

LECTURE / DISCUSSION / DEBATE
INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS AND THE OTHER WORLD

Terms and concepts to know:

Authoritarian regime	Political development
Comparative method	Political economy
Comparative politics	Political ideology
Democracy	Political science
Elite theories	Politics
Empirical theory	Psychological theories
Normative theory	Rational choice theory
Patriarchy	Structuralism
Pluralist theories	Subcultures
Political culture	Theory

Study and discussion questions:

1. What are the different types of political systems and how much power do different people or groups have in them?
2. Do self-interest, beliefs, or underlying structural forces best explain how people act in the political realm?
3. What kinds of evidence can help us determine why political actors do what they do? Does the type of government they occupy make a difference in policy?
4. What can be learned from comparing political behavior and outcomes from across countries and nation-states?
5. Sam Pizzigati says that America should be more like Canada. What empirical evidence does he bring to his argument and is it sufficient in your opinion to adopt Canadian political, economic, and cultural ways? Do you think Canadians want to be more like Americans (or have institutional structures similar to ours?).
6. What is “democratic backsliding” and why does Portzer feel that as this phenomenon occurs in the U.S. it could have repercussions for other western industrialized democracies?
7. Explain LaPorte’s focus on “kleptocracy” and why she believes that there is a distinction between domestic and foreign sources of proceeds from bribery and how that can have effects on how various government officials deal with policy.

Readings:

Orvis / Drogus – Chapter 1

Video:

Where to Invade Next (first hour).