

Intro + Approaches to Comparative Politics

Section 1

Adrian Scheibler

Gov 20: Foundations of Comparative Politics

Fall 2025

Overview

1. Introductions
2. Section Syllabus
3. Practical Guide
4. Discussion

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1. **Introductions**
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Introductions

- Name
- College year
- Hometown
- Reason for taking the class
- Something you're looking forward to this semester

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Section Syllabus

Section Website

[Home](#) [CV](#) [Research](#) [Teaching](#)

Course Schedule

Week 1 – Introduction and Approaches

Week 2 – Politics of Economic Development

Week 3 – Politics of Late Development

Week 4 – The State

Week 5 – Democracy and Democratization

Week 6 – Democratization and Democratic Breakdown

Week 7 – Authoritarianism and Populism

Week 8 – Social Revolution I

Week 9 – Social Revolution II

Week 10 – Institutions

Week 11 – Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict I

Week 12 – Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict II

Week 13 – Full Schedule

Gov 20: Foundations of Comparative Politics

Teaching Fellow: Adrian Scheibler

Sections: Thursdays at 1:30pm and 3pm in Room K108

Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:00am–12:00pm at Jenny's Cafe (Harvard Art Museums). Please sign up [here](#).

Contact: Email me at ascheibler@fas.harvard.edu. I will attempt to respond to emails within 24 hours except the day before a paper is due. All emails should have a subject line that begins with "Gov20:".

Section Syllabus: Please see the section syllabus [here](#).

Suggestion Box: I welcome suggestions at any point of the semester. Please submit (anonymously) [here](#).


Week 1 – Introduction and Approaches to Comparative Politics


- [Section 1 Slides](#)
- [Week 1 Recap](#)

Week 2 – Politics of Economic Development: Modernization Theory and its Alternatives

Section Suggestion Box

GOV 20: Section Suggestion Box

ascheibler@g.harvard.edu [Switch account](#) 

 Not shared

Is there a topic or an event that you would like to discuss this week?

Your answer

Is there a particular reading you would like to discuss this week?

Your answer

Please add any feedback you have about the section that would improve your learning experience.

Your answer

Submit

[Clear form](#)

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How to Read Social Science I

Some things to consider when reading:¹

1. What question is the author trying to answer? [*Question*]
2. Why is this question important? [*So what?*]
3. What is the author's answer? [*Hypothesis*]
4. How does the author support their answer? [*Evidence*]
5. What are the main arguments they argue against? [*Counterclaims*]
6. Are you convinced? Why or why not? [*Analysis*]

¹Adapted from Sima Biondi.

How to Read Social Science II

- Separate the argument from the evidence
- Be mindful of concepts and definitions
- Do not become stuck on minute details that obscure the main picture
- Take notes on readings to make life easier
- Attend the workshop next Monday (8. September) at 5pm in S010

How to Participate in Section

There are different ways to participate:²

- *Text Reviewer*: What does the text say?
- *Analyst*: What do you think about what the text says?
- *Respondent*: What do you think about your classmate's analysis of the text?
- *Synthesizer*: Where is this discussion going? What are we missing?

- Be willing to think aloud; it is alright to not have a polished idea
- Interact with others respectfully

²Adapted from Sima Biondi.

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- How do we define the state?

Upcoming Readings

- Reading list:
 - Weber
 - Lerner
 - Rostow
 - Gerschenkron
 - Inglehart and Welzel
- Challenges with older readings
- Next week we begin in earnest

Above all: Have fun!

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