

Gov 1400: Introduction to Comparative Government

"The decisive means for politics is violence."

--Max Weber

Professor Alyssa Maraj Grahame

Meeting time: Monday/Wednesday 11:30 AM – 12:55 PM

Location: Druckenmiller 016

Contact: agrahame@bowdoin.edu

Office: Dudley Coe 306

Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 9:30-11:00 am and by appointment

Course Description and Goals

Why are some countries poor and others rich? Why are some regimes stable, and others weak? Why are some countries democratic, and others authoritarian? How do structural, institutional, and cultural forces shape political life in different parts of the world? These are just a few of the questions that animate *comparative politics*, a subfield in the discipline in political science. In this course, you will be introduced to some of the major themes and theories of comparative politics. We will accomplish this by examining the *origins of the modern world* together with *contemporary political challenges* in different parts of the world to discover how the two intersect and interact. Students engage in guided analysis of classical and contemporary texts that address the substantive topics of comparative politics, learn how social scientific knowledge of the political world is produced, and expand their own knowledge of political life in different regions and countries of the world.

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Discuss the origins and historical development of the modern world system, including states, nations, and markets.
2. Understand the interactions between large-scale political processes and ordinary people's experiences of and responses to those processes in their everyday lives.
3. Critically appraise received wisdom about power and political life.
4. Connect contemporary political challenges with their historical antecedents.
5. Use the tools of comparative politics to produce empirically and theoretically informed analyses of political life in other parts of the world.

Logistics and Course Policies

Course structure: This course consists of two 85-minute classes per week. Each class meeting will be comprised of lecture and, occasionally, in-class writing exercises, small group activities, and class discussions.

Lectures (including other class activities) and readings are not interchangeable. I will not summarize the readings during lecture. Nevertheless, I encourage you to ask questions about the readings!

Lecture slides *will not* substitute for attendance, active listening, participation in discussion, and attentive note-taking. I do not post lecture slides.

Correspondence: I check my email regularly Monday-Friday between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm. If I do not respond to you within 48 hours during those times, please assume that I did not receive your email and resend it. Please include GOV1400 in the subject line of your email.

Classroom technology policy: Laptops, tablets, phones, and cameras must be silenced and put away during class unless otherwise indicated (such as use for research during group activities). [Studies](#) show that handwritten note taking improves knowledge retention. Please feel free to speak with me if you have a disability or other set of circumstances that necessitates note taking on a laptop. You may not record any part of class without my permission.

Classroom environment and etiquette: Observing good classroom etiquette is an important component of creating an environment conducive to learning and is a consideration in your participation grade.

- ❖ Arrive on time to class. If you arrive more than 5 minutes late you will be marked absent.
- ❖ Be respectful to everyone in class. You should not interrupt when someone else is speaking, and you should not direct offensive comments at anyone, or dismiss their perspectives.
- ❖ Being a good citizen of this class and in general means that you should regularly read a reliable news outlet (e.g. The New York Times, The Guardian, Economist, BBC, NPR, etc).
- ❖ Please do not pack up your belongings until class is over at 12:55.

Attendance Policy: The instructor will make reasonable accommodations for excused absences, but *students are responsible* for all material covered, assignments distributed or collected, and announcements made during any classes missed. For an absence to be excused, you must notify me *before* class. Documented illnesses, family emergencies, and college-sponsored activities count as excused absences; vacations, early departure from campus for breaks, and oversleeping are not excused absences.

Academic Honesty: Students are expected to be in compliance with college policies on academic honesty at all times. If you're not sure what constitutes academic dishonesty, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, or facilitating dishonesty, please consult the Academic Handbook. Please contact me if rules and standards of academic honesty are not clear.

Disabilities Accommodation: If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements.

Comparative Government Café

The Comparative Government Café is a gathering outside of class that gives students the opportunity to meet each other and their professor. Students are invited to sign up for the Café once during the semester. Participants should find an article in a reputable newspaper about a topic related to the themes of the class for the week of the café session and write a 1-2 paragraph (300 word limit) explanation of the connection. By participating in the Café, students can earn up to 2 points of extra credit towards their final average.

Evaluation and Course Requirements

Exam 1 (20%)
Exam 2 (20%)
State formation paper (25%)
Final exam (25%)
Attendance, participation, and pop quizzes (10%)

Exams 1 and 2

The first exam will be in class, and the second exam will be a take-home. More details to come.

State formation paper

Students will write a research paper of 1500-2000 words, which will critically explore the process of state formation. More details will be provided in class.

Final exam

The final exam will be a cumulative, seated exam consisting of short answers and an essay question. Students must take and pass the final exam in order to pass the course. The final is scheduled for May 17 at 9:00 am.

Attendance, participation, and pop quizzes

In order to receive full credit, you must consistently attend class and participate regularly. I reserve the right to give unannounced reading quizzes at any time.

Keep in mind: Retain a copy of all assignments and retain all original graded assignments until after the final grades are posted.

Readings

Books:

Students should plan to purchase, rent, or otherwise secure regular access to the following three books:

1. Marks, Robert. 2015. *The Origins of the Modern World*. Rowman and Littlefield. 3rd edition.
2. Hall, Derek. 2013. *Land*. Polity Press.
3. O'Neil, Patrick H. 2015. *Essentials of Comparative Politics*. W.W. Norton and Company. 5th edition.

- Make sure that you have obtained the correct edition.
- Each book is on reserve at the library.
- The books are available through Chegg but you are not required to buy them through Chegg. You may find better prices elsewhere. Chegg shows the rental price first.
- College is a great time to build a book collection. *Essentials* is a textbook and may be helpful to own only if you plan to concentrate in comparative government. The books by Hall and Marks are not typical textbooks and could be lasting additions to your collection regardless of whether you major in government.
- Please let me know if you think you will have difficulty acquiring the required texts for any reason.

Blackboard readings:

The rest of the readings will be either posted or linked on Blackboard under the corresponding week, and consist of book extracts and articles.

About the readings:

- Readings are due on the day of the corresponding class meeting.
- You should complete the readings in the order indicated on the course schedule.

- The reading load varies, averaging 74 pages per week.
- Reading systematically is an acquired skill. To help you cultivate that skill, I have prepared a guide (posted on Blackboard) that contains questions and strategies to help you break down the readings. You may use it at your own discretion.
- There are three types of readings in this course:
 1. *Analytical* readings are drawn from a range of canonical and more contemporary contributions to the study of comparative politics. They offer the central concepts and theoretical frameworks we will be working with. As such, the analytical readings are often dense and challenging, but rewarding. You should spend most of your reading time on these.
 2. *Narrative* readings are generally more approachable and faster to read. These readings offer examples and accounts that help you to unpack and situate the analytical readings.
 3. *Reference* readings come from the textbook. The textbook is there to offer you baseline accounts and definitions of the theories and concepts we will be exploring in this course, which are much richer and more nuanced than textbooks often make them out to be. Usually, I will only ask you to skim these.
- In order to help you plan ahead, each reading is marked as analytical (A), narrative (N), or reference (R) in the schedule. The different types of readings will not substitute for one another.

COURSE SCHEDULE

This section contains a schedule of topics, the required readings for each week, and due dates for assignments. I reserve the right to make changes, and if I do so will notify you accordingly. Please note that the most up-to-date schedule will always be on Blackboard.

PART I

1 | January 22: Why compare politics?

Required reading:

- i. Green, December and Laura Luehrmann. "Global Village of 1000 people." In *Comparative Politics of the Third World*. (2 pages) (N)
- ii. Marc I. Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman. 2013. "Research Traditions and Theory in Comparative Politics: An Introduction," in Ronald Rogowski and Patrick O'Neal, eds., *Essential Readings in Comparative Politics*. 3 – 8. (5 pages). (A)
- iii. Gerald Munck, "Table 2.2: The Origins and Evolution of Comparative Politics in the United States," in *Passion, Craft, and Method in Comparative Politics* (Johns Hopkins Press, 2007). 38 – 39. (2 pages) (A)
- iii. "What is comparative politics?" in *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, 6-18 (12 pages). (R)

2 | January 24: Points of departure

Required reading:

- i. Marks, Robert B. 2015. "Introduction: the rise of the west?" and "The material and trading worlds,

circa 1400” and “Starting with China” in *The Origins of the Modern World*. 1-66. (66 pages) (N)

3 | January 29: Building blocks: the state

Required reading:

- i. Weber, Max. 1919. “Politics as a vocation.” (27 pages) (A)
- ii. Hall, Derek. *Land*. Introduction. 1-22. (22 pages) (N)

Skim:

- iii. “Defining the state” and “Legitimacy” in *Essentials*. 33-38 and 46-49 (8 pages) (R)

4 | January 31: Building blocks: nation and market

Required reading:

- i. Polanyi, Karl. 1944. *The Great Transformation*. “Societies and Economic Systems” 35-58. (23 pages) (A)
- ii. Anderson, Benedict. 2006 [1983]. “Introduction,” in *Imagined Communities*. 1-8. (8 pages) (A)

Skim:

- iii. Selections from “Nations and society” and “Political economy” in *Essentials*. Pages 62-69 and 98-103. (12 pages) (R)

5 | February 5: How did (modern) states form, and where?

Required reading:

- i. Tilly, Charles. 1990. “How war made states, and vice-versa.” In *Coercion, Capital, and European States*. 67-95. (28 pages) (A)

Skim:

- ii. “Origins of Political Organization” and “Rise of the Modern State” in *Essential*. 38-45 (7 pages) (R)

Brainstorming your topic and question (in class)

6 | February 7: State formation today

Required reading:

- i. Hall, Derek. 2013. “Interstate Struggles” and “Frontiers” in *Land*. 23-82. (59 pages) (N)

7 | February 12: How do states govern?

Required reading:

- i. Scott, James. 2000. “Cities, People, and Language” in *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 53–83. (29 pages).

(A)

8 | February 14: Escaping the state

Required reading:

- i. Scott, James. 2009. "Hills, Valleys, and States: An Introduction to Zomia." in *The Art of Not Being Governed*. 1-39. (38 pages). (A)

Preliminary research due

9: | February 19: States and markets

Required reading:

- i. Smith, Adam. 1776. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. "Of the Division of Labor" and "Of the Principle which Gives Rise to the Division of Labour." 8-17. (9 pages) (A)
- ii. North, Douglas. 1991. "Institutions." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. (16 pages). (A)
- iii. Polanyi, Karl. 1944. "Habitation vs. Improvement" in *The Great Transformation*. 35-44. (9 pages) (A)

Skim:

4. "A Guiding Concept: Political Institutions" and "Political Economic Systems" in *Essentials*. 19-21 and 112-119. (9 pages) (R)

10 | February 21: Nations, states, and citizens

Required reading:

- i. Gellner, Ernest. 1983. "Definitions" in *Nations and Nationalism*. 1-7. (7 pages) (A)
- ii. Anderson, Benedict. 2006 [1983]. "The Origins of National Consciousness," in *Imagined Communities*. 39-48. (10 pages) (A)

Skim:

- iii. Selections from "Nations and Society" in *Essentials*, pages 70-76. (6 pages) (R)

Revised topic due

11 | February 26: Exam 1

Exam 1 (in class)

PART II

12 | February 28: Encountering Modernity

Required reading:

- i. Marks, Robert. 2015. "Empires, States, and the New World, 1500-1775" in *The Origins of the Modern World*. 67-96. (28 pages) (N)
- ii. Anderson, Benedict. 2006 [1983]. "Census, Map, Museum." in *Imagined Communities*. 167-190. (13 pages). (A)

13 | March 5: The Industrial Revolution

Required reading:

- Marks, Robert. 2015. "The Industrial Revolution and its consequences, 1750-1850." In *The Origins of the Modern World*. 97-126. (29 pages) (N)

14 | March 7: Development and the state

Required reading:

- i. Gerschenkron, Alexander. 1962. *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962. 5-30. (25 pages). (A)

Skim:

- ii. "The Components of Political Economy" in *Essentials*. 104-112. (8 pages) (R)

15 | March 26: Democratization and other paths to modernity

Required reading:

- i. Moore, Barrington. 1966. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. 413-432. (19 pages)

Skim:

- ii. Selections from "Democratic Regimes," "Nondemocratic Regimes," and "Communism and Postcommunism" in *Essentials*. Pages 140-142, 178-186, and 274-285. (22 pages). (R)

Annotated bibliography due

16 | March 28: Revolutions

Required reading:

- i. Skocpol, Theda. 1979. "Explaining social revolutions" and "A structural perspective" In *States and Social Revolutions*. 3-18. (15 pages) (A)
- ii. Sewell, William. 1985. "Ideologies and Social Revolutions: Reflections on the French Case." *The Journal of Modern History*. Vol. 57, No. 1 (1985): 58-85. (28 pages) (A)

17 | April 2: Democratization and class struggle

- i. Marx, Karl. "The Struggle for a Normal Working Day" in *Capital, Volume 1*. (18 pages). (A)

- ii. Ahmed, Amel. 2013. "Introduction: contradictions and ambiguities of democratization" in *Democracy and the politics of electoral system choice: engineering electoral dominance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Read pages 1-8 and 15-29 (20 pages). (A)

Skim:

- iii. Selections from "Democratic Regimes" in *Essentials*. 152-168. (16 pages). (R)

18 | April 4: Modernity's promise

Required reading:

- i. Rostow, Walt. 1960. *The Stages of Economic Growth*. 4-11. (7 pages)
- ii. Huntington, Samuel. 1991. "Democracy's 'Third Wave,'" *Journal of Democracy*. 12-34. (21 pages) (A)

Skim:

- iii. "Contemporary Democratization" in *Essentials*. 143-147 (5 pages). (R)

Take home exam distributed

19 | April 9: Documentary screening

No assigned reading; work on your take-home exam

20 | April 11: Documentary screening continued

Take home exam due

Part III

21 | April 16: Growing together or coming apart?

Required reading:

- i. James, C.L.R. 1938. "The Property." in *The Black Jacobins*. 6-26. (20 pages) (A)
- ii. Beckett, Greg. 2013. "The Ontology of Freedom: the unthinkable miracle of Haiti." *The Journal of Haitian Studies*. 19(2): 54-74. (17 pages) (A)

Skim:

- iii. "Political-Economic Systems and the State: Comparing Outcomes" in *Essentials*. 120-127. (8 pages) (R)

22 | April 18: Poverty, dependence, and underdevelopment

Required reading:

- i. Gunder-Frank, Andre. 1966. "The Development of Underdevelopment." 7-19. (12 pages) (A)
- ii. Marks, Robert. 2015. "The Gap" in *The Origins of the Modern World*. 123 – 155. (22 pages) (N)

iii. Hall, Derek. "Land Booms" in *Land*. 82-111. (29 pages) (N)

Skim:

iv. Selection from "Developing Countries" in *Essentials*. 312-321. (9 pages) (R)

Outline or concept map due

23 | April 23: Predatory states

Required reading:

i. Evans, Peter. "Predatory, Developmental, and Other Apparatuses: A Comparative Political Economy Perspective on the Third World State." *Sociological Forum*. 561-587. (23 pages) (A)

ii. Hall, Derek. "Titling and Conservation" in *Land*. 112-138. (26 pages) (N)

Skim:

iii. "The Challenges of Post-imperialism" in *Essentials*. 322-329. (7 pages) (R)

24 | April 25: Political conflict and ethnicity

Required Reading:

i. Mamdani, Mahmood. 2001. "Beyond Settler and Native as Political Identities: Overcoming the Political Legacy of Colonialism." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43, 4: 651-664. (12 pages). (A)

ii. Roy, Srirupa. 2007. "Introduction: Imagining Institutions, Instituting Diversity" in *Beyond belief: India and the politics of postcolonial nationalism*. Duke University Press. 1-31. (31 pages) (A)

Skim:

iii. "Puzzles and Prospects for Democracy and Development" and "In Sum" in *Essentials*. 330-341. (11 pages)

Thesis statement due

25 | April 30: Political violence and mobilization

Required Reading:

i. Fujii, Lee Ann. 2011. "Introduction" in *Killing Neighbors: webs of violence in Rwanda*. 1-22. (22 pages) (A)

ii. Hall, Derek. "Social Movements" in *Land*. 139-166 (27 pages) (N)

Skim:

iii. Selections from "Political Violence" in *Essentials*. 209-226. (16 pages) (R)

26 | May 2 | Authoritarian backsliding and the end of history

Required Reading:

- i. Przeworski, Adam. 2005. "Democracy as an Equilibrium." *Public Choice*. Read the Introduction (253 to the top of 255) and pages 265-270. (8 pages) (A)
- ii. Tugal, Cihan. 2016. "Introduction: The Charm of the Turkish Model" in *The Fall of the Turkish Model*. 1-28. (28 pages) (A)

Skim:

- iii. "Models of Nondemocratic Rule" and selections from "Developed Democracies" in *Essentials*. 193-200 and 242-249. (14 pages) (R)

Paper draft due

27 | May 7 | Comparative politics in the Anthropocene

Required Reading:

- i. "Syria's Climate Conflict" by Symbolia and Years of Living Dangerously. (comic)
- ii. Hall, Derek. "Conclusion." in *Land*. 167-174. (8 pages) (N)
- iii. Marks, Robert. 2015. "The Great Departure." in *The Origins of the Modern World*. 155 –195. (40 pages) (N)

28 | May 9 | Wrap up and review

Final paper due

BY ENROLLING IN THIS COURSE, YOU INDICATE THAT YOU HAVE READ, UNDERSTAND, AND ACCEPT THE REQUIREMENTS IN THIS SYLLABUS

APPENDIX: ASSESSMENTS AND DUE DATES AT A GLANCE

ASSESSMENT	% OF FINAL GRADE	DUE DATE
EXAM 1 (IN CLASS)	20%	FEBRUARY 26
EXAM 2 (TAKE HOME)	20%	APRIL 11
STATE FORMATION PAPER	25%	MAY 9
FINAL EXAM	25%	MAY 17
ATTENDANCE ETC	10%	ONGOING