

## **Political Science 611.**

**Brendan O'Leary, Lauder Professor of Political Science.  
University of Pennsylvania, Fall 2005**

### **Comparative Politics. A Dozen Influential Books.**

This course is an introduction to comparative politics based on twentieth century books that have been influential among consumers and producers of political science. In introducing each book I shall frame the reading with questions posed by a pre-twentieth century thinker.

Comparative political analysis has its antecedents in ancient and medieval European thought, as developed from Aristotle through Machiavelli to the Mills, and in the European sociology and political economy of modernity developed by Montesquieu, Smith, Tocqueville, Marx, Durkheim and Weber. A rounded PhD student in comparative politics reads through the canons of political thought and classical sociology and political economy for the pleasure and imaginative extensions it will generate – and the demands it makes. Often we moderns deceive ourselves about our intellectual originality. But it is as false to assume that all wisdom is to be found, explicitly or tacitly, in the ancients or the classics, as it is to imply we have nothing to learn from our grandparents. The twelve selected texts are neither definitive nor flawless. They offer demanding introductions to systematic reflection and research on states, nations, democracy, electoral systems and the nature of our times. Many genres of comparative politics are represented in method and substantive zone of inquiry, and in values endorsed and rejected. None should be assumed to be uncritically endorsed by me, or any of the faculty.

All books are ordered at the Penn Book Center. They are required purchases. But not all of them will be there, I regret to say, despite the best efforts of the book center. The books by Finer, Katz, Lipset, Lijphart (1977) and Taagepeera and Shugart may require you to find them in the library, or through second-hand purchases (via E-Bay or Amazon or elsewhere). Treat this as a research exercise in finding rare materials, and as a collective as well as individual responsibility.

#### **Seminar Format:**

- a. One book to be read by all participants in each week. Weeks 2 and 3 require reading three books by the same author.
- b. One hour's introduction by me. Break.
- c. Post-Break: Student exchanges of one-page summaries (each student will be assigned part of the book to summarize). This sectional assignment does not exhaust your obligations: you are expected to read the whole book.
- d. One student will be assigned the task of criticizing the book. Twenty minutes. Group responses.
- e. Another student will be assigned the task of how showing best to improve or progress the author's goals and argument. Twenty minutes. Group responses. The task in (b) is much easier than that in (c) so you shall each play the role of (b) and (c) at least once in the seminar.

By December 1 2005 you will tender one paper on at least one of the books on a question (not a topic) agreed with me. 6,000 words maximum.

Class discussion by you – and essays by you – are to be based solely on reading(s) of the texts, and not on second-hand surveys or criticisms or reviews by others.

Why such a delimiting injunction, especially one that cannot be policed by me? Three reasons, which you can challenge after the course is over:

- (i) to teach you how badly we collectively misrepresent authors and their arguments in our lazy (Author: YEAR, no pagination) style of referencing;
- (ii) because you will not have time, given your other course commitments, to read secondary literature thoroughly --- but you should feel free to do so later; and
- (iii) to help you practice critical readings(s) of major books independently of established authorities – so that you learn to be an independent and thorough reviewer.

Sometimes after we have read the book – or re-read it in my case – we shall 'review the reviewers' --- and check whether you find their criticisms fair – or ill-founded. Evaluation: Class performances and summaries: 25%. Paper: 75%.

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### **PART A. Governments, States and Nations**

WEEK 1. DURKHEIM AND RENAN'S QUESTIONS.

Gellner, Ernest. 1983. *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell

WEEKS 2 AND 3. ARISTOTLE'S, MACHIAVELLI'S AND MONTESQUIEU'S QUESTIONS.

Finer, Samuel E. 1997. *The History of Government I: Ancient Monarchies and Empires. The History of Government II: The Intermediate Ages. The History of Government III: Empires, Monarchies and the Modern State*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

### **PART B. Democracy: Origins and Variation**

WEEK 4. LENIN'S AND WEBER'S QUESTIONS.

Moore, Barrington. 1966. *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Harmondsworth: Penguin

WEEK 5. TOCQUEVILLE'S QUESTIONS.

Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1983. *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press

WEEK 6. ARISTOTLE'S, MACHIAVELLI'S, MONTESQUIEU'S AND MADISON'S QUESTIONS.

Lijphart Arend. 1999. *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. New Haven: Yale University Press

### **PART C. Democracy and National, Ethnic and Communal Diversity**

WEEK 7. ROUSSEAU'S QUESTIONS:

Lijphart, Arend. 1977. *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*. New Haven, London: Yale University Press

WEEK 8. ROUSSEAU'S QUESTIONS:

Horowitz, Donald. 1985. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press

### **PART D. Voting: Electoral Systems and Parties**

WEEK 9. J. AND J.S. MILL'S QUESTIONS.

Taagepera, Rein, Shugart MS. 1989. *Seats and Votes: The Effects and Determinants of Electoral Systems*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press

WEEK 10. J. AND J.S. MILL'S QUESTIONS

Cox, Gary. 1997. *Making Votes Count: Strategic Coordination in the World's Electoral Systems*. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press

### **PART E. QUESTIONS OF METHOD AND KNOWLEDGE**

WEEK 11. DILTHEY'S QUESTIONS.

Katz, Steven T. 1994. *The Holocaust in Historical Context: Volume 1. The Holocaust and Mass Death before the Modern Age*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

WEEK 12. J.S. MILL'S QUESTIONS.

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

WEEK 13. HEGEL'S QUESTION: IS IT ALL OVER?

Fukuyama, Francis. 1992. *The End of History and the Last Man*. London: Hamish Hamilton

NOTES: We may de-select one text if progress is slow. My Office Hours are held at the Asch Center. Please contact me by e-mail: boleary@sas.upenn.edu