

Spring 2019  
POLIS 408002  
Field Seminar in Comparative Politics

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The University of Chicago  
T: 9:30-11:50  
Pick 506

Office hours: Tuesdays 3:30 -5pm (Nalepa) Office hours: Tuesdays 2:00 -3:30pm (Stokes)

**Course description**

This course is the second in a two-course field survey sequence in comparative politics. An important goal of the course is to give PhD students in political science a sense of the methodological and research-design challenges that comparativists face. You will be introduced to cutting-edge research that is innovative in the ways it deals with these challenges and that tackles substantively important topics. The course will also be helpful for students who plan to take the comparative politics field exam. The winter quarter offers an overview of major topics and studies that are constitutive of the contemporary field of comparative politics; the spring quarter of the sequence focuses on research design. The winter quarter is not necessarily a prerequisite for taking the Spring quarter and neither is being a PhD student. However MA students may only enroll with the instructors' permission.

**Requirements**

*Class participation*

Engagement with weekly readings: You are expected both to have completed and reflected on all the weekly readings before each class. When reading for this class, think especially about the empirical tests in each reading. Is the empirical analysis a clear test of the theory? Are there additional empirical tests you think would be more appropriate? Do you think the empirical analysis is sound? Or are there problems with the data/information and models employed? Do you agree with the interpretation of the empirical analysis?

*CPW Workshop Paper*

Ideally, everyone in the class will attend the Comparative Politics Workshop on Tuesdays. If a scheduling conflict makes this impossible, you are still responsible for reading the paper before our class on Wednesday. We will spend the first 15 minutes of each class discussing the paper, and your contributions to this discussion will count toward your participation grade.

*Reading responses* You will write three short response papers (3 pages each) on weeks assigned to you by the instructors. Each paper will be worth 10 percent of the grade. The weeks assigned to each student will be posted on Piazza by the end of the day on April 4th. Response papers are due by 8 pm on the Sunday before the class. You must e-mail the papers to the instructor by this time and you must post your paper on Piazza.

*Three topics or questions* (due April 23)

You will write three short paragraphs describing potential topics or research questions you are interested in. These will be read by both faculty who will advise you on which topic to pursue.

*Presentations of additional readings and alternative research design presentations* PhD students enrolled in this class will have to prepare presentations. These can be either presentations on additional readings assigned for that class or alternative research presentations. The presentations of additional readings must summarize the argument, explain how it is related to the materials we all read for that day, as well as take critical stock of what we have learned from the materials. Additionally, some students will be assigned to develop an alternative research design for one of the books assigned during the class, worth 10 percent of your grade. You will present the research design at the beginning of the class on this book. The presentation should be no more than 15 minutes. Working from the book's central research question and/or hypothesis, you should develop your own research strategy for answering the book's central question or testing the book's central hypothesis. (In fact, I recommend you approach this project by developing your alternative research design once you've read the introduction to the book's argument but before you have read the book's research design section!) In your presentation, address the pros and cons of the proposed research design vis a vis the research design actually used by the author, as well as speculating about why the author decided on their research design.

*Original research design*

Your final paper for this class will be a proposed research design. You will outline a research question and a strategy for investigating it in 10-15 pages. You will present your research design-in-progress to the class in advance of handing it. The presentations will be on June 4. We will provide more details on the length of the presentations later in the quarter (as this will be dictated in part by the number of students in the class). The final memo will be due by 9 am on May 1st.

## **Books**

You will be assigned substantial parts of the books listed below. For those of you who plan to take the comparative politics field exam, you may find it convenient to own them. All books have been ordered at the Coop bookstore:

1. King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing social inquiry: Scientific inference in qualitative research*. Princeton university press, 1994.
2. Teele, Dawn Langan, ed. *Field experiments and their critics: essays on the uses and abuses of experimentation in the social sciences*. Yale University Press, 2014.
3. Svobik, Milan W. *The politics of authoritarian rule*. Cambridge University Press, 2012.
4. De la O, Ana “Crafting Policies to End Poverty in Latin America”, Cambridge University Press, 2015.
5. Mahoney, James. “Colonialism and postcolonial development: Spanish America in comparative perspective.” Cambridge University Press, 2010.

### **Grading**

Grades will be assigned according to the following rubric:

A	81-100%
B	61-80%
C	41-60%
D	26-40%
F	0-25%

Pluses and minuses will be awarded at the discretion of course staff.

### **Socratic method**

In class, we will frequently engage in what is known in some law schools as the “Socratic method”, that is, I will call on students without prior warning to answer questions related to the readings or lectures. Therefore, it is in your interest to come prepared for each class.

### **Calendar**

**April 2: Game Theory Refresher** *Recommended:*

Hobbes, Thomas. “Leviathan (Oxford World’s Classics).” (1998), Chapter 13-15 of Part I (Of Man)

Downs, “An Economic Theory of Democracy,” Chapter 8

Rousseau, Jean J. “Discourse on Inequality, Part II”

Romer, T. and H. Rosenthal (1978). "Political Resource Allocation, Controlled Agendas, and the Status Quo." *Public Choice* 33: 27-44.

Gibbons, Robert "Game Theory for Applied Economists", Chapter 4

Clarke, Kevin A., and David M. Primo. *A Model Discipline: Political Science and the Logic of Representations*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

### **April 9: Formal Models as a source of hypotheses in Comparative Politics**

Granato, Jim, and Frank Scioli. "Puzzles, proverbs, and omega matrices: The scientific and social significance of empirical implications of theoretical models (EITM)." *Perspectives on Politics* 2.2 (2004): 313-323.

EITM NSF report available [here](#).

Hein Goemans and William Spaniel: "Multi-Method Research: The Case for Formal Theory." University of Rochester

Debs, Alexandre "The Empirical Promise of Game Theory" Working Paper. Yale University

Lorentzen, Peter, M Taylor Fravel and Jack Paine "Qualitative investigation of theoretical models: the value of process tracing" *Journal of Theoretical Politics*

Little, Andrew T., and Thomas B. Pepinsky. "Simple and formal models in comparative politics." *Chinese Political Science Review* 1.3 (2016): 425-447 (Presentation: student 1)

Bates, Bob "From Case Studies to Social Science: A Strategy for Political Research" in *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics* (Presentation: student 2)

### **April 16: Methodological Issues I: KKV**

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing social inquiry: Scientific inference in qualitative research*. Princeton university press, 1994

Collier, David, Henry E. Brady, and Jason Seawright. "Sources of leverage in causal inference: Toward an alternative view of methodology." *Rethinking social inquiry: Diverse tools, shared standards* 2 (2004), Chapter 13. (Presentation: students 3 & 4).

### **April 23: Methodological Issues II: Making Inference non-assigned date**

Elster, Jon. *Nuts and bolts for the social sciences*. Cambridge University Press, 1989, pages 3-10.

Angrist, Joshua D., and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. *Mostly harmless econometrics: An empiricist's companion*. Princeton university press, 2008, p 3-24.

Fearon, James D. "Counterfactuals and hypothesis testing in political science." *World politics* 43.2 (1991): 169-195.

**April 30: Methodological Issues III: Observational Analysis, experiments, and design-based inference Three topics-questions due**

Teele, Dawn Langan, ed. Field experiments and their critics: essays on the uses and abuses of experimentation in the social sciences. Yale University Press, 2014, chapters 1,2, 5 and 6.

Dunning, Thad. “Design-based inference: Beyond the pitfalls of regression analysis?.” Rethinking social inquiry: Diverse tools, shared standards (2010): 273-311.

Wantchekon, Leonard. “Clientelism and voting behavior: Evidence from a field experiment in Benin.” World politics 55.3 (2003): 399-422.

Habyarimana, James, et al. Coethnicity: diversity and the dilemmas of collective action. Russell Sage Foundation, 2009 (Presentation students 5 and 6)

**May 7: Large-n cross-national research**

Svolik, Milan W. The politics of authoritarian rule. Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Alternative Research Design I (students 7 and 8)

**May 14: Small-n, cross-national research**

De la O, Ana “Crafting Policies to End Poverty in Latin America”, Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Alternative Research Design II (students 9 and 10)

**May 21: Process-tracing**

Mahoney, James. “Colonialism and postcolonial development: Spanish America in comparative perspective.” Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Alternative Research Design III (students 11 and 12)

**May 28: No class, 1-1 meetings with faculty**

**June 4: Presentations**