

Approaches to Comparative Politics

Section 1

Sima Biondi

Fall 2026

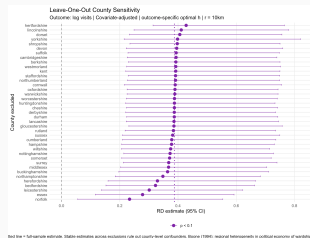
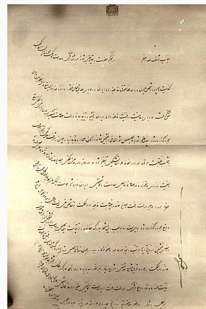
Gov 20: Foundations of Comparative Politics

- 1 Introductions
- 2 Review of section syllabus
- 3 Discussion

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About me

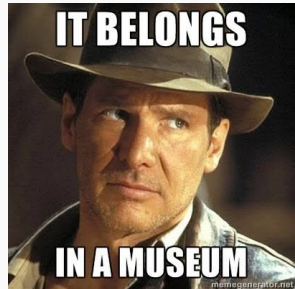
- Sima
- From San Francisco
- 5th year in the Government Department
- State building in 19th-century Egypt and Iran using statistical and computational methods



About me



99% of the time



1% of the time

Introduce yourself!

What's your:

- Name
- School year
- Hometown
- Most controversial food take

- 1 Introductions
- 2 Review of section syllabus**
- 3 Discussion

Review of website + section syllabus

Section website: <https://tinyurl.com/gov20sb26>

- ★ Office hours sign-up
- ★ Weekly recap
- ★ Section slides
- ★ Reading priority list for the following week

- 1 Introductions
- 2 Review of section syllabus
- 3 Discussion**

This week's readings

- David Samuels, Comparative Politics (Pearson, 2013), pp. 4-25.
- Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (Penguin 2002), pp. 1-36, 67-87, 105-122.

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As Professor Levitsky noted, this is a complex reading! So focus on the main argument and don't get bogged down in the details

How to read (speed version)

These questions help us decide what's important to identify in readings:

1. What question is the author trying to answer? *[question]*
2. What is the author's answer? *[hypothesis]*
3. How does the author support their answer? *[evidence]*
4. Why is this question important? *[so what?]*
5. What are the main arguments that the author is arguing against? *[counterclaims]*
6. Are you convinced by their argument? Why or why not? *[analysis]*

How to contribute to discussion

1. *Text Reviewer*: What does the text say?
 - Question
 - Hypothesis
 - Evidence
2. *Analyst*: What do you think about what the text says?
 - Counterclaims
 - So what?
 - Analysis
3. *Respondent*: What do you think about your classmate's analysis of the text?
4. *Synthesizer*: Where is this discussion going? What are we missing?

How to contribute to discussion



Learning how to read for Gov 20 is *really* important!

Let's practice

1. *Text Reviewer*: What does the text say?
 - Question
 - Hypothesis
 - Evidence
2. *Analyst*: What do you think about what the text says?
 - Counterclaims
 - So what?
 - Analysis

Let's practice

1. *Text Reviewer*: What does the text say?
 - Question
 - Hypothesis
 - Evidence
2. *Analyst*: What do you think about what the text says?
 - Counterclaims
 - So what?
 - Analysis



Don't be me



Be me!

Let's write them! Turn to your neighbor and brainstorm a couple of ideas:

- Section 1
- Section 2

Last thing!

On a note card please write down:

1. Why are you taking this class
2. One thing you found that previous instructors did that was:
 - Helpful to your learning
 - Not helpful

Recap

The goals of section this semester are: critical thinking in discussion and constructing written arguments

Next week readings: Gerschenkron 1962, review Weber 1905, Lerner 1958, Inglehart + Welzel 2005, Rostow 1960

Important links

- Section website
- Section syllabus
- Week 1 recap

sbiondi@g.harvard.edu