This course presents an introduction to the study of comparative politics through a survey of the main theoretical debates and methodological approaches of the discipline. Upon completion of this course, students should have a general understanding of the historical development of intellectual trends in the study of comparative politics and an ability to articulate the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches. Critical thinking is stressed throughout the course, and students are encouraged to bring their own experiences and ideas into classroom discussion. After a brief introduction to key concepts and epistemological puzzles, the readings, lectures, discussions, and assignments are organized around four important themes of comparative politics: the state (including comparative institutions); democracy and democratization; social movements and collective action; and political culture. A range of methodologies will be examined for each theme, while other themes such as political economy, gender, and globalization will be examined throughout the course.

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