INTL 6300: Comparative Analysis and Method
Fall 2020
Th: 3:55-6:45pm, IA Building, Room 117

Dr. Mollie J. Cohen
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Office Hours: Online, by appointment
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Course Description: This course is the core seminar for the field of comparative politics. It provides an introduction to many of the questions, theories, and research methodologies employed by scholars of comparative politics. Because comparative politics is concerned principally with political phenomena within countries, there are many potential topics. This course is designed to introduce you to a wide range of topics in comparative politics, but it is by no means exhaustive.

Course Requirements: Students are expected to (1) attend and participate in all course meetings, either in-person or via Zoom; (2) complete the required reading before the start of each class; (3) complete all assignments. In the event of an emergency, it is expected the student will contact me within 24 hours of a missed class or assignment deadline.

Assignments:

1. Participation (15%)
   This is a Ph.D. level seminar, and classes are discussion-based. You are expected to attend class, to engage thoughtfully with the readings, and to communicate your ideas, questions, and concerns about the readings in a respectful way with your peers – even when you are not the discussion leader. Part of your job as a graduate student is active engagement with the material. Refusing to participate in class discussions creates an undue burden on your classmates, while also depriving you of the opportunity to participate in the exchange of ideas. Everyone is expected to post two discussion questions to the discussion board on eLC by 5pm the day before class.

2. Discussion leader (2x, 20% total)
   You will be assigned two weeks on the syllabus for which you are the “discussion leader.” Your responsibilities as discussion leader include a ~20 minute summary and critique of the week’s readings. You should think of this as a chance to set the agenda for the class discussion. Your introduction should address the main questions raised by the articles, and outline any additional questions, concerns, or issues that you would like to discuss with your classmates. It is also your responsibility to gather up the questions your classmates submit on the eLC discussion board to incorporate into your discussion.
You must submit a 2-3 page memo (single-spaced) to me on the days that you lead discussion. It should address the main questions raised by the assigned readings, with a mind towards the theories that are presented and how these fit into larger literatures on the topic. How is the theory operationalized: how are variables measured, coded, or conceptualized? What is the unit of analysis? How are alternative explanations addressed or accounted for? You should focus your critiques on the theoretical and empirical aspects of each paper, and strive to make constructive comments. Try to avoid criticizing a paper too harshly unless you can present a better way to address their research question.

3. Review (15%)
   You will write a review for an anonymous manuscript which I will provide. Writing constructive reviews is an important part of our professional responsibilities as scholars. Everyone will receive a bad review at some point, and it is very frustrating. The sooner you learn to be a helpful reviewer, the better.

4. Final Exam (50%)
   The final exam will approximate the morning portion of the doctoral comprehensive exam in comparative politics. We will discuss this in more detail at the end of the semester, but you should bear in mind that the notes you take on the readings and discussions at the end of the semester will save you a great deal of work both on the final, and also later on during your comprehensive exams.

Special Considerations for Covid-19: I would like nothing more than to be in the classroom with all of you this semester; however, the Covid-19 pandemic has made this unsafe for us and for the larger Athens community.

1. If you experience symptoms consistent with Covid-19 or are exposed to someone who has tested positive for Covid-19, **DO NOT ATTEND CLASS**. Report your exposure and any symptoms immediately through UGA’s contact tracing app and seek a test as soon as possible.

   If you are ill, you might find yourself physically unable to complete assignments on time. If you find yourself in this situation, **DO NOT PANIC**. Do reach out to me as soon as possible so we can find a solution.

2. There is no attendance policy for this class, and you will not be punished in any way for exclusively participating in this class online.

3. If you choose to attend class in person on days you are eligible, you must sign up online at least **24 hours prior to the scheduled class time**. Once the class roster is settled, you will be assigned to an “attendance group” (currently A and B). You will only be eligible to attend class on your attendance group days. If you choose to attend class in person,
note that UGA requires all students, faculty, and staff to wear face coverings over the
nose and mouth while indoors and maintain social distance (at least six feet) whenever
possible. If you come to class without a face covering, you will be asked to find one or to
leave and participate virtually.

4. This class is discussion based and all discussions will occur via “real-time” chat, on
Zoom. Links will be sent by university email to students each week, and the invitation
will include a password. Students are expected to attend each online session; if you
physically attend class, you will still be engaging with your peers who are ineligible for
in-class participation via Zoom.

5. After Thanksgiving (November 26th), all classes will be held exclusively online.

Books you should purchase:

3. Adida, Claire L. 2014. *Immigrant Exclusion and Insecurity in Africa: Coethnic
   Strangers*. Cambridge University Press.

*Note that these books are also available as e-books, through the UGA library.*
Week 1 (August 20) – Introduction to Comparative Politics [ALL ONLINE]

Required:

Assignment due on August 20: Write a one paragraph description of your research interests, drawing on the Geddes reading from this week. Be sure to state your broader research question, as well as specify the scope of your research (time period, geographic region, groups, etc.). Think of this as the written version of your elevator speech: How would you describe your research interests to someone in just a few sentences?

Please email these to me by the start of class. We will discuss these in class today, so come prepared!

Week 2 (August 27) – Comparative Method, Case selection, Process tracing [GRP A]

Required:

Recommended:

**Week 3 (September 3) Research Ethics [GRP B]**

Required:
6. Skim the [University of Georgia IRB Investigator Manual](https://www.irb.uga.edu/investigator-manual). Focus on sections that are potentially relevant to your own work.
7. Complete the [CITI online certification for human subjects research](https://www.citiprogram.org). Email your completion certificate to me, or print it and bring it to class. I recommend that you complete the basic “Social and Behavioral Research” course. If your own research will involve other groups, you may also wish to complete those courses now.

Recommended:

**Week 4 (September 10) – Regime Types and Measurement [GRP A]**

Required:
Recommended:

Week 5 (September 17) – Authoritarian Institutions [GRP B]

Required:

Recommended:

Week 6 (September 24) – Democracy and Development [GRP A]

Required:

Recommended:


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**Week 7 (October 1) – Parliamentary, Presidential, and Semi-presidential democracies [GRP B]**

**Required:**

6. **Review Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland 2010 (Week 4) – just the part on classifying democracies!**

**Recommended:**

Week 8 (October 8) – Electoral Rules and Party Systems [GRP A]

Required:

Recommended:
Week 9 (October 15) – Parties and Partisanship [GRP B]

Required:

Recommended:

Week 10 (October 22) – Protest and Social Movements [GRP A]

Required:

Recommended:
Week 11 (October 29) – Political Violence [GRP B]

Required:

Recommended:

**Week 12 (November 5) – Identity and Movement [GRP A]**

**Required:**

**Recommended:**
Week 13 (November 13) – Language and ethnicity [GRP B]

Required:

Recommended:

Week 14 (November 20) – Representation [OPEN GRP, BY SIGN UP]

Peer reviews due by Friday at 5pm

Required:

Rest TBD.

Week 15 (November 26)

NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING
Week 16 (December 3) – Class to be held by Zoom

Group meeting to review responses to the list of potential comps questions I will provide. Discussing and outlining answers with a group can help you to think of creative ways that you might answer the same question. It’s also helpful to get feedback from your peers on whether your responses are covering the basic literature – the main point of comps is to show you understand the broad contours of different topics in comparative politics!

Final Exam: Questions released Friday, December 4 – due by noon, Monday, December 7
Mental Health and Wellness Resources:

- If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit https://sco.uga.edu. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.

- UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga) or crisis support (https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies).

- If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.

- Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.