PS220B: COMPARATIVE POLITICS/INSTITUTIONS

Objectives
This seminar, like Political Science 220 (Comparative Politics: State and Society), is designed to help students prepare for the comprehensive examination in comparative politics and for research in comparative politics, including doctoral dissertations. Though this seminar covers a wide range of subjects, it cannot do so exhaustively; among the subjects only tangentially treated are political development, mass behavior, judicial institutions, bureaucratic politics, and public policy. Students preparing for the comprehensive exam should therefore seek other opportunities to study these topics.

Format
Seminar meetings are scheduled for the ten teaching weeks of the quarter. Generally, each week will introduce a new theme in the comparative study of political institutions. The reading list distinguishes between two categories of readings: required and recommended. Required readings will form the basis of the general seminar discussions, and all students should read them carefully and critically before class. Recommended readings are additional readings of broad theoretical importance, with which students preparing for the comprehensive exam should gain some familiarity. Students will do short presentations on each required reading on the list.

Assignments
All students taking the seminar for credit must do the assigned readings, write three discussion papers (5-7 pages in length), participate actively in the seminar discussions, and give regular presentations on the readings.

Each week, students will be assigned specific readings to review. These presentations should summarize the article or book chapter (dependent variable, independent variables, causal argument), comment critically on it (What does it leave out or fail to explain? What assumptions does it make? Are they justified?), discuss how the piece fits in with the other selections of the week (and course, if appropriate), and raise a couple of questions to stimulate discussion. Students giving presentations should prepare brief outlines of the article for distribution to the other seminar participants. NOTE: students are expected to do all of the required reading and to be prepared to discuss it, not just their particular assignment. Thus, being the reviewer for one article does not excuse you from commenting intelligently on the others!!

The discussion papers are due before the class session in question. The object of the papers is two-fold. The first objective is to make an argument about the week’s readings. Thus, early in the paper (first paragraph), there should be a line that says: “in this paper, I argue that . . . ” (Or something closely related). The argument should be stated clearly and concisely and the rest of the paper should tie into this argument. The second objective is to review in a critical fashion some or all of the week’s readings. In the process of providing supporting evidence for your argument, you should identify the some of central issues that the assigned reading for the week addresses, locate the principal authors’ positions vis-à-vis those issues, and comment critically on the state of the debate and the value of the individual contributions to it. Your analysis of the reading should go beyond summary of the readings toward critical commentary and a discussion of the issues that unite the work; it should also tie in with the overall argument that you are making in the papers. Good papers will do meet both objectives: they will make an argument and they will provide careful reviews of some or all of the reading. Writing style matters! Be focused and selective and avoid long quotations. (For more information – see handout “How to Write a Good Social Science Paper.”) You should do one paper from one week in the first third of the class (weeks 2-4), one paper from one week in the second third of the class (weeks 5-7), and one paper from one week in the final third of the class (weeks 8-10).
Grades will be based on course assignments in the following way: discussion papers, 20% each; general participation, 20%; weekly reviews, 20%. Extensions, incompletes, etc. will be given in accordance with UCSD policy. Except under very pressing circumstances, they will be discouraged. If you must miss a class, please talk to me about an alternative assignment.

Readings
Many of the readings are in article form and can be found easily on the web. If you have trouble locating something, contact me and I’ll make a copy available. The remainder of the readings comes from books. The following is a list of books from which multiple chapters will be assigned:


1. **INTRODUCTION: INSTITUTIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS** (1/8)

Required:

Recommended:
2. **DEMOCRACY VS. AUTOCRACY** (1/15)

**Required:**


**Recommended:**


Michael Bratton and Nicholas van de Walle, "Popular Protest and Political Reform in Africa," *Comparative Politics* 24, 4 (July 1992), 419-442.


Roger Myerson, “The Autocrat’s Credibility Problem and Foundations of the Constitutional State,”
American Political Science Review, 102: 125-139.

3. CONSENSUAL VERSUS MAJORITARIAN DEMOCRACY (1/22)

Required:
Arend Lijphart, Patterns of Democracy, chs. 1-4 and 14-17.

Recommended:

4. FEDERALISM (1/29)

Required:
Arend Lijphart, Patterns of Democracy, chs. 10 and 12.


Recommended:
The Federalist Papers


5. **PRESIDENTIALISM AND EXECUTIVES (2/5)**

**Required:**

**Recommended:**
- Donald L. Horowitz, Seymour Martin Lipset, and Juan J. Linz, "Debate--Presidents vs. Parliaments," *Journal of Democracy* 1, 4 (Fall 1990), 73-91.
- Scott Mainwaring, "Presidentialism, Multipartism, and Democracy: The Difficult Combination." *Comparative Political Studies* 26, 2 (July 1993), 198-228.

6. **PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY (2/12)**

**Required:**
Recommended:


7. **ELECTORAL RULES** (2/19)

Required:
Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy*, chs. 5 and 8.


Recommended:


Michael J. Laver, "Party Competition and Party System Change," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 1, 3 (July 1989), 301-324.


Michael J. Laver, "Party Competition and Party System Change," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 1, 3 (July 1989), 301-324.


8. **PARTIES AND PARTY SYSTEMS** (2/26)

**Required:**


**Recommended:**


André Blais, Donald Blake, and Stéphanie Dion, "Do Parties Make a Difference?" *American Journal of Political Science* 37, 1 (February 1993), 40-62.


9. **VETO PLAYERS AND POLICY OUTCOMES** (3/5)

Required:


10. **INSTITUTIONS AND ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE** (3/12)

Required:


**Recommended:**


