

**GOVT 6053**  
**Comparative Methods in International and Comparative Politics**

**Spring 2015**  
**Tuesday 10:10am**  
**Uris Hall 438**

**DRAFT SYLLABUS**

**Instructor:** Gustavo Flores-Macías  
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**Office hours:** 2:40-4pm Tue and Thursdays & by appointment

**Course Description**

This seminar is designed to introduce doctoral students to the study of politics through the procedures of science. It will familiarize students with methodological challenges encountered in research, such as concept formation, theory development and testing, case selection, variable operationalization and measurement, and descriptive and causal inference. Students will learn to assess research designs and causal claims as both consumers and producers of research. The material covered in this course (along with material from Government 6353) prepares students to take the comparative politics A exam. Another goal of the course is to prepare students to conduct original research for their A paper and dissertation. Students, therefore, will apply concepts and techniques to their own research questions as the semester progresses.

Because this seminar is designed to introduce doctoral students to some of the major issues in political science methods, and because specific methodological issues in the fields of comparative and international politics are numerous and varied, the list of topics discussed in this course should not be considered comprehensive.

**Course requirements**

There are no formal prerequisites, but enrollment is at the instructor's discretion. Priority will be given to PhD students in the Government department. The maximum enrollment will be 15.

**Grading Criteria**

*Participation* (30% of the final grade): You are required to attend all class meetings, to come to seminar having read and thought about the assigned material for the week, and to participate actively in class discussions.

*Peer review* (10% of the final grade). All students must write a "peer review" of the research design and causal claims in one paper presented this academic year in the PSAC workshop, which students are strongly encouraged to regularly attend. Your review is due by April 28th, but may be completed at any time during the semester. The PSAC schedule is available at:  
<http://government.arts.cornell.edu/departments/related/psac/calendar/>

*Research design* (40% of the final grade). Complete all ten research design assignments, and be prepared to discuss these ideas in class. All assignments are due Sundays at 7:00 PM on Blackboard and by email to your group.

*Final presentation* (20% of the final grade). Present to the class a 15 minute summary of your

research question, theory and observable implications, case selection, and research strategy.

Finally, students are expected to give one another regular feedback on their written work. Before the second assignment is due, the class will be divided into small research support groups. You should read the written assignments of the other members of your group as you receive them and e-mail constructive comments to them. Alternatively, groups can choose to meet weekly to discuss ideas.

### **Cornell University policies and regulations.**

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity, which is available at: <http://www.cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html>. This code includes the following statements: “A Cornell student’s submission of work for academic credit indicates that the work is the student’s own. All outside assistance should be acknowledged, and the student’s academic position truthfully reported at all times.” It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with university policies regarding plagiarism and other violations of academic integrity. A Cornell tutorial called “Recognizing and Avoiding Plagiarism” can be found at: <http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/index.cfm>

### **Readings**

All required readings are available through Blackboard, except for the following **required** books:

- King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Geddes, Barbara. 2003. *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Collier, David, and Henry E. Brady, eds. 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Morgan, Stephen L., and Christopher Winship. 2007. *Counterfactuals and Causal Inference: Methods and Principles for Social Research*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

All other readings (book chapters and articles) can be found on Blackboard. You can find them in the “Content” tab from the course homepage. You may read these articles and chapters online, or you may print them out. Please read the texts in the order that they are presented below.

### **Course Schedule**

#### **January 27: Introduction**

- Keohane, Robert O. 2009. “Political Science as a Vocation.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 42, 2: 359-363.
- Laitin, David D. 2002. “Comparative Politics: The State of the Subdiscipline.” In *Political Science: State of the Discipline*, eds. Ira Katznelson and Helen Milner. New York: Norton. pp. 630-659.
- Herrera, Yoshiko. 2006. “Theory, Data, and Formulation: The Unusual Case of David Laitin,” *Qualitative Methods* 4, 1.
- Monroe, Kristin Renwick. 2007. “The Perestroika Movement, its Methodological Concerns, and the Professional Implications of These Methodological Issues.” *Qualitative & Multi-Method Research* 5, 1.

#### **February 3: Puzzles and Questions**

- KKV, chapter 1 (pp. 3-33)
- Smith, Rogers M. 2007. "Systematizing the Ineffable: A Perestroikan's Methods for Finding a Good Research Topic." *Qualitative & Multi-Method Research* 5, 1.
- Shapiro, Ian. 2002. "Problems, Methods, and Theories in the Study of Politics, or What's Wrong with Political Science and What to Do about It." *Political Theory* 30, 4: 596-619.
- Lake, David A. 2011. "Why 'isms' Are Evil: Theory, Epistemology, and Academic Sects as Impediments to Understanding and Progress." *International Studies Quarterly* 55, 2: 465-480.
- Krugman, Paul. 1993. "How I Work." *The American Economist* 37, 2: 25-31.

### **February 10: Theories and Models**

- Lakatos, Imre. 1970. "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes." *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, ed. Imre Lakatos. New York: Cambridge University Press. pp. 91-138 and 173-180.
- Wagner, R. Harrison. 2001. "Who's Afraid of Rational Choice Theory?" Unpublished Manuscript. Department of Government, University of Texas, Austin.
- Geddes, chapter 5 (pp. 175-211)
- Clarke, Kevin A., and David M. Primo. 2007. "Modernizing Political Science: A Model-Based Approach." *Perspectives on Politics* 5, 4: 741-753.
- Friedman, Milton. 1953. "The Methodology of Positive Economics," in *Essays in Positive Economics*, ed. Milton Friedman. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. pp. 3-43.
- Bernstein, Steven, Richard Ned Lebow, Janice Gross Stein, and Steven Weber. 2000. "God Gave Physics the Easy Problems: Adapting Social Science to an Unpredictable World." *European Journal of International Relations* 6, 1: 43-76.

### **February 24: Descriptive Inference**

- KKV, chapter 2 (pp. 34-74)
- Kratchowil, Friedrich. 2007. "Evidence, Inference, and Truth a Problems of Theory Building in the Social Sciences," and Hopf, Ted. 2007. "The Limits of Interpreting Evidence." In *Theory and Evidence in Comparative Politics and International Relations*, eds. Richard Ned Lebow and Mark Irving Lichbach. New York: Palgrave. pp. 25-84.
- Przeworski, Adam, and Henry Teune. 1970. *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*. New York: John Wiley & sons, Inc. pp. 3-46.
- Eckstein, Harry. 1975. "Case Study and Theory in Political Science." In *Handbook of Political Science Volume 7*, eds. Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley. pp. 79-137.
- Gerring, John. 2004. "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good for?" *American Political Science Review* 98, 2 (May): 341-354.

### **March 3: Concepts and Measurement**

- 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. Forthcoming 2012. "Putting Typologies to Work: Concept-Formation, Measurement, and Analytic Rigor". *Political Research*

*Quarterly* 65, 2.

- Goertz, Gary. 2006. *Social Science Concepts: A User's Guide*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. pp. 27-94.
- Munck, Gerardo L., and Jay Verkuilen. 2002. "Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices." *Comparative Political Studies* 35, 1 (February): 5-34.

### **March 10: Counterfactuals**

- KKV, chapter 3 (pp. 75-114)
- Lewis, David. 1973. "Causation." *Journal of Philosophy* 70, 17: 556-567.
- Levy, Jack S. "Counterfactuals and Case Studies." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, eds. Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 627-644.
- Fearon, James D. 1991. "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science." *World Politics* 43, 2 (January): 169-195.
- M&W, chapters 1, 2, and 5 (pp. 3-57, 123-166—*skim 142-158*)

### **March 17: Case Selection**

- KKV, chapters 4-6 (pp. 115-230)
- George, Alexander L., and Andrew Bennett. 2004. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Chapter 3, "The Methods of Structured, Focused Comparison." pp. 67-72.
- Gerring, John. 2008. "Case selection for case-study analysis: qualitative and quantitative techniques." In Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 645-684.
- Geddes, chapter 3 (pp. 89-129)
- Snyder, Richard. 2001. "Scaling Down: The Subnational Comparative Method." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 36, 1: 93-110.
- Multiple authors. 2008. "Symposium: Case Selection, Case Studies, and Causal Inference." *Qualitative & Multi-Method Research* 6, 2.

### **March 24: Endogeneity, causality and identification: "natural experiments," instrumental variables, regression-discontinuity...**

- B&C, chapter 14 (Dunning, pp. 273-311)
- Sovey, Allison J., and Donald P. Green. 2011. "Instrumental Variables Estimation in Political Science: A Readers' Guide." *American Journal of Political Science* 55, 1: 188-200.
- Sekhon, Jasjeet S. 2009. "Opiates for the Matches: Matching Methods for Causal Inference." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12:487-508.
- M&W, chapters 4, 7, and 9 (*further reading, not required*)

#### *Exemplars (Read for Logic and Assumptions)*

- Natural experiment 1: Posner, Daniel N. 2004. "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi." *American Political Science Review* 98, 4:529-545.
- Natural experiment 2: Hyde, Susan D. 2007. "The Observer Effect in International Politics: Evidence from a Natural Experiment." *World Politics* 60, 1: 37-63
- Instrumental variables: Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson. 2001.

“The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation.” *American Economic Review* 91, 5: 1369-1401.

- Matching and RD: Eggers, Andrew C. and Jens Hainmueller. 2009. “MPs for Sale? Returns to Office in Postwar British Politics.” *American Political Science Review* 103, 4: 513-533.

### **March 31: Spring Break**

#### **April 7: Field, Lab-in-the-Field, and Survey Experiments**

- Stokes, Susan. 2010. “The Opportunities and Limits of Field Experiments.” *APSA-CP* 21, 1.
- Malesky, Edmund J. 2008. “Battling Onward: The Debate Over Field Research in Developmental Economics and its Implications for Comparative Politics.” *Qualitative & Multi-Method Research* 6, 2.
- Green, Donald and Alan Gerber. 2002. “Reclaiming the Experimental Tradition in Political Science.” In *Political Science: State of the Discipline*, eds. Ira Katznelson and Helen Milner. New York: Norton. pp. 805-832.
- Gaines, Brian J., James H. Kuklinski, and Paul J. Quirk. 2007. “The Logic of the Survey Experiment Reexamined.” *Political Analysis* 15, 1: 1-20.

#### *Exemplars (Read for Logic and Assumptions)*

- Field Experiment 1: Wantchekon, Leonard. 2003. “Clientelism and Voting Behavior: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Benin.” *World Politics* 55: 399-422.
- Field Experiment 2: Paluck, Elizabeth Levy, and Donald P. Green. 2009. “Deference, Dissent, and Dispute Resolution: An Experimental Intervention Using Mass Media to Change Norms and Behavior in Rwanda.” *American Political Science Review* 103, 4: 622-644.
- Lab-in-the-field experiment: Grossman, Guy and Delia Baldassarri. 2011. “The Impact of Elections on Cooperation: Evidence from a Lab in the Field Experiment in Uganda.” Working paper, [http://guygrossman.com/wpcontent/uploads/2011/08/Grossman.Baldassarri.Final\\_.pdf](http://guygrossman.com/wpcontent/uploads/2011/08/Grossman.Baldassarri.Final_.pdf)
- Survey experiment 1: Pepinsky, Thomas B., R. William Liddle, and Saiful Mujani. 2012. “Testing Islam’s Political Advantage: Evidence from Indonesia.” *American Journal of Political Science* 56, 3: 584-600.
- Survey experiment 2: Lawson, Chappell, Gabriel S. Lenz, Andy Baker, and Michael Myers. 2010. “Looking Like a Winner: Candidate Appearance and Electoral Success in New Democracies.” *World Politics* 62, 4: 561-593.

#### **April 14: Process Tracing and Mechanisms**

- B&C, chapter 10 (Bennett, 207-219) and chapter 12 (Brady, 237-242)
- Checkel, Jeffrey T. 2008. “Process-tracing.” In *Qualitative Methods in International Relations*, ed. Audie Klotz. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- George, Alexander L., and Andrew Bennett. 2004. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. pp. 205-232.
- Elster, Jon. 1989. *Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*. New York: Cambridge University Press. pp. 3-10.
- Gerring, John. 2010. “Causal Mechanisms: Yes, But...” *Comparative Political Studies* 43, 11:1499-1526.
- Beck, Nathaniel. 2006. “Is Causal-Process Observation an Oxymoron?” *Political Analysis* 14, 3 (Summer): 347-352.

### **April 21: History, Time, and Sequence**

- Pierson, Paul. 2003. "Big, Slow-Moving, and ... Invisible: Macro-Social Processes in the Study of Comparative Politics." In *Comparative-Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, eds. James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer. New York: Cambridge University Press. pp. 177-207.
- Aminzade, Ronald. 1992. "Historical Sociology and Time." *Sociological Methods and Research* 20, 4: 456-480.
- Lieberman, Evan S. 2001. "Causal Inference in Historical Institutional Analysis: A Specification of Periodization Strategies." *Comparative Political Studies* 34, 9: 1011-1035.
- Page, Scott E. 2006. "Path Dependence." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 1: 87-115.
- Collier, Ruth Berins, and David Collier. 1991. *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. pp. 27-39.
- M&W, 244-249

### **April 28: Field work and student presentations**

- Wood, Elisabeth. 2007. "Field Methods." In *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, eds. Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 123-146
- Collier, David. 1999. "Data, Field Work and Extracting New Ideas at Close Range." *APSA-CP* 10, 1: 1-2, 4-6.
- Loaeza, Soledad, Randy Stevenson, and Devra C. Moehler. 2005. "Symposium: Should Everyone Do Fieldwork?" *APSA-CP* 16, 2:8-18.
- Lieberman, Evan S. et al. 2004. "Symposium: Field Research," *Qualitative Methods*. 2, 1: 2-14.
- Read, Ben, Lauren Morris MacLean, and Melani Cammett. 2006. "Symposium: Field Research: How rich? How Thick? How Participatory?" *Qualitative Methods* 4, 2:9-18.

### **May 5: Student Presentations**

- King, Gary, Michael Tomz, and Jason Wittenberg. 2000. "Making the Most of Statistical Analyses: Improving Interpretation and Presentation." *American Journal of Political Science* 44, 2 (April): 341-355.
- Tufte, Edward. 2003. "PowerPoint is evil." *Wired*. 11, 9 (September).  
<http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/11.09/ppt2.html>