 2.
- Green, Donald and Alan Gerber. 2002. “Reclaiming the Experimental Tradition in Political Science.” In *Political Science: State of the Discipline*, eds. Ira Katznelson and Helen Milner. New York: Norton. pp. 805-832.
- Gaines, Brian J., James H. Kuklinski, and Paul J. Quirk. 2007. “The Logic of the Survey Experiment Reexamined.” *Political Analysis* 15, 1: 1-20.

Exemplars (Read for Logic and Assumptions)

- FIELD EXPERIMENT 1: Wantchekon, Leonard. 2003. “Clientelism and Voting Behavior: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Benin.” *World Politics* 55: 399-422.
- FIELD EXPERIMENT 2: Paluck, Elizabeth Levy, and Donald P. Green. 2009. “Deference, Dissent, and Dispute Resolution: An Experimental Intervention Using Mass Media to Change Norms and Behavior in Rwanda.” *American Political Science Review* 103, 4: 622-644.
- LAB-IN-THE-FIELD EXPERIMENT: Grossman, Guy and Delia Baldassarri. 2011. “The Impact of Elections on Cooperation: Evidence from a Lab in the Field Experiment in Uganda.” Working paper, available online at http://guygrossman.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Grossman.Baldassarri.Final_.pdf
- SURVEY EXPERIMENT 1: Pepinsky, Thomas B., R. William Liddle, and Saiful Mujani. Forthcoming 2012. “Testing Islam’s Political Advantage: Evidence from Indonesia.” *American Journal of Political Science*.
- SURVEY EXPERIMENT 2: Lawson, Chappell, Gabriel S. Lenz, Andy Baker, and Michael Myers. 2010. “Looking Like a Winner: Candidate Appearance and Electoral Success in New Democracies.” *World Politics* 62, 4: 561-593.

April 4: Set Theory and Boolean Logic

- Mahoney, James, Erin Kimball, and Kendra L. Koivu. 2009. "The Logic of Historical Explanation in the Social Sciences." *Comparative Political Studies* 42, 1: 114-146.
- Goertz, Gary. 2006. *Social Science Concepts: A User's Guide*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. pp. 177-210.
- Ragin, Charles C. 2008. "Measurement versus Calibration: A Set Theoretic Approach." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, eds. Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 174-198.
- Rihoux, Benoît. 2008. "Case-Oriented Configurational Research: Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), Fuzzy Sets, and Related Techniques." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, eds. Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 722-736.
- Clark, William Roberts, Michael J. Gilligan, and Matt Golder. 2006. "A Simple Multivariate Test for Asymmetric Hypotheses." *Political Analysis* 14, 3: 311-331.

April 11: Process Tracing and Mechanisms

- B&C, chapter 10 (Bennett, 207-219) and chapter 12 (Brady, 237-242)
- Checkel, Jeffrey T. 2008. "Process-tracing." In *Qualitative Methods in International Relations*, ed. Audie Klotz. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- George, Alexander L., and Andrew Bennett. 2004. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. pp. 205-232.
- Elster, Jon. 1989. *Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*. New York: Cambridge University Press. pp. 3-10.
- Gerring, John. 2010. "Causal Mechanisms: Yes, But..." *Comparative Political Studies* 43, 11:1499-1526.
- Beck, Nathaniel. 2006. "Is Causal-Process Observation an Oxymoron?" *Political Analysis* 14, 3 (Summer): 347-352.

April 18: History, Time, and Sequence

- Pierson, Paul. 2003. "Big, Slow-Moving, and... Invisible: Macro-Social Processes in the Study of Comparative Politics." In *Comparative-Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, eds. James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer. New York: Cambridge University Press. pp. 177-207.
- Aminzade, Ronald. 1992. "Historical Sociology and Time." *Sociological Methods and Research* 20, 4: 456-480.
- Lieberman, Evan S. 2001. "Causal Inference in Historical Institutional Analysis: A Specification of Periodization Strategies." *Comparative Political Studies* 34, 9: 1011-1035.
- Page, Scott E. 2006. "Path Dependence." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 1: 87-115.
- Collier, Ruth Berins, and David Collier. 1991. *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. pp. 27-39.
- M&W, 244-249

April 25: Students' Choice

Choose from

- Dissertation Exemplars (*recommended*)
- Field Work
- Archival Research
- Statistics and Causal Inference
- Anything Else

May 2: Student Presentations