This course is designed to survey the principal methods, approaches and issues in the study of comparative politics. It is required for those PhD students who intend to take the Comparative Politics candidacy examination. The assignments in this course will assist in your preparation for both the written and oral components of the exam. It will also serve as an important disciplinary grounding for MA students intending to write their theses on a comparative topic, or who will be using a comparative methodology in their chosen research. Comparison is, of course, a natural and inevitable aspect of all human inquiry. It is also a more explicit methodology. We build broad theoretical generalizations about politics by continually testing propositions about the relationship between conditions and outcomes through comparative investigation. The course will help students to understand the sociology of knowledge of the field, its changing dynamics and its various methods and approaches. The readings include various overviews, surveys, and anthologies that attempt to take stock of the field, and critique its development.

**CLASS ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

- First paper (critical analysis of one concept/approach): 30%
- Second paper (comparative research design): 40%
- Presentation on first paper: 10%
- Presentation on second paper: 10%
- Attendance and participation: 10%
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1) Everyone is to complete the required readings listed under each topic before each week’s seminar. In each session, I will go around the class and ask for a brief reflection on the readings as a whole. My typical strategy is to ask everyone in the class in each session to note one point or issue which they do not understand, and one point or issue with which they disagree. Overall class attendance and participation is worth 10% of the grade.

2) In addition to doing the required readings, those writing on the assigned topic for the weeks beginning September 27th are required to give a 20-minute presentation (10%) on his/her first paper. This presentation will lead the discussion in each of these sessions. I will consult each of you before this presentation.

3) The first paper is due one week after the presentation, and will be a critical review of one of the approaches discussed after September 27th (political culture; nationalism/ethnicity; social movements/revolutions; democracy/democratization; states and institutions; parties/elections; political economy; political development. This schedule allows you not only to choose a topic of interest, but also to select the time in the semester when you wish to complete the work. The aim is not to review the readings, but rather to take a higher-level approach in which you address a series of questions about the concept: How can it be defined, and how has it been studied? What kinds of theory does the approach generate, and what methods might be used to study it? In each case, you will try to analyze its value as a way to understand and explain similarity and difference in cross-national contexts. Each paper will try to interrogate and critique the theoretical assumptions behind the concept and approach in question. You are also expected to make use of the longer and supplementary recommended readings posted on Course Spaces, for the preparation of these papers. This critical review will be around 3000 words (not including bibliography) and is worth 30% of your final grade.

4) The second paper is a comparative research design (around 4000 words) in which you propose a comparative research project. You will state a clear question (“why is X like this here, and like that there?”); choose and justify your cases; explain the importance of the topic; and explain your method and strategies for gathering data. This research design should be considered throughout the entire semester, and will be presented (10%) during the final two classes. I, and your peers, will provide feedback in a “workshop” atmosphere that you should consider in writing up the final draft. This research design is worth 40% of your grade, and should be posted in the Drop Box on Course Spaces by Friday, December 14th.
**Grading Scale:**
The following is the official grading system used by instructors in arriving at final assessments of student performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade Point Evaluation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>exceptional, outstanding</strong> and <strong>excellent</strong> performance. Normally achieved by a minority of students. These grades indicate a student who is self-initiating, exceeds expectation and has an insightful grasp of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Very good, good</strong> and <strong>solid</strong> performance. Normally achieved by the largest number of students. These grades indicate a good grasp of the subject matter or excellent grasp in one area balanced with satisfactory grasp in the other area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory.</strong> These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Marginal</strong> Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-49</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>0</td>
<td><strong>Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-49</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
<td><strong>Unsatisfactory</strong> performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements; no supplemental.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>DEF</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td><strong>Deferred status</strong> granted. Used only when deferred status has been granted because of illness, an accident or family affliction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CLASS SCHEDULE

September 6th

AN INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS


September 13th

COMPARATIVE THEORY AND METHODOLOGY


Recommended Readings:


**September 20th**

**ONTOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL CRITIQUES**


Recommended Readings:


September 27th (THIS CLASS WILL BE RESCHEDULED)

COMPARING POLITICAL CULTURE


Recommended Readings:


**October 4th**

**COMPARING NATIONALISM, IDENTITIES AND ETHNICITIES**


**Recommended Readings:**


October 11th

COMPARING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS and SOCIAL REVOLUTIONS


Recommended readings:


https://books.google.ca/books?hl=en&lr=&id=IUXs0W22vgC&oi=fnd&pg=PA125&dq=Social+movements+or+revolutions%3F&ots=1jNk28Efnw&sig=UQKYRMaZuI_T81kueMv0mOoKy1#v=onepage&q=Social%20movements%20or%20revolutions%3F&f=false


October 18th

COMPARING DEMOCRACY AND DEMOCRATIZATION

“Measuring Democracy.” The Polity IV Project at:
http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html


https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/sites/default/files/Plattner-26-1.pdf

Recommended Readings:


October 25th

COMPARING STATES AND INSTITUTIONS


**Recommended Readings:**


**November 1st**

**COMPARING POLITICAL PARTIES AND PARTY SYSTEMS**


Recommended Readings:


November 8th

COMPARATIVE POLITICAL ECONOMY


Recommended Readings:


November 15th is READING BREAK
November 22nd

COMPARING POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT


**Recommended Readings:**


November 29th (CLASS TO BE RESCHEDULED)

Student presentations on comparative research designs

December 6th

Student presentations on comparative research designs

DECEMBER 14th:  FINAL PAPER DUE
Course Experience Survey (CES)

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term, as in all other courses at UVic, you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience (CES). The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. The survey is accessed via MyPage and can be done on your laptop, tablet, or mobile device. I will remind you and provide you with more detailed information nearer the time but please be thinking about this important activity during the course.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is intellectual honesty and responsibility for academic work that you submit individually or as a member of a group. It involves commitment to the values of honesty, trust and responsibility. It is expected that students will respect these ethical values in all activities related to learning, teaching, research and service. Therefore, plagiarism and other acts against academic integrity are serious academic offences.

The responsibility of the institution – Instructors and academic units have the responsibility to ensure that standards of academic honesty are met. By doing so, the institution recognizes students for their hard work and assures them that other students do not have an unfair advantage through cheating on essays, exams, and projects.

The responsibility of the student - Plagiarism sometimes occurs due to a misunderstanding regarding the rules of academic integrity, but it is the responsibility of the student to know them. If you are unsure about the standards for citations or for referencing your sources, ask your instructor. Depending on the severity of the case, penalties include a warning, a failing grade, a record on the student’s transcript, or a suspension. It is your responsibility to understand the University’s policy on academic integrity, which can be found on pages 45-48 of the undergraduate calendar.