PS220: State and Society

Course Summary and Objectives
This seminar complements Political Science 220B (Comparative Politics: Institutions) to prepare students for the Comparative Politics comprehensive exam and to provide them with the background and training necessary to undertake original research in comparative politics. Each week will introduce a new theme, typically a dependent variable in comparative politics. This seminar will focus on the non-institutional side of political science, specifically on themes such as culture, identity, behavior, order and violence. Although this course tries to be comprehensive, it is far from exhaustive. Students should familiarize themselves with the list of recommended readings as well in order to prepare for the comprehensive exam.

Requirements
Students will be graded based on class participation (30%), one presentation (30%), and a final exam (40%) that mimics the comprehensive exam. The distribution of requirements is as follows:

• Class participation (30%): Students are expected to do all required readings for the week before coming to class, and to participate actively in class.

• Presentation (30%): Students will sign up to present one of the week’s readings at the beginning of class. Presentations should last 15-20 minutes and synthesize the week’s themes, by presenting:
  o The main research questions explored
  o The hypotheses tested
  o The empirical strategies used
  o The results found
  o The questions remaining
Presentations that simply summarize the readings will not be accepted.

• Final exam (40%): The final exam will be a take-home, closed-book, written exam, to be completed over the course of a weekend. Students will have to answer 3 out of 5 essay questions.
**Week 1: Methods in Comparative Politics**

**Required:**


**Recommended:**

Week 2: The State

Required:


Recommended:

- Migdal, J. *Strong Societies and Weak States*: Chapters 1 and 2
- North, Douglas *Structure and Change in Economic History*
- Olson, M. *The Rise and Decline of Nations*
Week 3: Autocracy

Required:

Recommended:
- Decalo, S. Coups and Army Rule in Africa
- Geddes 2005
- Lust-Okar Ellen. 2005. Structuring Conflict in the Arab World: Chapters 2-3
- Stepan, A. The State and Society: Chapters 1 and 2
Week 4: Participation

Required:

Recommended:
Week 5: Exclusion

Required:


Recommended:

• Adida, C. 2010. “Too close for comfort? Immigrant exclusion in Africa” *Comparative Political Studies*
• Blalock, H. 1967. *Toward a theory of minority-group relations*.
• Hainmueller and Hiscox. 2010. “Attitudes toward highly skilled and low-skilled immigration: evidence from a survey experiment.” *APSR* 104(1)
Week 6: Constructing the nation

Required:
- Gellner, E. "Nationalism.” In Thought and Change: Chapter 7
- Weber, E. Peasants into Frenchmen: Chapters 6, 27, 29

Recommended:
- Fearon, J.D. “What is Identity (As We Now Use the Word)?” Unpublished manuscript: http://www.stanford.edu/~jfearon/papers/iden1v2.pdf
- Hardin, R. One for All: Chaps. 1, 4, 6.
- Kalyvas, S. The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe
Week 7: Ethnic identities

Required:


Recommended:

- Laitin, D. *Hegemony and Culture*
- Wilkinson, S. *Votes and Violence* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: Chapters 1-2, 6
Week 8: Culture, Norms, Ideas

Required:
- Axelrod, R. “Disseminating Culture.” In The Complexity of Cooperation: 148-77

Recommended:
- Bednar, J. and Scott Page (February 2007) “Can game(s) theory explain culture? The emergence of cultural behavior within multiple games” Rationality and Society 19(1): 65-98
- Elster, J. Cement of Society: Chapter 3
Week 9: Conflict and Violence

Required:


Recommended:

Week 10: Governance and Government Performance

Required:


Recommended:

- Tsai, L. 2007. “Solidary groups, informal accountability, and local public goods provision in rural China.” *APSR* 101(2).