POLS 5201
Comparative Theory
Spring 2015
Monday, 5:00-7:25 pm
Waleed C133

Dr. Kevin Koehler
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American University in Cairo
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Office hours: Monday and Thursday, 2:00-3:00 pm
Room 2033

Course Description
The course is an examination of the field of Comparative Politics and major relevant theories and approaches to research and analysis.

The course is divided into three main parts. The first part deals with the comparative method and issues of research design in Comparative Politics. The second part covers some of the main research traditions in the field. The third part, finally, turns to selected subject fields and surveys major theoretical trends and contributions in these subfields.

Objectives
After this course, you will be able to:

- Describe some of the main research traditions in Comparative Politics.
- Explain the role of the comparative method and case selection in the research process.
- Apply basic principles of research design to your own research interests.
Requirements

1. **Active participation in class**: regular attendance and participation in class discussions.

2. **Research design**: Design your own research project for class session no. 5, using the class reading by Philippe Schmitter. Length: up to 1,000 words. Submission to me by email, due Saturday, 7 March 2015, (late submission will not be accepted).

3. **Book reviews**: discussion of major works in Comparative Politics; length: up to 1,500 words. Book review no. 1 is due on 26 March. You will present the second review in class in a short presentation (not longer than 15 minutes). Book reviews should not simply summarize the readings; your paper should make an argument and convey your own viewpoint in reference to the reviewed work. A critique is not necessarily negative. Whether or not you like an author’s argument, you still must critique it: is the argument clearly stated? Is the evidence offered relevant to the argument and convincing, or is it biased in some way? Are alternative explanations ignored or addressed? Are the cases selected appropriate for the research question? Consult major journals in the discipline for examples of book reviews!

4. **Reaction paper**: write a short paper (up to 3,000 words) summarizing, discussing, and critiquing the readings assigned for one class session. You are strongly advised to consult further readings, apart from those texts assigned for class discussions. Submission to instructor due on 1 May.

5. **Final Essay**: take-home; three essay questions will be provided through blackboard of which you will answer ONE. You can use all

Readings

The main text is Mark Irving Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman (eds.), 1997. *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*, (Cambridge UP) and can be purchased through the bookstore. All other required readings will be available on blackboard.

Class Attendance and Absence

I will adhere to the the following policy on class attendance and absences:
Table 1: Grading System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Points</th>
<th>Cut-off Scores</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>A 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Reviews</td>
<td>A- 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction Paper</td>
<td>B+ 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Essay</td>
<td>B 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>B- 78</strong></td>
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C+ 74
C 70
C- 66
F below 65

A student who misses more than the equivalent of three weeks of class meetings during a semester for any reason may be assigned a reduced grade for the course—including the grade of “F”—solely on the basis of inadequate attendance, regardless of excuse. Students who miss fewer than three weeks of class sessions may not be penalized on the grounds of attendance alone. Students are personally responsible for making up any academic tasks and assignments missed due to their absence.

Classes start at 5pm sharp. If you are not present when I take attendance at the beginning of each class, you will not be registered as attending.

Course policy

- *Cheating and plagiarism*: Any information, arguments, or data used by students in their work should be properly cited and credited. Should you fail to give proper credits wherever appropriate or turn in the same paper for two different courses, I reserve the right to fail you for the course and to turn your name over to the University Administration for disciplinary measures. Your assignments will all be checked with anti-plagiarism software. If you have doubts, feel free to ask me.

- *Academic freedom and intellectual interaction*: You are free to offer the class any disagreement you may have with the readings or lecture. You will not be penalized for disagreeing with other students or the instructor, but your perspective must be based on evidence from
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>February 2</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>February 9</td>
<td>History of the Discipline</td>
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<td></td>
<td>February 16</td>
<td>NO CLASS (ISA)</td>
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### Part 1: The Comparative Method

| 3       | February 23| Research Design in Comparative Politics    |
| 4       | March 2    | Quantitative vs. Qualitative?             |
| 5       | March 9    | The Research Cycle                        |

### Part 2: Research Traditions

| 6       | March 16   | Rational Choice                           |
| 7       | March 23   | Culture and Identity                      |
| 8       | March 28   | Structure                                  |

### Part 3: Selected Fields

| 9       | March 30   | The State and State Building              |
| 10      | April 20   | Economic Development                      |
| 11      | April 27   | Democratization and Regime Change         |
| 12      | May 4      | Parties and Elections                     |
| 13      | May 11     | Social Movements and Revolution           |
| 14      | May 18     | Ethnicity and Social Conflict             |
| 15      | TBA        | Conclusion                                |
the course, other readings and/or empirical information. Freedom of speech and ideas is a basic principle of academic life. Please listen carefully to your classmates and respect other viewpoints. Every student will have a chance to express her/his opinion as long as it is voiced in a respectful manner. Intellectual interaction and a healthy academic environment necessitate that we address and refer to each other with politeness, cordiality, and an appropriate tone of speech. In addition, varied points of view must be expressed in a manner that is sensitive to differences in ability, class, ethnicity, lifestyle, race, religion, or sex, and should not be expressed so as to be perceived as a personal attack.

Detailed Course Outline

Introduction (2 February 2015)

History of the Discipline (9 February 2015)

Readings:


0.1 Part 1: Research Design

0.1.1 Research Design in Comparative Politics (23 February 2015)

Readings:


### 0.1.2 Quantitative vs. Qualitative? (2 March 2015)

**Readings:**


**Further Readings:**


0.1.3 The Research Cycle (9 March 2015)

Readings:


0.2 Part 2: Research Traditions

0.2.1 Rational Choice (16 March 2015)

Required Readings:

- Lichbach & Zuckerman, chapter 2.


Further Readings:


### 0.2.2 Culture and Identity (23 March 2015)

**Required Readings:**

• Lichbach & Zuckerman, chapter 3.


**Further Readings:**


0.2.3 Structure (Saturday 28 March 2015)

Required Readings:

• Lichbach & Zuckerman, chapter 4.


Further Readings:


• 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.


• Skocpol, Theda. 1979. *States and Social Revolutions*. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP).


### 0.3 Part 3: Selected Fields

#### 0.3.1 The State and State Building (30 March 2015)

**Required Readings:**

- Lichbach & Zuckerman, chapter 8.


**Further Readings:**


### 0.3.2 Economic Development (20 April 2015)

**Required Readings:**

• Lichbach & Zuckerman, chapter 7.


**Further Readings:**


0.3.3 Democratization and Regime Change (27 April 2015)

Required Readings:


Further Readings:


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**0.3.4 Parties and Elections (4 May 2015)**

Required Readings:

• Lichbach & Zuckerman, chapter 5.


Further Reading:


0.3.5 Social Movements and Revolution (11 May 2015)

Required Reading:

• Lichbach & Zuckerman, chapter 6.


Further Readings:


• McAdam, Doug, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald (eds.), 1996. Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).


• Skocpol, Theda. 1979. States and Social Revolutions. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP).


0.3.6 Ethnicity and Social Conflict (18 May 2015)

Required Readings:

• Lichbach & Zuckerman, chapter 15.


Further Readings:


0.3.7 Conclusion (TBA)
Course Description

The assumption of comparative politics is that we may better understand domestic politics, governance, and policy by comparing the political conditions and institutions within different countries. Comparative Advantage. Stanford Undergraduate Economics Journal Spring 2015. Volume 3, Issue 1. Note from the Editor. On behalf of the Editorial Board, I am honored to present the 2015-2016 Stanford Economics Journal. May 2015. Abstract Are immigrants in the United States more likely to be enrolled in welfare programs than natives and how has this comparative usage changed over time? To address this question, I pool four panels from the 1990, 1991, 2001, and 2004 Survey of Income and Program Participation and regress different measures of welfare usage on binary migrant variables as well as including time fixed-effects. POLS 5201-01 Al. advertisement. American University in Cairo Department of Political Science Pols.5201 Prof. Mustapha K.Al-Sayyid Fall 2015. Comparative Politics Course description This is an advanced course in comparative politics. It targets graduate political science students who have already taken comparative politics courses in their undergraduate years.Â Introduction Third week: Wednesday September 16 Strategies in comparison Theory in comparative politics. Timothy C. Lim. Chapters 2 & 3. p. 31-104 Fourth week Wednesday September 30 Major perspectives Culture in comparative politics Read: Ross, Marc Howard.