

International Affairs 6202
SEMINAR IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS

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SEMINAR OBJECTIVES AND ORGANIZATION

The ability to account for change within and across nations is a valuable tool in a variety of vocations ranging from market analysis to international diplomacy, and from journalism to academia. For example, how does one explain the economic dynamism of China and the countries of East Asia? Is the trend toward "democracy" and "market capitalism" irreversible in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and the countries of the former Soviet Union? Is communism destined to collapse in China, North Korea, and Cuba? Does the experience of the advanced industrialized nations provide any useful insights for explaining change in Africa or Asia? Should we expect "convergence?" Or is the Western experience unique and irreplicable? What are the driving forces of change?

The primary objective of this seminar is to survey the major theories that purport to explain the forces of change within and across national borders. We will examine these theories, starting with the ideas of Adam Smith and concluding with the current fascination concerning "globalization." As we will discover time and again this seminar, despite claims of originality, the roots of many of today's theories can be traced to the ideas of the "old masters" such as Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber. We will see how much analytical purchase these theories provide in explaining regional politics in the European Union, Latin America, and East Asia. As de Tocqueville put it, "Without comparisons to make, the mind does not know how to proceed." The principal aim of this seminar is to provide you with the mental tools to understand domestic and international change through comparative analysis.

SEMINAR REQUIREMENTS

A successful graduate seminar demands student participation. First and foremost, attendance at ALL seminar meetings is mandatory, and active, informed participation is expected. This means that you are expected to attend every seminar meeting having read the assigned readings. To this end, you are required to submit a brief summary (approximately two

double-spaced typed pages) of the key points raised in each week's readings. These summaries will be collected at the outset of each seminar meeting. Beginning on the fourth week of the term, you will be partnered with a classmate (or classmates) and charged with directing discussion in a specified seminar meeting. You and your partner (or partners) will be expected to give an oral presentation of professional quality, using PowerPoint, in which you review and lead discussion of the main points covered in the assigned readings for that week. I will provide you with a list of key questions and issues upon which to focus your presentation. You will be required to submit an electronic file containing the PowerPoint presentation within one week of the session in which you deliver the presentation. In addition, you are required to submit two response papers (approximately ten double-spaced typed pages) on topics to be assigned. Finally, the final seminar meeting will be devoted to a recapitulation of the major theories with a focus on contemporary issues. You and your presentation partner(s) will be required to assess these issues in light of the theoretical literature you presented in class. Course grades will be weighted as follows:

- * participation: 20 percent (includes attendance, participation, and weekly summaries)
- * discussion leader: 25 percent (team project)
- * response papers: 50 percent (25 percent each)
- * discussion presentation (final seminar meeting): 5 percent (team project)

Note: Always bear in mind that academic honesty is required of all Georgia Tech students by the Institute's honor code, the text of which is found at www.honor.gatech.edu.

READINGS

The books listed below can be purchased at the Engineer's Bookstore. Students wishing to pursue a particular topic in more depth should feel free to consult with the Instructor. Readings marked with an asterisk are available in full text on-line.

REQUIRED

Birchfield, Vicki L.

Income Inequality in Capitalist Democracies: The Interplay of Values and Institutions
University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2008 (2009?)
ISBN 978-0-271-03440-9 | cloth: \$45.00

Friedman, Thomas L.

The World Is Flat 3.0: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century [Paperback]
Picador, July 2007
ISBN: 978-0-312-42507-4
ISBN10: 0-312-42507-4

Janos, Andrew C.

Politics and Paradigms: Changing Theories of Change in Social Science [Paperback]

Paperback: 184 pages
Publisher: Stanford University Press; 1 edition (June 1, 1986)
ISBN-10: 0804713332
ISBN-13: 978-0804713337

Lichbach, Mark Irving; and Alan S. Zuckerman
Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure
Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997
Paperback: 336 pages
ISBN-10: 0521586682
ISBN-13: 978-0521586689

North, Douglass C.,
Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance [Paperback]
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990
Paperback: 159 pages
ISBN-10: 0521397340
ISBN-13: 978-0521397346

RECOMMENDED

Strunk, William, Jr. and E.B. White
The Elements of Style, Fourth Edition
Longman; 4th edition (August 2, 1999)
Paperback: 105 pages
ISBN-10: 020530902X
ISBN-13: 978-0205309023

DISCUSSION TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Introductions, Overview, and Objectives
Date: 23 August
Readings: Purchase textbooks and begin reading Friedman's *The World Is Flat*
2. Is Comparative Politics Obsolete?
Date: 30 August
Readings: Friedman, *The World Is Flat*
Presenter: Brian Woodall
3. Changing Theories of Change
Date: 6 September
Readings: Andrew Janos, *Politics and Paradigms*: 1-95, 147-154; "The Role of Theory in Comparative Politics: A Symposium." *World Politics* 48 (October 1995): 1-49 (download from GT Library eJournals); and Mark I. Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman, "Research

Traditions and Theory in Comparative Politics: An Introduction,” in Lichbach and Zuckerman volume
Presenters: Brian Woodall

4. The “Invisible Hand” and Stages of Development
Date: 13 September
Readings: Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, Book I, chapters 1-3 and 7; Book III, chapters 1-4; Book IV, chapters 1-2; and Book V, chapter 1 (online at www.marxists.org/reference/archive/smith-adam/index.htm); Margaret Levi, “A Model, a Method, and a Map: Rational Choice in Comparative and Historical Analysis,” in Lichbach and Zuckerman volume.
Presenters: Tony, Shehzin, and Phylicia
5. Class Struggle and Economic Determinism
Date: 20 September
Readings: Karl Marx, “Preface to the First German Edition” of *Capital*; (with Friedrich Engels), *Manifesto of the Communist Party*; “The German Ideology”; “The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,” (www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/date/index.htm); Joshua Cooper Ramo, *The Beijing Consensus*, London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 2004 (uploaded to T-square).
Presenters: Zack, Tarun, and Jessica
6. The Social Organism and Functionalism
Date: 27 September
Readings: Herbert Spencer, “The Social Organism” (www.econlib.org); Durkheim, *The Division of Labor* (selected pages uploaded to T-square); Samuel P. Huntington, “Political Development and Political Decay,” *World Politics*, Vol. 17, No. 3. (Apr., 1965), pp. 386-430 (download from JSTOR); Ira Katznelson, “Structure and Configuration in Comparative Politics,” in Lichbach and Zuckerman volume
Presenters: Adam, Nick, and Jonathan
7. Culture and Rationalization
Date: 4 October
Readings: Reading: Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* and “Bureaucracy as a Vocation” (<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/WEBER/cover.html>); Marc Howard Ross, “Culture in Comparative Political Analysis,” in Lichbach and Zuckerman volume
Presenters: Lee, Wesley, and Hether
8. NO CLASS: 11 October – work on response paper
9. FALL RECESS: 18 October – rest and relax!
10. Focus on Latin America – State Capacity and Tourism
Date: 25 October

Readings: Bowman, *State Capacity, Structure, and Choice: Peddling Paradise in the Latin American Tourism Boom* (selected draft chapters to be uploaded to T-square)
Presenter: Kirk Bowman

25 October: FIRST RESPONSE PAPER DUE

11. Focus on East Asia – The Developmental State

Date: 1 November

Readings: Ziya Onis, “The Logic of the Developmental State,” *Comparative Politics*, 24 (no. 1), 1991, pp. 109-26 (download from GT Library eJournals); and Brian Woodall, *Japan Under Construction*

(www.escholarship.org/editions/view?docId=ft5489n9zf&brand=eschol)

Presenter: Brian Woodall

12. Institutions, Path Dependency, and Critical Junctures

Date: 8 November

Readings: Douglass North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*; David Collier and Ruth Berins Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena*, pp. 27-39; (uploaded to T-square); Paul Pierson, “Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics.” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 94, No. 2 (June 2000), pp. 251-267 (download from GT Library eJournals); and Woodall, “Introduction” and selected chapters (uploaded to T-square)

Presenter: Brian Woodall

13. Focus on Europe – Explaining Income Inequality

Date: 15 November

Readings: Vicki L. Birchfield, *Income Inequality in Capitalist Democracies*

Presenter: Vicki Birchfield

14. World Systems and Dependency

Date: 22 November

Readings: Andre Gunder Frank, “The Development of Underdevelopment” (distributed in class); V.I. Lenin, Imperialism: *The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/index.htm), chapters. VI, VII, VIII, IX, and X; Immanuel Wallerstein, “The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concepts for Comparative Analysis” (download from GT Library eJournals); Fernando H. Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, “Nationalism and Populism” (handout).

Presenters: TBA

15. Is the World Really Flat?

Date: 29 November – final seminar meeting

Readings: TBA

Presenters: group debate

6 December: SECOND RESPONSE PAPER DUE

