Comparative Politics (Sammenlignende statskundskab og DAK 3) – Lecture plan and syllabus

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Lecturers and teachers: Stine Laursen, Livia Rohrbach, Anders Woller Nielsen, Christoffer Cappelen, Bertel Teifeldt Hansen, and Jacob Gerner Hariri.

Lectures: Monday 10-12 in CSS 35-01-05.

Course description

This BA-level course provides an introduction to the field of comparative politics, a subfield in political science. Comparative politics relies on the comparative method to examine general theories but also to understand individual cases. The course builds upon Introduction to Political Science (“PG”) and General Political Science (“Almen statskundskab”). Whereas these courses largely examined politics in established democracies, the course Comparative Politics examines the origins of democratic institutions, democratic regime change, politics in non-democratic systems, as well as politics across different varieties of democracies.

Description of objectives

On completion of the course the student is expected to be able to:

• Knowledge
  o explain the concepts and theories of comparative politics
  o describe comparative politics’ field of study
  o understand the comparative methods and their application to specific material

• Skills
  o independently consider the problems of comparative politics

• Competencies
  o turn concepts and theories into concrete analyses of empirical material

Assignments and Exams

Compulsory writing exercise for SS

As part of the course, all students must pass the compulsory writing exercise. The question(s) for the writing exercise will be made available on the course website in Absalon at 12:00 on October 12, 2018 (week 41). The writing exercise must be uploaded to the course website no later than 12:00 on Friday October 26 (week 43). Students who do not pass the writing exercise can resubmit. The deadline for resubmission is 12:00 on November 23 (week 47). Week 45 will be reserved for feedback on the writing exercise, and there will be no lectures or classes this week. Schedules for each class (“hold”) will follow.

Students are allowed to do the writing exercise in groups (up to three students per paper).

If you choose to do the writing exam in groups, all members of a group must belong to the same class (“hold”). The length of the writing exercise (excluding frontpage, table of content, references) should not exceed 19,200 characters (8 “normalsider”). This holds whether the assignment is completed individually or in a group. Remember to include name and page number in your midterm.
Ordinary exam and resit exam

For SS: The exam is a five-day take home assignment (individual examination). Questions will be issued 12:00 January 3, 2019. Deadline for submission is 12:00 January 8, 2019. Grades will be posted online no later than 16:00 January 28, 2019. The resit examination will be uploaded 12:00 February 8, 2019. It must be submitted 12:00 February 13 2018. Results from the resit will be made available online no later than 16:00 February 28, 2019.

For DAK 3: The exam is a three-day take home assignment (individual examination). Questions will be issued 12:00 January 11, 2019. Deadline for submission is 12:00 January 14, 2019. Grades will be posted online no later than 16:00 February 8, 2019. The resit examination will be uploaded 12:00 February 15, 2019. It must be submitted 12:00 February 18 2019. Results from the resit will be made available online no later than 16:00 March 3, 2019.

Course language
The official course language in E2018 is Danish. This means that the compulsory writing exercise, the exam, and the re-sit exam will be in Danish.

Course program and readings

With few exceptions, all readings are available through REX. The exceptions have been scanned and uploaded to the course’s Absalon page in the folder for the relevant week. Readings marked with an “L” are covered in the lecture. Readings marked with a “C” are covered in the classes.

OBS: NOTE only for the students from the 2017-studieordning, following the course DAK 3: You follow all lectures, but only follow the class sessions in the weeks that are marked “also DAK 3”. Thus, your curriculum contains all required readings marked “L” and the required readings marked “C” only in those weeks that are marked “also DAK 3”.

Week 1 – Introduction to Comparative Politics & the Use of Concepts (also DAK 3)

Learning goals:
- Conceptual precision is of special importance in Comparative Politics where theories travel across regions and over time. Different approaches to concept formation (classical, family resemblance, radial concepts) are introduced (Sartori and Collier & Mahon).
- Challenges in measuring a core concept in the social sciences – and in this course: Democracy.

Required readings:
Further readings:
Cheibub, Jose Antonio, Jennifer Gandhi, and James Raymond Vreeland. 2010. “Democracy and

Bloc I – Patterns of State and Regime Formation

Week 2 - State and Empire (also DAK 3)

Learning goals:
- What is a state? What is an empire? The classical theories of state formation (Fukuyama). For
much of recorded history, empire was the dominant form of social organization, and in many
regions they have continued to be so until recently. What are the characteristics of imperial
rule -- and the consequences?
- The classical theories of state building are Eurocentric. What has held back the process of
state formation in Africa, and why are African states weak (Herbst)? How is state building
different today from the early modern period (Krasner)? And can we fix that (Krasner)?
- Cases covered: Political history of Western Europe, particularly France and UK

Required readings
L Fukuyama, Francis. 2011. The origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution,
London: Profile Books, CH 2 (The coming of Leviathan, pp. 137-159) and CH 22 (“The
(excerpt).
chapter 1: 11-31.

Further readings
Hui, Victoria Tin-bor (2004): “Toward a Dynamic Theory of International Politics: Insights from
Comparing Ancient China and Early Modern Europe”, International Organization.
Møller, Jørgen. 2014. “Why Europe Avoided Hegemony? A Historical Perspective on the

Week 3 – Modernization Theory (and its Critics)

Required readings
(OBS: not required on 2012-studieordning!)
Further readings:

Week 4 - From Early Regimes to Modern Democracy

Learning goals:
- What are the origins of early representative institutions (Ertman)?
- And how did modern democracy arise from that (Przeworski)?
- Early representative institutions are an institutionalization of privileges to certain groups in society; modern democracy is the removal of said privileges. How can we understand that dynamic?

Required readings

Further readings:

Week 5 - How does democracy spread (or not). Colonization and the case of the Middle East. (also DAK 3)

Learning goals:
- Now that we understand the origins of representative democracy in Europe -- how did it spread outside the continent (Hariri)? How did the pattern of European colonization shape subsequent regime developments and what are the causes and consequences of different forms of colonization (Lange).
- Cases covered: the Middle East.
- The Middle East also opens the discussion of varieties of authoritarianism that follows in the coming two weeks.

Required readings:


**Further readings:**


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**Bloc II – Authoritarian Institutions and Regime Transitions**

**Week 6- Authoritarian institutions / elections and parliaments in authoritarian regimes**

Learning goals:
- The concept of institutions under authoritarian rule: different function of institutions, but self-enforcing institutions do play role in information sharing (establish credible commitments) as well as in terms of coordination.
- Explaining legislatures, elections and parties in terms of credible commitment mechanisms (Magaloni) or as co-optation mechanisms (Gandhi).
- Cases covered: China

**Required readings**


**Further readings:**

**Week 7 - Regime types, levels of democracy, varieties of authoritarian regimes, hybrid regimes (Also DAK 3)**

Learning goals:
- Have a fundamental overview of political regimes: what are the constitutive characteristics of subtypes of democracy (Møller and Skaaning) and of subtypes of autocracies (Seeberg).
Understand the relationship (causally and temporally) between the different regime attributes -- historically and today (Møller and Skaaning).
- Understanding the rise and the function of competitive authoritarian regimes.

Required readings:

Further readings:

Week 8 - Revolutions

Learning goals:
- What constitute a revolution? How have they been studied? (Goldstone)
- The underlying dynamics of revolutions: revolutionary thresholds, equilibria and spiralling effects (Kuran).
- How collective action problems seriously impede revolutions (Kuran)
- Cases covered: The revolutionary dynamics during the Arab Spring (Bellin)

Required readings

Further readings:

Week 9 - Feedback week

Week 10 - Coups

Learning goals:
- When does the military intervene in politics? What impedes / facilitates coups?
- Guardianship dilemma and the military as a unique actor when violence is ever present.
- Recap on weeks on transitions: Does revolutions and coups lead to democratization or just another authoritarian regime? Important for democratization: negotiation, pacts, credible commitments, future payoffs. With the readings to this module in mind, how could one expect transitional outcomes of revolutions vs. coups?

**Required readings**


**Further readings:**


**Week 11 – Civil War (Also DAK 3)**

**Learnings goals:**

- Why do civil wars occur? What are the main theoretical explanations of civil war onset?
- Why are civil wars so difficult to end?
- Why are the causes of civil war so difficult to figure out?

**Required readings**

**L** Fearon, James D. (2017). Civil war and the current international system. *Daedalus*, 1-22


**Further readings**


Fearon, J. D. (2004). Why do some civil wars last so much longer than others?. *Journal of Peace*
Bloc III – Varieties of Democracy

Week 12 – Patterns of Democracy & Democratic Institutions

Learning goals:
- Institutions and political effects
- Introduction into dimensions of democratic institutions: consensus-majoritarian
- Consensus-majoritarian as a type of democracy: Germany and UK
- Presidentialism and semi-presidentialism.

Required readings


Further readings:


Week 13 - Federalism and Unitary States (Also DAK 3)

Learning goals:
- Why federalism?
- Different types of territorial autonomy/decentralisation
- Bicameralism
- How does federalism combine with democracy + non-democracy
- Cases covered: Federal systems in practice: United States versus Russia
Required readings

Further readings:

Week 14 - Social Cleavages and Institutions

Learning goals:
- Definition of cleavages
- Institutions for divided societies: Consociational and integrationist approaches
- Endogeneity of social cleavages
- Comparative case study design (Posner)
- Cases covered: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Required readings

Further readings:
Week 15 - Democracies and their citizens: direct democracy; civil society/social movements (Also DAK 3)

Learning goals:
- Get familiar with institutions that allow for direct participation of citizens
- Spread of institutions of direct democracy
- A vetoplayer model of direct democracy
- The role of civil society in democracies
- Cases covered: United Kingdom, United States

Required readings

This week DAK 3 covers the welfare state in the class session. The DAK 3 curriculum for this week is: