This course introduces graduate students to the complex, fascinating, and ever-changing field of comparative politics. Although the course is organized theoretically, it self-consciously operates on three levels: the theoretical, the methodological, and the empirical. Theoretically, we will focus on the evolution of the main disciplinary debates in comparative politics such as those surrounding democratization, nationalism, institutions, and the interaction of the state and the market. Methodologically, we will discuss the various tools and approaches that scholars use to compare states. Empirically, we will look at how these theories and methods have been applied to the real world and with what results. The course thus gives students the basic means with which to progress from critical consumers of comparative political research to active, engaged producers of it.

Course Obligations
This course emphasizes reading and digesting a large amount of material in order to give you a basic background in comparative politics, and the course obligations reflect that goal. Your grade is based on eleven weekly reviews (worth 25% of your grade), active class participation (15%), and three 6-8 page analytic essays (20% each, for a total of 60%).

Readings
As this is a general survey course, we will read extensively and broadly. Strategically processing a great deal of information in a short period of time is a critical skill for graduate students to develop. Each week the readings will focus on one key theme. Although you may feel buried in reading, keep in mind that we are barely scratching the surface of each theme.

If possible, you should do the readings in the order that they appear on the syllabus, as there is typically a logical flow from one to the next. Nearly all of the readings are available online with McGill VPN access, and are hyperlinked; those that are not will be available on MyCourses. We are reading large portions of certain books (e.g., Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*), so you may prefer to purchase those rather than reading the e-versions.

Weekly Reviews
Beginning with Week Two, you will hand in a short written review that answers the following five questions for each assigned reading:

1) Sum up the most important argument of each reading in **one or two sentences**. What major point are the author(s) trying to make?

2) Identify the methodology that the author(s) use to support their argument, in one sentence.

3) Give one important insight and/or fact that you gained from this reading, again in one sentence. That is, what do you now understand or know that you didn’t before doing this
reading? What was most valuable to you about this reading?

4) Give one major critique of the reading, again in one sentence - consider methodology, logic, biases, omissions, etc. Do the author(s) prove their argument convincingly?

5) If you heard the author(s) present this work, what probing question would you ask?

The reviews are due each Monday no later than 2pm via MyCourses, beginning on September 16 (Week 2). These brief reviews are meant to encourage you to think about the readings before you come to class. You must answer all five questions for each reading, and the answers must reflect a solid understanding of the readings (i.e., don’t try to do this after skimming the first and last paragraphs of an article).

To receive an A for this part of the course, at least ten of your reviews must be turned in on time and fulfill all of the above criteria. You may have one late and/or incomplete review during the semester without penalty, as long as it is completed by December 3. Each further late and/or incomplete review will reduce your final grade for this section of the course by one letter-grade step (e.g., A to A-). All reviews must be handed in and be complete by 5pm on December 3 - any missing reviews at that point will each reduce the final letter grade for this part of the course by two steps (e.g., A to B+).

Participation
You should participate actively and regularly in class discussions. Part of this participation will be up to you (offering informed comments and questions during our discussions), and part will be determined by the luck of the draw. When we begin to discuss each reading, one student will be chosen at random to start the discussion by giving a short (about one minute) summary of the specific work in question. You should be able to remind the class of the author(s) main argument and methodology (i.e., how do they support the work’s claims?), and raise a few initial critiques and/or questions for the class to think about.

Analytic Essays
You will write three analytic essays over the course of the semester that discuss issues of your choice raised by the required readings. You should structure your essays not as literature reviews but as topic or problem-focused essays, in which you present an argument dealing with a particular research area (or areas) and use materials from the assigned readings to support your argument. There are many ways to accomplish this task. You might, for example, compare and contrast two authors’ or two types of approaches to a particular theoretical issue, carefully specifying the grounds for your comparison. You might compare/contrast two or more authors’ arguments in light of their methodologies, probing to what extent these methodologies can support the authors’ conclusions. You may wish to focus exclusively on the readings from one particular week, or to compare readings across different weeks. Ph.D. students might choose to answer a question from a past comparative comprehensive exam (old exams are available on the departmental website under “Graduate Students Restricted Content”). It is up to you.

Make sure that your papers have a minimum of summary, are clearly argued, and do not wander from one unrelated point to the next. Most importantly, let me know in the introductory paragraph what your chosen focus is, how you are going to analyze it, and what your main
argument will be. Spelling, grammar, and style count. Use the author-date in-text reference system and include a complete bibliography. Your papers should be 6-8 double-spaced pages (not counting the bibliography), with reasonable margins and in 12-point font. No outside reading is required or expected in writing these papers, although if you choose to answer an old exam question you will likely find additional readings to be helpful.

Save a tree - submit your papers to me via MyCourses. Your first paper is due by 4pm on Friday, October 11, your second paper is due by 4pm on Friday, November 15, and the third and final paper is due by 4pm on Friday, December 6. Late papers are penalized by one letter-grade step per day (e.g., an A paper submitted one day late becomes an A- paper, etc.).

Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade Points</th>
<th>Grade Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>&gt;3.85</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.51-3.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.16-3.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.86-3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.51-2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.16-2.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.86-2.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0-1.85</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>&lt;1.0</td>
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This course uses the standard 4.0 system for grading. An A on an assignment is worth 4 points, an A- is worth 3.7 points, etc. To calculate your final grade, I will first multiply the grade points you have earned on each assignment by the relative weight of that assignment (e.g., since the reviews are worth 25% of your grade, I would multiply your final review grade by .25), and then add all of the scores together to get your final grade-point average. That average will determine your final letter grade for the course (refer the grade range column). For example, if your overall grade-point average is a 3.4, you would earn a B+ in the course.

Important Notes
McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

McGill University is on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.
## Course Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week One (9/9)</th>
<th>What Is Comparative Politics? Methods and Perspectives</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week Two (9/16)</td>
<td>Pluralism and Liberal Democracy (<em>Weekly reviews begin</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Three (9/23)</td>
<td>Democratization and Democratic Backsliding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week Four (9/30)</td>
<td>Authoritarianism</td>
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<td>Week Five (10/7)</td>
<td>The State and State Formation</td>
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*October 11 - First essay due*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week Six (10/21)</th>
<th>Nations, Nationalism, and Memory</th>
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<td>Week Seven (10/28)</td>
<td>Identity and the State</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week Eight (11/4)</td>
<td>Institutions, Ideas, and Change</td>
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<td>Week Nine (11/11)</td>
<td>Parties, Elections, and Representation</td>
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*November 15 - Second essay due*

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<tr>
<th>Week Ten (11/18)</th>
<th>Comparative Political Economy</th>
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<td>Week Eleven (11/25)</td>
<td>Development and Dependency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week Twelve (12/2)</td>
<td>Collective Action and Contentious Politics</td>
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*December 6 - Third essay due*
Week One (9/9)  What is Comparative Politics? Methods and Perspectives


Symposium on Political Ethnography, 2017. *PS: Political Science & Politics, 50(1).* Contributions by Peregrine Schwartz-Shea and Samantha Majic (pp 97-102) and Edward Schatz (pp. 135-138).
Week Two (9/16)    Pluralism and Liberal Democracy (guest - Prof. Jacob Levy)


Constant, Benjamin. 1816. "The Liberty of Ancients Compared with that of Moderns."

*I encourage those with strong French-language skills to read it in the original ([Vol 1 and Vol 2]).*
  - Author’s introduction, online or pp. 11-26 in Penguin;
  - vol. 1 chapters 9-27 online or pp. 201-370 in Penguin (From "It is the people who govern" through "Importance of the above in relation to Europe")
  - vol. 2 section 2, chapters 1-13 online or pp. 583-626 in Penguin (From "Why democratic nations display..." through "Why Americans are so restless...")
  - vol. 2 section 3, chapters 1-4 online or pp 649-662 in Penguin (From "How customs become softer..." through "Consequences...")


Week Three (9/23)  Democratization and Democratic Backsliding


Week Four (9/30)  Authoritarianism


Levitsky, Steven and Lucan Way. 2010. Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid regimes after the Cold War. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1-2 (pp. 1-84)


Week Five (10/7)  The State and State Formation


Read one carefully of a, b, or c (include in weekly review), skim the other two:


Week Six (10/21)  Nations, Nationalism, and Memory


Week Seven (10/28)  

Identity and the State


Week Eight (11/4)  Institutions, Ideas, and Change


Week Nine (11/11)  Parties, Elections, and Representation


Week Ten (11/18)  Comparative Political Economy


Week Eleven (11/25)  Development and Dependency


Week Twelve (12/2)  Collective Action and Contentious Politics


