

PS 200B: Major Themes in Comparative Analysis

Version 2/27/2023

Spring 2023
Wednesdays 12-2 PM
202 Social Sciences Building

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Office Hours: Thursdays 4-5:30

This course provides an introduction to research design in comparative politics; it is the second semester of the two-semester introductory graduate sequence for the comparative sub-field. We will focus on various topics relevant to doing research, such as how to formulate research questions; develop concepts and measures; improve the validity of descriptive and causal inferences; and use various qualitative and quantitative methods in the service of a diverse substantive agenda. Most of the major approaches currently used in the subfield of comparative politics are represented. The course has three objectives: to develop your ability to critique research, to provide a foundation for your dissertation and beyond, and to introduce you to ideas you might not otherwise encounter in your political science training.

There are five main requirements/components for the course beyond doing the readings:

- (1) Respond to weekly readings **for at least 8 sessions** in a written statement of between two and three double-spaced pages. These responses should go beyond summarizing individual articles. In what ways do the articles agree or disagree with one another? What are their strengths and weaknesses? How can those be addressed? How might the ideas be relevant for your research question? (See also (4) below.) Reading responses should be uploaded in PDF format to bCourses no later than Tuesday evening at 6pm. (20% of grade)
- (2) Participation in class discussion. Our discussions will undoubtedly touch on themes raised in the response papers, but will usually go beyond them. I realize that class participation can be highly gendered, so I may also call on people who have not had the opportunity to speak. (20% of grade)
- (3) Read the paper to be presented at each week's Comparative Politics Colloquium (and attend the workshop if you can, Thursdays at 12:30-2pm in 202 SSB). Consider the argument, research design, and data analysis. Are you convinced by the argument? Why or why not? We will devote some class time to discussing the CPC papers. (10% of grade)
- (4) Write a research proposal in which you present a research question and devise a strategy for investigating that question. While you will not actually carry out the

proposed research this semester, you should anticipate the steps that would be involved in doing so. This proposal can provide a foundation for 2nd year M.A. essays or, if you already have a dissertation topic, help you prepare for your dissertation prospectus. The proposal should be 15-20 double-spaced pages, and include a literature review, theory, research design, and some empirical implications. (If your theory holds, what should be observe in the world?) These proposals are due Friday, May 5 by 4pm, in PDF format. **Please consult with me before moving forward with your proposal.** (30% of grade)

- (5) Our last two sessions (April 19 and 26) will be devoted to student presentations of their proposals. Each student will be allotted 15 minutes. You should take 5-10 minutes to present your research question, theory, and research design. The remainder of the 15 minutes will be devoted to Q & A. (20% of grade).

Most of the readings can be googled but for convenience I have made them available on bCourses. In some cases you will access the UCB library electronic version. These include:

Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994[2021]. *Designing Social Inquiry: Statistical Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press.

Barbara Geddes. 2003. *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. University of Michigan Press.

Henry Brady and David Collier, eds. 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Rowman & Littlefield.

I reserve the right to amend the syllabus without prior warning.

Schedule of Topics

PART I - FUNDAMENTALS

January 18: What is the Comparative Method?

Smith, Munroe. 1886. "Introduction: The Domain of Political Science." *Political Science Quarterly* Vol. 1, No. 1, March, pp 1-8.

Lijphart, Arend. 1971. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method." *American Political Science Review* 65(3): 682-93.

Ragin, Charles. 1987. "The Distinctiveness of Social Science," in Charles Ragin, *The Comparative Method*. University of California Press. Chapter 1.

Schmitter, Philippe. 2016. "Comparative Politics: its Past, Present, and Future." *Chinese Political Science Review* Volume 1, Issue 3: 397-411.

Geddes, Barbara. 2003. "Big Questions, Little Answers: How the Questions You Choose Affect the Answers You Get." in *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. University of Michigan. Chapter 2.

January 25: Ontology: What Entities Do We Study When We Study Comparative Politics?

Hay, Colin. 2011. "Political Ontology," in Robert Gooding, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*. Oxford University Press, 2011, 460-477.

Mayhew, David R. 2000. "Political Science and Political Philosophy: Ontological Not Normative." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. Volume 33, Issue 2, 192-194.

White, Stephen K. 2000. "Taking Ontology Seriously in Political Science and Political Theory: A Reply to Mayhew." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. Volume 33, Issue 4, 743-744.

Hall, Peter, 2003. "Aligning Ontology and Methodology in Comparative Research," in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds. *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge University Press, 373-404.

List, Christian and Kai Spiekermann, 2013. "Methodological Individualism and Holism in Political Science: A Reconciliation." *American Political Science Review* Volume 107, Issue 4, 629-643.

February 1: Models and Explanations: How Can/Do/Should We Theorize About the Entities We Study?

Abbott, Andrew. 2004. *Methods of Discovery: Heuristics for the Social Sciences*. WW Norton, excerpts from Chapters 1 and 4.

Clarke, Kevin A. and David M. Primo. 2007. "Modernizing Political Science: A Model-Based Approach." *Perspectives on Politics*. Volume 5, Issue 4, 741-753.

Little, Andrew T. and Thomas B. Pepinsky. 2016. "Simple and Formal Models in Comparative Politics." *Chinese Political Science Review* Volume 1, Issue 3: 425-447.

Healy, Kieran. 2017. "Fuck Nuance." *Sociological Theory* Volume 35(2), 118-127.

Geddes, Barbara. 2003. "How the Approach You Choose Affect the Answers You Get." in *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. University of Michigan. Chapter 5.

Johnson, James. 2021. "Models-as-Fables: An Alternative to the Standard Rationale for Using Formal Models in Political Science." *Perspectives on Politics* 19(3): 874-889.

February 8: Concepts and Measurement: What links "The Entities We Study" to "How/Can/Should We Theorize About the Entities We Study?"

Sartori, Giovanni. 1970. "Concept Misinformation in Comparative Politics." *American Political Science Review* 64(4): 1033-1053.

Adcock, Robert and David Collier. 2001. "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research." *American Political Science Review* 95(3): 529-546.

Collier, David, Jody LaPorte, and Jason Seawright. 2012. "Putting Typologies to Work: Concept Formation, Measurement, and Analytic Rigor." *Political Research Quarterly*. 65(1): 217-32.

Capoccia, Giovanni and Daniel Ziblatt. 2010. "The Historical Turn in Democratization Studies: A New Research Agenda for Europe and Beyond." *Comparative Political Studies* 43(8/9): 931-968.

Paxton, Pamela. 2000. "Women's Suffrage in the Measurement of Democracy: Problems of Operationalization." *Studies in Comparative International Development*, Fall, Vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 92-111.

February 15 (12-1:30): Description: What Do We Need to Know About the Entities We Study?

Brodkin, Evelyn Z. 2017. "The Ethnographic Turn in Political Science: Reflections on the State of the Art." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. January, 131-134.

Mosely, Layna. 2013. "'Just Talk to People?' Interviews in Contemporary Political Science," in Layna Mosely, ed. *Interview Research in Political Science*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1-28.

Gallagher, Mary. 2013. "Capturing Meaning and Confronting Measurement," in Layna Mosely, ed. *Interview Research in Political Science*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 181-195.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Thick Description: Toward and Interpretive Theory of Culture," in Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Basic Books, 310-323.

Schaffer, Frederic Charles. 2014. "Thin Descriptions: The Limits of Survey Research on the Meaning of Democracy." *Polity*, Vol. 46, No. 3, July, pp. 303-330.

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 34-55 (through section 2.5).

February 22: Case Selection and Descriptive Inference: Among the Entities We Study in Comparative Politics, How Do We Choose Which Ones to Focus On?

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 55-74 (sections 2.6 and 2.7) and 115-149.

Bartels, Larry M. 2010. "Some Unfulfilled Promises of Quantitative Imperialism." in David Collier and Henry Brady, eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2nd Edition, 83-88.

Geddes, Barbara. 2003. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get." in *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. University of Michigan. Chapter 3.

Gerring, John. 2004. "What is a Case Study and What is it Good For?" *American Political Science Review* Vol. 98, No. 2, May, pp. 341-354.

Slater, Dan and Daniel Ziblatt. 2013. "The Enduring Indispensability of the Controlled Comparison." *Comparative Political Studies* 46(10): 1301-1327.

March 1: Causal Inference: When Do We Say That One Thing We Study Causes Another Thing That We Study?

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 75-114.

Keele, Luke. 2015. "The Statistics of Causal Inference: A View from Political Methodology." *Political Analysis* 23(3): 313-335.

Fearon, James D. 1991. "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science." *World Politics* 43(2): 169-195.

King, Gary and Langche Zeng. 2007. "When Can History Be Our Guide? The Pitfalls of Counterfactual Inference." *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 51, No. 1, pp. 183-210.

Mahoney, James and Gary Goertz. 2006. "A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research." *Political Analysis* 14(3): 227-249.
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PART II - METHODS

March 8: Field Experiments

Gerber, Alan S. and Donald P. Green. 2008. "Field Experiments and Natural Experiments." in Carles Boix and Susan Stokes, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*. Oxford University Press. **Introduction through section 6 only.**

McDermott, Rose. 2002. "Experimental Methods in Political Science." *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 5, pp. 31-61. **Read pp. 31-40 only.**

Teele, Dawn Langan. 2014. "Reflections on the Ethics of Field Experiments." in Dawn Langan Teele, ed., *Field Experiments and Their Critics: Essays on the Uses and Abuses of Experimentation in the Social Sciences*. Yale University Press, pp. 115-140.

Olken, Benjamin A. 2010. "Direct Democracy and Local Public Goods: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia." *American Political Science Review* Vol. 104, No. 2, pp. 243-267.

Beath, Andrew, Fotini Christia, and Ruben Enikolopov. 2013. "Empowering Women Through Development Aid: Evidence from A Field Experiment in Afghanistan." *American Political Science Review* 107 (3): 540-57.

March 15: "Natural Experiments": As if Randomization, Regression Discontinuity, and Instrumental Variables

Dunning, Thad. 2010. "Design-Based Inference: Rethinking the Pitfalls of Regression Analysis?," in David Collier and Henry Brady, eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2nd Edition, 273-311.

Peisakhin, Leonid. 2015. "Culture Legacies: Persistence and Transmission." in Norman Schofield and Gonzalo Caballero, eds. *The Political Economy of Governance: Studies in Political Economy*. Basel, Switzerland: Springer International: 21-39. (As If Randomization/Borders)

Kuipers, Nicholas. C. 2022. "Failing the Test: The Countervailing Attitudinal Effects of Civil Service Examinations." *American Political Science Review* pp. 1-18. (Regression Discontinuity)

Anonymous 2022. "Elite Murder and Popular Resistance: Evidence from Post-World War II Poland." Unpublished Manuscript (Instrumental Variables).

Rozenas, Arturas and Yuri Zhukov. 2019. "Mass Repression and Political Loyalty: Evidence from Stalin's 'Terror by Hunger'." *American Political Science Review* 113(2): 569-583 (Instrumental Variables/Exogenous Shock)

Sovey, Allison J. and Donald P. Green. 2011. "Instrumental Variables Estimation in Political Science: A Readers' Guide." *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 55, No. 1, January, pp. 188-200.

Sekhon, Jasjeet S. and Rocio Titiunik. 2012. "When Natural Experiments are Neither Natural Nor Experiments." *American Political Science Review* 106 (1): 35-57.

March 22: Office Hours in 732 SSB

March 29: Spring Break

April 5: Quantitative Observational Designs: Regression, Difference in Difference, Matching

Ziblatt, Daniel. 2009. "Shaping Democratic Practice and the Causes of Electoral Fraud: The Case of Nineteenth-Century Germany." *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 103, No. 1, February, pp. 1-21. (Regression)

Scheve, Kenneth and David Stasavage. 2010. "The Conscription of Wealth: Mass Welfare and the Demand for Progressive Taxation." *International Organization* 64, fall, pp. 529-561. (Difference in Difference)

Lyall, Jason. 2010. "Are Coethnics More Effective Counterinsurgents? Evidence From the Second Chechen War." *American Political Science Review* Vol. 104, No. 1, February, pp. 1-20. (Matching)

Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green, and Edward H. Kaplan. 2014. "The Illusion of Learning from Observational Research." in Dawn Langan Teele, ed., *Field Experiments and Their Critics: Essays on the Uses and Abuses of Experimentation in the Social Sciences*. Yale University Press, pp. 9-32.

Stokes, Susan C. 2014 "A Defense of Observational Research." in Dawn Langan Teele, ed., *Field Experiments and Their Critics: Essays on the Uses and Abuses of Experimentation in the Social Sciences*. Yale University Press, pp. 33-57.

Schrodt, Philip A. 2014 “Seven deadly sins of contemporary quantitative political analysis.” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 51(2), pp. 287-300.

Sekhon, Jasjeet S. 2009. “Opiates for the Matches: Matching Methods for Causal Inference.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 12(1): 487-508.

April 12: Qualitative Observational Designs: Process Tracing, Comparative Historical Analysis, and Mixed Methods

Thelen, Kathy and James Mahoney. 2015. “Comparative-historical analysis in contemporary political science.” in James Mahoney and Kathy Thelen, eds., *Advances in Comparative-Historical Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 3-36.

Bennett, Andrew. 2010, “Process tracing and Causal Inference,” in David Collier and Henry Brady, eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2nd Edition, 179-189.

Collier, David. 2011. “Understanding Process Tracing.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 44, No. 4, pp. 823-30.

Lieberman, Evan S. 2015. “Nested analysis: toward the integration of comparative historical analysis with other social science methods.” in James Mahoney and Kathy Thelen, eds., *Advances in Comparative-Historical Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 240-263.

Seawright, Jason. 2016. *Multi-Method Social Science: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Tools*. Cambridge University Press, Chapter 1.

Ahmed, Amel and Rudra Sil. 2012. “When Multi-Method Research Subverts Methodological Pluralism—or, Why We Still Need Single-Method Research.” *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 10, No. 4, pp. 935-953.

April 19: Discussion of Research Proposals

April 26: Discussion of Research Proposals