

POS 6933
Spring 2026
216 Anderson
T 8:30-11:30

Michael Bernhard
201A Anderson
Office Hours: F10:00-12:00
bernhard(at)ufl.edu

POS6933: Comparative Historical Analysis

AUDIENCE: Open to all graduate students. Prerequisites: one of the following -- CPO 6091 - Introduction to Comparative Political Analysis, POS 6045: Seminar in American Politics, INR 6607: International Relations Theory, or one of three Foundational Thinkers and Texts courses in political theory (POT 6016: Ancient Political Thought, POT 6056: Modern Political Thought, POT 6067: Contemporary Political Theory).

COURSE OBJECTIVES: This is an advanced offering that counts distributionally either in comparative politics or methods. It is meant to introduce students to a wide range of work which studies macro-political outcomes (state formation, regime type, political change, and development) across a broad range of states. The materials in the course look at a wide cross-section of cases from Europe, Africa, North America, Latin America, and Asia. It also includes two units with meta-theoretical/methodological focus which serve as an introduction to the forms of inquiry grouped under the rubrics of comparative historical analysis, historical institutionalism, and historical political economy. This can either serve as an independent area of examination on comprehensive exams or will help to buttress your knowledge in the theories of the state, regimes and regime change, or development.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES: This is a reading and discussion seminar. You need to attend all sessions, arrive on time, and be prepared. We will discuss and evaluate the ideas and concepts presented in the weekly readings. Prior to each session, each student should read and spend time critically thinking about all the readings for the week. You need to move beyond the undergraduate habit of passing your eyes over the words and declaring an assignment completed. In the case of research this means that you should be able to identify the author's research question, the strategy devised for answering it, the method(s) and data used to answer it, as well as assess the validity of the results presented.

Student participation: Informed and civil participation is an integral part of the seminar's strategy for learning. Discussion will be structured by the posing of questions by the instructor. Guessing, uninformed answers, and speculation will not help you in my assessment of your mastery of the material assigned and will be apparent to those who are prepared around the table. I expect all enrolled to participate. For those of you who are shy or feel insecure, or for whom English is not a first language, this will be more difficult. You can overcome such disadvantages by thorough preparation and turn a potential weakness into a new aptitude.

Policy on attendance: Any absence requires an explanation in advance. An unexcused absence will lead to a participation score of zero for that week and a proportional deduction from the attendance component of your grade.

Research paper: All students will be required to submit a research paper. Given the nature of the subject studied, several formats are more likely to yield successful results. First, one alternative would be to test an existing theory using a case not covered by that work, further testing and evaluating a finding in the literature. Second, students who have greater ambition can consider writing a more comprehensive research design, explaining their theory and strategy for inference, and then implementing one aspect of the design as a plausibility probe (e.g., a regression test, a paired case comparison, or a theoretically informed case study). Third, students can bring extant theory to bear on a new case and highlight how the existing literature explaining a particular outcome in that case, by not considering this perspective, has failed to shed light on important considerations in explaining the outcome. Students should not necessarily feel constrained by these suggestions. Other reasonable proposals will be happily entertained and discussed.

All students should schedule a meeting with me during office hours to discuss their preliminary ideas for the research paper in Week 6. An interim meeting to discuss progress on the paper should be scheduled in office hours prior to Spring Break. This meeting should show serious thought on the inferential strategy used in the paper. First drafts of all papers will be due to me by Week 13. This draft will not be graded but will be an opportunity for you to receive final feedback and guidance prior to the presentation of your work in class and final submission. Such drafts need not be fully complete but should be in an advanced state with any missing sections outlined and explained.

PROCEDURES FOR EVALUATION: Student performance will be assessed on the basis of attendance and participation in the seminars, and the research paper sequence. These responsibilities will be weighted in the following manner.

Participation.....	10%
Initial research meeting.....	5%
Follow-up research meeting....	10%
First draft submission	10%
Presentation.....	5%
Final paper.....	60%

90% of your grade is based on the preparation, presentation, and submission of your research product. We will follow a series of steps of identifying your topic, your research question, your inferential strategy, providing you with feedback, and then submission of finished work. Pay attention to the prompts marked by **asterisks (**), bolded, and italicized** in the syllabus.

ACADEMIC POLICIES:

- Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in the course are consistent with university policies. [See UF Academic Regulations and Policies for more information regarding the University Attendance Policies.](#)

- Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. [See the “Get Started With the DRC” webpage on the Disability Resource Center site.](#) It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.
- Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points. This may be achieved by including [a link to the University grades and grading policies.](#)
- Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three ways:
 1. The email they receive from GatorEvals
 2. Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals
 3. The central portal at <https://my-ufl.bluer.com>

Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

- The University's Honesty Policy regarding cheating, plagiarism, etc.:

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [See the UF Conduct Code website for more information.](#) If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

- In-Class Recording:

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal education use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and deliver by an instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentation such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless, of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES:

- E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at [352-392-4357](#) or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- [Career Connections Center](#): Reitz Union Suite 1300, [352-392-1601](#). Career assistance and counseling services.
- [Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Call [866-281-6309](#) or email ask@ufl.libanswers.com for more information.
- [Academic Resources](#): 1317 Turlington Hall, Call [352-392-2010](#), or to make a private appointment: [352- 392-6420](#). Email contact: teaching-center@ufl.edu. General study skills and tutoring.
- [Writing Studio](#): Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, [352-846-1138](#) | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; [Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information](#).
- Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): [View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information](#).
- UF Student Success Initiative: Visit <https://studentsuccess.ufl.edu/> for resources that support your success as a UF student.
- [Public Speaking Lab](#): (Dial Center, 501 Rolfs Hall). Offering online and in-person help developing, organizing, and practicing oral presentations. Contact email: publicspeakinglab@clas.ufl.edu.
-

CAMPUS HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES:

- UF Whole Gator Resources: Visit <https://one.uf.edu/whole-gator/discover> for resources that are designed to help you thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally at UF.

POLICY ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: AI can be a useful tool in research. It can help you locate relevant literature. It can help you locate and master software that will help you produce and analyze data. It is not a substitute for your thinking or writing. You are here to learn to write, make an argument, think critically, and use evidence to further advance your intelligence and human potential. Reliance on such programs to formulate your argument or write it is a form of cheating yourself from realizing your full potential. Please note that under the Honor Code: "Commissioning or seeking to commission another person or Entity, with or without compensation, to produce or complete academic work or to impersonate a student in any academic activity."

LATE WORK: Students may request short extensions on deadlines when they face situations that would qualify for excused absences (see below), or instances where their attendance in multiple courses create situations where many assignments are due on or about the same day. Such extensions need to be requested prior to the assignment deadline. Unexplained lateness may be subject to the penalty of a reduction of a full letter grade on the assignment.

READINGS: All readings are available free of charge either through the UF libraries either electronically or on reserve through ARES. The location of course materials is noted in the course outline. All books are available for purchase at the UF bookstore.

COURSE OUTLINE:

Week 1 (January 13): Introductory Session

Week 2 (January 20): Methods I

Kreuzer, M. (2023). *The Grammar of Time: A Toolbox for Comparative Historical Analysis*. Cambridge University Press. [ARES]

Week 3 (January 27): The State I

Tilly, C. (1985). War Making and State Making as Organized Crime. In P. B. Evans, D. Rueschemeyer, & T. Skocpol (Eds.), *Bringing the State Back In* (pp. 169–191). Cambridge University Press. [UF Library Access: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/bringing-the-state-back-in/war-making-and-state-making-as-organized-crime/7A7B3B6577A060D76224F54A4DD0DA4C>]

Ceteno, M. (1997). Blood and Debt: War and Taxation in Latin America. *American Journal of Sociology* 102(6): 1565-1605. [UF Library Access: <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/epdf/10.1086/231127>]

Herbst, J. (1990). War and the State in Africa. *International Security* 14(4): 117-139. [UF Library Access: <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/446857>]

Week 4 (February 3): The State II

Bensel, R. (1991). *Yankee Leviathan: The Origins of Central State Authority in America, 1859–1877*. Cambridge University Press. [UF Library Access: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/yankee-leviathan/794C503CB4333604E87ADBBFDA817BD6>]

Week 5 (February 10): The State III

Grzymała-Busse, A. M. (2023). *Sacred Foundations: The Religious and Medieval Roots of the European State*. Princeton University Press. [UF Library Access: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv2tjd6j6>]

****Think about discussing your research topic in an office meeting. Deadline next week.**

Week 6 (February 17): Regimes I

Special session with David Art, Tufts University, Thursday, Feb 19th. Discussion of his new book manuscript. Time and Place TBA. Students with other responsibilities will be excused. [Reading provided by guest].

**** Discussion of research question in office during class time.**

Week 7 (February 24): The State IV

Schenoni, L. L. (2024). *Bringing War Back In: Victory, Defeat, and the State in Nineteenth-Century Latin America*. Cambridge University Press [UF Library Access: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/bringing-war-back-in/849FF87CA1DC04EDE8657C90F00D9504>]

Week 8 (March 3): The State V

Charnysh, V. (2024). *Uprooted: How Post-WWII Population Transfers Remade Europe*. Cambridge University Press. [UF Library Access: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/uprooted/CE6B3075998AD5B1FBC44F2A3C494C6A>]

****Schedule research question and inferential strategy office meeting for next week.**

Week 9 (March 10): Methods II

Collier, D. & Munck, G. (2022). *Critical Junctures and Historical Legacies: Insights and Methods for Comparative Social Science*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. [ARES]

****In office meeting to discuss inferential strategy.**

March 17 – Spring Break

Week 10 (March 24): Regimes II

Skocpol, T. (1994). A Critical Review of Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy. Social Revolutions in the Modern World* (pp. 25-54). Cambridge University Press. [UF Library Access: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/social-revolutions-in-the-modern-world/D743103B7930DB9081B440B05D130536>]

Haggard, S., Kaufman, R. (2021). *Backsliding: Democratic Regress in the Contemporary World*. Cambridge University Press. [UF Library Access: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/elements/backsliding/CCD2F28FB63A56409FF8911351F2E937>]

Week 11 (March 31): Regimes III

Slater, D., & Wong, J. (2022). *From Development to Democracy: The Transformations of Modern Asia*. Princeton University Press. [ARES]

Week 12 (April 7): Regimes IV

Ahmed, A. (2025). *The Regime Question: Foundations of Democratic Governance in Europe and the United States*. Princeton University Press. [ARES]

Week 13 (April 14): Regimes V

Teele, D. L. (2020). *Forging the Franchise: The Political Origins of the Women's Vote*. Princeton University Press. [UF Library Access: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ufl/detail.action?docID=5527324>]

**** Paper Drafts Due**

Week 14 (April 21)

Research Presentations

****Paper Due:** April 30, 2026.