POIR Program: Comparative Politics

Field Description

“Comparative politics is the focus of research of eighteen POIR faculty. Their interests include democratization, political economy, law, subnational politics, state-society relations and women in development. These faculty have regional expertise in North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, East Asia, Europe, Russia, the Middle East and Africa. Their publications include a large number of articles in top political science journals (Comparative Political Studies, Comparative Politics, World Politics, International Organization, International Security, International Studies Quarterly), premier policy journals (Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, Governance), and leading university presses (Cambridge, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Michigan, Oxford, Princeton, Stanford).”

Core Faculty
Laurie Brand
Mai’a Cross
Richard Dekmejian
Robert English
Nora Hamilton
Patrick James
David Kang
Saori Katada
Abe Lowenthal
Daniel Lynch
Gerry Munck*
Alison Renteln
Stan Rosen
Eliz Sanasarian
Mary Sarotte
Jefferey Sellers*
Nick Weller
Carol Wise
*Field co-coordinators

Field Requirements

Students concentrating in Comparative Politics will be required to take the core seminar, POSC 520 (Comparative Politics) and at least two elective courses. Additional electives are encouraged. A field examination is required except for students who take comparative politics as a third field.
Catalogue description of core seminar: POSC 520 Comparative Politics. (4 units) Survey of literature; examination of approaches, concepts, and issues in the field of comparative politics. (NOTE: The seminar is designed in coordination with the field reading list, and is intended to provide an overview of the field and preparation for the field examination.)

**Courses in Comparative Politics**

The list of courses that have been considered up to now as comparative politics courses are:

- PS 525: Cities, Regions & Global Society
- PS 535: Seminar in No. African & Middle Eastern Politics
- PS 539: Political Economy and Public Policy
- PS 554: Women in Global Perspective
- PS 610: Seminar in Political Parties
- PS 611: Seminar in Executive & Legislative Processes
- PS 630: Seminar in European Politics
- PS 632: Seminar in Latin American Politics
- PS 633: Seminar in East Asian Politics
- PS 634: Seminar in Southeast Asian Politics
- PS 636: Seminar in African Politics
- PS 637: Seminar in Chinese Politics
- PS 640: Seminar in Problems of Comparative Politics
- PS 641: Seminar in Comparative Judicial Policies, Processes & Behavior
- PS 648: International Human Rights Law & Policy
- PS 670: Seminar in International Law
- PS 695: Social Science Theory
- IR 509: Culture, Gender & Global Society
- IR 525: State and Society in International Relations
- IR 534: East Asian Security Issues
- IR 551: International Political Economy of the Pacific Rim
- IR 556: Latin America and US Foreign Policy
- IR 557: Africa and US Foreign Policy
- IR 558: European Foreign and Security Policy
- IR 561: Japanese Foreign Policy and International Relations of East Asia
- IR 563: Chinese Foreign Policy
- IR 581: International Relations of the Middle East
- IR 599: Advanced Field Research Methods in Comparative Politics & IR
- IR 599: Migration and Diaspora

In addition, courses in religion and conflict, democratization, and human rights, have been considered comparative courses.
Beginning in 2011-2012, any course that will be counted toward the Comparative Politics field requirement must focus predominantly on the comparative explanation of politics within countries. Faculty members are encouraged to request that courses they teach be included in the field. In order for a course to be included, the syllabus for the course must be approved by the field coordinators in consultation with the relevant faculty member. Faculty may appeal the decisions of the coordinators to the full Comparative Politics faculty.

The core seminar in Comparative Politics will be cross-listed in IR and POSC. In addition, we consider that the cross listing of all comparative courses would be advisable.

An annual meeting will be held to coordinate the offerings in comparative politics. The timing of this meeting would be just ahead of the time when the unit heads decide on the courses to be taught.

Students concentrating in Comparative Politics are required to take one core seminar (POSC/IR 520) and two elective courses (from the list of courses provided by the field coordinator/s); to earn credit, a grade of B or better is needed on each course. Additional electives are encouraged. A field examination is required except for students who take comparative politics as a third field. Proficiency in a language other than English is strongly recommended.

**Field Reading List**

A recommended reading list for the field exam is maintained by the field co-coordinators and updated periodically. As new areas of scholarship evolve, these will be included in the reading list. However, addition to the list should be balanced through the removal of some items.

**Language Requirement**

Language training is strongly encouraged but not required. To ensure language competence, prospective students are encouraged to begin development of language skills for their area of specialization before entering the program. Faculty advisors may encourage individual students to acquire additional language or methodological skills for specific research programs.

**Sample Program of Study**

*Year 1:*

**Fall**
Methods I  
Comparative core seminar  
Second field course I

**Spring**
Methods II
Comparative Elective I
Third field course I

*Year 2:*

**Fall**
Comparative Elective II
Second field course II
Third field course II

**Spring**
Elective
Second field course III
Third field course III

*Year 3:*

**Fall**
Theory I
Methods Elective
Field exam in semester 5

**Spring**
Comparative Elective III (recommended)
Elective