GOV-20

Introduction to Comparative Politics

Fall 2005

Pippa Norris

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Contact Details:

Class time: Mondays and Wednesdays 12.00 to 1.00pm
Class place: Harvard Hall Rm 201
First class: Monday 19th September 2005
Last class: Wednesday 14th December 2005
Total: 25 classes
Exam group: 5 Catalog number 6166

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Sections: Tues 1-2pm; 2-3pm
Sections: Thurs 3-4pm; 4-5pm
Sections: Mon 2-3pm; 3-4pm

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For all details see the class website online under ‘teaching’ at: http://www.courses.fas.harvard.edu/~gov20/
See also www.pippanorris.com.

Course Synopsis:

This course provides an introduction to key theoretical frameworks, concepts, and analytical methods commonly used today in comparative politics. The class focuses upon some of the seminal contemporary works in the field and evaluates them in the light of the arguments of their critics.

After reflecting upon the methods, frameworks and analytical tools in comparative political science, the class considers alternative ‘consociational’ and ‘majoritarian’ models of democratic institutions; analyzes the impact of economic development on the process of democratization; reviews the changing nature of political activism; considers the impact of civic society and social capital; examines the role of political culture; and finally discusses issues of ethnic conflict and cooperation. The conclusion draws together the core lessons from the class for effective research in comparative political science. A broad global comparison is adopted drawing upon materials and theories derived from many countries and regions of the world. There are no prerequisites for taking the class.
## Class Schedule Fall 2005:

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<td>Introduction: Road Map of the Course</td>
<td>Part I: Comparative research designs</td>
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<td>Lijphart's Models of Democratic Institutions: Theoretical framework</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>Putnam’s Social Capital and Democracy: European comparisons</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>Huntington’s Clash: Theoretical framework</td>
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Note University holiday: No class will be held on Columbus Day (Monday 10<sup>th</sup> Oct). Assignments are due to be handed in at the start of the class on the specified deadlines. Exam date to follow (from 14-24<sup>th</sup> January 2006). 
Required Readings:

The required reading listed below each class is essential to understand the course. The recommended reading provides supplementary materials to pursue topics in greater depth for your essays and independent study. The online links represent additional sources of information.

Books, listed in sequential order of use, can be ordered direct from the publishers, or from Amazon.com Harvard Coop Wordsworth's books or Barnes and Noble. The total cost of the required books should be around $110 but some second-hand copies are cheaper from the Harvard Coop. Also one Reading Packet is available from HPPS, Science Center, One Oxford Street, Room B10. Further online resources are listed under each week's topic. All required readings, including the course packet, are available on reserve at Hilles and Lamont.


In this updated and expanded edition of his highly acclaimed book Democracies, Arend Lijphart offers a broader and deeper analysis of worldwide democratic institutions than ever before. Examining thirty-six democracies during the half-century from 1945 to 1996, Lijphart arrives at important conclusions about what type of democracy works best.


Is economic development conducive to political democracy? Does democracy foster or hinder material welfare? These two questions are examined by looking at the experiences of 135 countries between 1950 and 1990. Descriptive information, statistical analyses, and historical narratives are interwoven to gain an understanding of the dynamic of political regimes and their impact on economic development. The often surprising findings dispel any notion of a tradeoff between democracy and development. Economic development does not generate democracies, but democracies are much more likely to survive in wealthy societies.


At the very time when electoral democracy has spread around the world, the conventional wisdom suggests that citizens in many countries have become disengaged from the traditional channels of political participation. Commentators highlight common warning signs undermining the three central channels of mass activism, including sagging electoral turnout, rising anti-party sentiment, and the decay of civic organizations. But are these concerns justified? This book compares systematic evidence for electoral turnout, party membership and civic activism in countries around the world and suggests good reasons to question popular assumptions of pervasive decline.


Robert D. Putnam and a group of leading scholars examine the state of social capital in eight advanced democracies around the world. Social capital—good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse—is vitally important both for the health of our communities and for our own physical and psychological well being. Offering a panoramic look at social capital around the world, this book makes an important contribution to our understanding of these phenomena and why they are important in today's world.


This book demonstrates that people's basic values and beliefs are changing, in ways that affect their political, sexual, economic, and religious behavior. These changes are roughly predictable because they can be interpreted on the basis of a revised version of modernization theory presented here. Drawing on a massive body of evidence from societies containing 85% of the world's population, the authors demonstrate that modernization is a process of human development, in which economic development triggers cultural changes that make individual autonomy, gender equality, and democracy increasingly likely.

Assignments:

All students will be expected to keep up with the required readings (listed in a checklist at the end of the syllabus) and to attend lectures every Monday and Wednesday. Sections will be organized by the second week of class.

Late policy: Barring an extraordinary excuse, all late papers will be marked down a third of a grade (such as from A to A-) for each day following the due date.

(i) Essay 1 (25%) Due in Class 11 on Wed 26th October

This paper should answer one of the listed discussion questions selected from classes 1-11.

The essay should be about 2,000-2,500 words long in scholarly format, including an introduction, sub-sections, conclusions, and a properly referenced bibliography. Further notes for guidance should be consulted from the website.

(ii) Essay 2 (25%) Due in Class 24 on Mon 12th December

This paper should answer one of the listed discussion questions selected from classes 12-23.

The essay should be about 2,000-2,500 words long in scholarly format, with an introduction, sub-sections, conclusions, and a properly referenced bibliography.

(iii) Final Examination (40%) Date to be confirmed

This is a final examination with two parts. Part I consists of a brief test of your grasp of ten key concepts used throughout the course. Part II allows a choice of two out of six essay questions to be answered within the specified time. There will be one question set on each of the six required books used in the class.

(iv) Class and Section Participation (10%)

Lastly, credit will be given for regular and active participation in the section and class meetings (10%). This will involve discussion of the readings, section presentations, case studies, and debates about controversial issues raised in the course.
Discussion Topics & Readings Per Class

Part I: Comparative politics

Class 1 Introduction: Road Map of the Course

Class 2 Comparative research & good governance

Topics:
- What are the pros and cons of the approach to measuring 'good governance' contained in the Millennium Challenge Account?

Required Reading (online):

The Millennium Challenge Account:
http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/developingnations/millennium.html

The Millennium Challenge Corporation: (overview, background paper)
http://www.mca.gov/
http://www.mca.gov/about_us/overview/index.shtml
http://www.mca.gov/about_us/key_documents/MCA_BackgroundPaper_FactSheet.pdf

Recommended reading:

Class 3 Measuring Democracy & Good Governance: Freedom House & IDEA

Topics:
- Is democracy a universal value?
- How far are the Freedom House measurements using the Gastil Index of democracy reliable, comprehensive, and accurate? How would you improve the Index?
- The Freedom House measures of democracy produce a single quantitative index of democratization. What are the advantages and disadvantages of such a measure?
- What are the pros and cons of conducting a democratic audit? Discuss by comparing the preliminary results of the studies conducted by International IDEA.

Required Reading (online):


Recommended Reading:


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**Part II: Comparing Democratic Institutions**

**Class 4 Lijphart’s Models of Democratic Institutions: Theoretical framework**

**Topics:**
- Is there a single best set of democratic institutions?
- Is ‘democracy’ primarily a Western ideal or are the values universally shared in other cultures?
- Explain the key contrasts Lijphart draws between ‘consensus’ or ‘majoritarian’ democracies by comparing and contrasting two countries exemplifying each type.
- Do we know enough about the impact of political institutions to engage in successful ‘constitutional engineering’? Compare the impact of electoral reforms in Italy, New Zealand and Israel to consider these issues.

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**


**Online Resources:**


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**Class 5 Lijphart’s Models of Democratic Institutions: Electoral Systems**

**Topics:**

- In considering debates about electoral reform, list the five most important normative values that any electoral system should meet, and give detailed reasons justifying your choices.

- What are the major distinctions between plurality first-past the-post, the alternative vote, the single transferable vote, combined, and party list electoral systems? Discuss with illustrations of recent elections held under each type of rules.

- Are mixed member (combined) electoral systems the best of all possible worlds?

- Compare two countries and discuss the primary advantages and disadvantages of proportional or majoritarian/plurality electoral systems for each state.

- Do proportional electoral systems generate fragmented or extreme multiparty systems?

- What are the consequences of majoritarian/plurality electoral systems for the representation of women and ethnic minorities, and why do these effects occur?

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**


Class 6  Lijphart’s Models of Democratic Institutions: Impacts

Topics:

- Explain and assess Lijphart’s claims about the consequences of the adoption of majoritarian or consociational arrangements for government performance and the quality of democracy.

- Explain and assess Linz’s claim that presidential government leads to democratic instability by comparing examples of presidential and parliamentary government in either Latin America or in Central and Eastern Europe.

- “In the most deeply divided societies, like Northern Ireland, majority rule spells majority dictatorship and civil strife rather than democracy. What such societies need is a democratic regime that emphasizes consensus instead of opposition, that includes rather than excludes, and that tries to maximize the size of the ruling majority instead of being satisfied with a bare majority.” (Lijphart). Is this a robust and well-substantiated claim?

Required Reading:


Recommended Reading:

See above. Also


Linz, Juan and Alfred Stephan. Problems of Democratic Consolidation Johns Hopkins Press. 1996.


Online Resources:
CID Datavine Database of Political Institutions
http://paradocs.pols.columbia.edu/datavine/MainFrameSet.jsp

World Bank Indicators of Governance and Institutional Quality
http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/indicators.htm

Class 7 Case study discussion exercise: Afghanistan elections

Topics:

- Explain and assess how far Lijphart’s theory of consociational democracy could be applied to two plural societies with deep ethnic conflict such as Northern Ireland, Israel/Palestine, Iraq, or Afghanistan.

- What electoral system would you recommend for Afghanistan and why?

- What are the possible positive and negative consequences of the electoral system adopted for the Afghan elections for (a) gender equality (b) the management of ethnic conflict (c) stable governance?

Required Reading:
Case study materials at the class website: www.pippanorris.com

Recommended Reading:
See classes 4, 5 and 6

Part III: Comparing Political Culture

Class 8 Inglehart’s Theoretical Framework

Topics:

- What is meant by Inglehart’s concepts of ‘modernization’ and ‘post-modernization’ and are these two distinct stages of socioeconomic development?

- Is there good evidence supporting Inglehart’s claims of a substantial value shift among the younger generation in affluent societies?

- Do economic priorities or generational shifts provide a more satisfactory explanation of value change?

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:


Seligson, Mitchell. A. 2002. ‘The renaissance of political culture or the renaissance of the ecological fallacy?’ *Comparative Politics* 34 (3): 273

**Online Resources:**

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**Class 9 Inglehart’s Theory: Gender equality**

**Topics:**
- How far does the theory of value change explain the rise of new social movements? Discuss in relation to either the environmental or the women’s movement.
- Critically assess how far cultural theories provide a satisfactory explanation of patterns of gender equality found in agrarian, industrial and postindustrial societies.

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**
See above, also…


Class 10 Inglehart’s Post-Modernization: Democratic values and institutions

Topics:
• Does democratic culture lead to institutions? Or vice versa?

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

See class 8.

Part IV: Comparing Political Activism

Class 11 Democratic Phoenix: Turnout

Topics:
• Has there been a systematic and persistent decline in electoral turnout in established democracies and, if so, what are the major factors driving this process? Discuss by comparing patterns in OECD nations.

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:


Online Resource:
Class 12 Democratic Phoenix: Parties and new social movements

Topics:
- Is there good evidence for a decline in traditional state-oriented political activism via parties, trade unions, and churches, and how do you explain the trends you find?
- Why has there been a rise of new social movements like the women's movement, environmentalism and anti-globalization?

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

Class 13 Democratic Phoenix: Protest politics

Topics:
- Has the rise of protest politics created new channels of public participation supplementing older forms, or has it instead led to a crisis of governability, exacerbated social inequality, and fostered instability, thereby undermining representative democracy?
- If traditional activism has fallen, and newer forms of protest politics have arisen, what are the possible consequences of this phenomenon for representative democracy?

Required Reading:

**Recommended Reading:**


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**Part V: Comparing Civic Society and Social Capital**

**Class 14 Putnam’s Social Capital and Democracy: Theoretical framework**

**Topics:**

- Do you agree that social capital, including dense social networks and rich reservoirs of social trust, help to explain why some democratic governments succeed while others fail? Explain and assess Putnam’s theory in the context of two countries.
- What are the alternative conceptions of ‘social capital’?
- Does social trust matter? Explain why and why not?

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**


Class 15 Putnam’s Social Capital and Democracy: the US

Topics:
- How far has the United States experienced a long-term erosion of civic engagement and, if so, explain and assess Putnam’s analysis of the causes of this phenomenon.
- Has television entertainment corroded social capital?

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:
Ladd, Everett C. 1996. ‘The Date Just Don't Show Erosion of America's Social Capital.’ The Public Perspective 7(4).

Online Resources:
Saguaro Seminar http://www.bettertogether.org/ Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey

Class 16 Putnam’s Social Capital: European comparisons

Topics:
- Is the United States ‘exceptional’ in its patterns of social capital?

Required Reading:
Putnam, Robert D. Ed. 2002. Democracies in Flux. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapters 1 (Britain), 5 (Germany), and 7 (Sweden)

Recommended Reading:


Online Resources:
World Bank Social Capital for Development

Part VI: Economic Development & Democratization

Class 17 Przeworski et al.’s Economic Development and Democracy

Topics:

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of the Przeworski et al. dichotomous measure of regime types for comparing the process of democratization?

- How far do economic development, political institutions, or political culture determine the process of democratization?

- Explain and assess Przeworski’s claims about the consequences of economic growth for democracy. Do these conclusions continue to hold in the era following the fall of the Berlin Wall?

Required Reading:


Recommended Reading:


Class 18 Przeworski et al.’s Economic Development and Democracy

Topics:

- Explain and assess Przeworski’s claims about the consequences of democracy for economic growth.

Required Reading:


Recommended Reading:

See above.
Online Resources:

Class 19 Wednesday 23rd October Critiques

Topics:
- What are the pros and cons of using alternative dichotomous, scale, and audit measures of democratization?
- What are implications of Przeworski’s account of the factors leading towards the transition and consolidation of democracies for international agencies such as the World Bank and UNDP? Discuss in relation to either (a) the Middle East (b) Sub-Saharan Africa or (c) Asia.
- Does Przeworski et al’s theory suggest an economic determinism that consigns poorer nations to non-democratic status?

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:
See class 17.

Part VII: Comparing Ethnic Conflict and Cooperation

Class 20 Huntington’s Clash: Theoretical framework

Topics:
- What Does Huntington mean by ‘civilizational cultures’ and how can these best be measured and operationalized?
- Are Western and Muslim values irreconcilably at odds?
- Why has democracy made so little progress in the Middle East and North Africa?

Required Reading:

Recommended reading:

**Online resource:**

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**Class 21 Huntington’s Clash: Evidence of ethnic conflict**

**Topics:**

- Is there good evidence that the last decade has seen rising levels of intra and inter-ethnic conflict?

- "In the new world the most pervasive, important and dangerous conflicts will not be between social classes, rich and poor, or other economically defined groups, but between people belonging to different cultural entities." (Huntington 1996:28). Discuss.

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended reading:**


Minorities at Risk database http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar/


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**Class 22 Huntington’s Clash: Evidence of religious cultures**

**Topics:**

- "Culture and cultural identities, which at the broadest level are civilizational identities, are shaping the patterns of cohesion, disintegration and conflict in the post-Cold War world.” (Huntington) Do you agree? Why or why not.

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended reading:**


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**Class 23 Case Study discussion exercise: Rebuilding Iraq**

**Topics:**

- What constitutional arrangements would you recommend for Iraq and why?
- What are the possible positive and negative consequences of the electoral system adopted for Iraq?

**Recommended Reading:**

- Full briefing details are available online: see the class website at [www.pippanorris.com](http://www.pippanorris.com)

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**Class 24 Review for examination: hand in essay #2**

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**Class 25 Conclusions & wrap-up**

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**For further research resources:**

See [www.pippanorris.com](http://www.pippanorris.com) For relevant literature always check the online Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) available via Hollis. Also check articles in *American Political Science Review, American Journal of Political Science, British Journal of Political Science, Comparative Political Studies, Comparative Politics, Electoral Studies, Journal of Democracy, Journal of Politics, Party Politics,* and *West European Politics.* For sources of data always check the Harvard Data Center. [http://data.fas.harvard.edu/hdc/](http://data.fas.harvard.edu/hdc/)
## Checklist of Required Reading:

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<th>Textbooks</th>
<th>Online resources</th>
<th>Read?</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>MCA online</td>
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<td>Marshall &amp; Gurr <em>Peace &amp; Conflict 2005</em></td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Norris &amp; Inglehart <em>Sacred &amp; Secular</em> Ch 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>Online case-study materials: Iraq</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Review all above</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>None</td>
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