Political Science 7975
Seminar in Comparative Political Behavior

Classroom: Stubbs 210
Class Time: TH 9:00 -- 11:50
Office Hours: M W 1:30-3
Instructor: Leonard Ray
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Course Description:
This seminar will survey the literature on comparative political behavior. Political behavior is distinctive in its focus on the actions and attitudes of individuals, rather than the study of rules, institutions, social classes, or other aggregates. Comparative political behavior examines political behavior outside of the context of the United States, often with a focus on the influence of national level factors on individual level behaviors, or on the way differences in individual level behavior can produce cross national differences in political outcomes. Because of the nature of the available data in this area and the expertise of this instructor, the course tends to focus on industrialized democracies, especially Europe. Part I will review the literature on political culture and support for democratic government. Part II focuses on non electoral participation. Part III examines voting behavior. Part IV shifts the emphasis from mass behavior to political elites in parties, legislatures, and the bureaucracy.

Requirements:
This is a seminar course, which means that students are expected to participate through class presentations and discussion. The course will require a substantial amount of reading, which must be completed prior to the class period so that you may participate actively and intelligently. Each week students will hand in a summary of the readings for the week. This course also provides an opportunity to practice the essential skill of oral presentation of ideas. Students will also summarize and present two of the recommended readings to the class. (Keep presentations to 5 minutes.) There is a substantial writing component for this course. Students will write three short papers analyzing the required readings for parts I, II, and III of the course. Students will also write either a literature review or research paper. Students are encouraged to integrate this work into their overall research agenda. As such, they may use portions of this paper for other projects, or rewrite and refine a paper from a previous course. However, in both cases, the student should obtain written permission from both instructors before beginning to write the paper. The final exam will be a take home essay exam.

Relative weights of course requirements:
2 Class Presentations 10% each
3 essay assignments 10% each
Weekly summaries 10% total
Research Paper or Literature Review 20%
Take Home Final Exam 20%
Class Presentations
Class presentations should relate the reading to the required readings for that week, briefly summarize the recommended reading, and critique the theory and methodology employed in the reading.

Essay assignments
First essay assignment: What drives support for democratic regimes? Are there cultural prerequisites for stable democracy? What might improve or depress the chances of survival of a democratic system?

Second essay assignment: Why do people participate/vote? Can we think of protest and voting as two facets of the same phenomenon? In what ways are these two phenomena fundamentally different?

Third essay assignment: Do voters “choose” which party/candidate to vote for? If so, how to they make that choice?

Weekly Analytical Summaries
Students will bring to class a typewritten summary of the readings for that week. These summaries will be handed in after class so that students can refer to them during the class discussion. They should analyze the reading and discuss commonalities and contrasts between them.

Paper/ Literature Review
Students will write a seminar paper which may consist of a review of the literature on a topic of their choosing, and/or an empirical analysis of data on political behavior. A literature review should go well beyond the readings recommended or required for the course. An empirical analysis should use inferential statistics, but the level of statistical sophistication will reflect the nature of the research question and the skills of the student. Students who are enrolled in POLI 7962 will not be expected to use techniques beyond multivariate OLS regression.

Plagiarism:
Graduate students are expected to follow professional norms and ethics. All written work submitted for this course must be original, and cannot have been used for a previous or concurrent course without my prior written approval. The unacknowledged use of material written by someone else constitutes plagiarism, and is grounds for a student’s separation from the university. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, feel free to ask me, or consult the University’s policy on plagiarism available online at: http://appl015.lsu.edu/slasis/judicialaffairs.nsf/$Content/Understanding+and+Avoiding+Plagiarism?OpenDocument.

Readings:
Some readings will be drawn from books on reserve in the main library, or for sale at the bookstore. Other readings are taken from journal articles, most of which are available electronically. To the extent possible, I will make readings available on Moodle. Students would be wise to make copies of the required reading over the course of the semester. They will be expected to discuss some of these readings on their final exam, and eventually on their comprehensive exams.
Textbooks and Reading Schedule:


Part I. Attitudes: Political / Civic Culture and Regime Support

Aug 30. Political Culture I: National character and qualitative approaches


Recommended:


Sept 6. Political Culture II Denomination, Civilizations, and Hemispheres


Sept 13. Attitudinal basis for Democratic Regimes: Early Work

Recommended

Sept 20. Recent Work on Support/ Satisfaction with Democracy
Sabetti, Filippo 1996 Path dependency and civic culture: Some lessons from Italy about interpreting social experiments. Politics & Society, Mar. 96, Vol. 24 issue 1,

Recommended:
Tessler, Mark, 2002 "Islam and Democracy in the Middle East: The Impact of Religious Orientations on Attitudes toward Democracy in Four Arab Countries" Comparative Politics 2002 April (pp. 337-354)

Sept 27. Political Culture IV: The Postmaterialism Debates
Part II. Mass Behavior: Participation: Revolution, Protest, and Turnout

Oct 4. Revolution and civil violence


Recommended—

First writing assignment due Oct 11

Oct 11. Participation and Protest


Recommended:
Samuel Barnes and Max Kaase Political Action: Mass Participation in Five Western Democracies. Sage Publications. (Chapters 1, 2, and 3.)
Oct 25. Why do Voters Vote?

Recommended

Second writing assignment due Nov 1

Part III. Mass Behavior: Voter “choice”

Nov. 1. Models of voter behavior I: Sociological and Socialization Models

Recommended:
Doerschler, Peter 2004 Education and the development of Turkish and Yugoslav immigrants' political attitudes in Germany. German Politics; Sep2004, Vol. 13 Issue 3, p449-480,
Nov. 8. Models of voter behavior II Spatial Models of Issue Voting
Benz, Matthias, and Alois Stutzer (2004) "Are voters better informed when they have a larger say in politics?" Public Choice 119: 31-59.

Recommended:
Anthony Downs. Economic Theory of Democracy 1957 Chapters 3, 4, 8 R

Nov. 15. Models of voter behavior III: Economic Voting

Recommended

Third writing assignment due Nov 20

Part IV. Elite Political Behavior

Nov 29. Legislators and Partisans
Robert Michels Political Parties 1915 Part Two Chapters IV, VII Part Six, Chapter II

Recommended:


Research Paper or literature review due Dec 3.

Final Exam hand in by 4:00 PM Dec 5.