PSC/IR 262, 260W: Elections in Developing Countries

University of Rochester
Spring 2014
Mondays, 2:00-4:40pm
LCHAS, 104

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Overview

How do elections work in developing countries? Do contexts that are specific to countries in the developing world have implications for the nature and operation of electoral politics therein? In this course we will explore a number of issues that have particular relevance for elections in developing countries, including clientelism and vote-buying, electoral manipulation and fraud, ethnic voting, and electoral violence. In addition, we will consider how limited levels of information and political credibility affect both the operation of electoral accountability and the nature of electoral competition. In doing so, we will draw on examples from Africa, Latin America, and Asia.

Requirements

- Class participation – 10%
- Midterm – 25%
- Presentation – 25%
- Final exam – 40%

This is a seminar course, and therefore participation in class is essential. You are expected to complete at least the required readings so that you are able to engage effectively in the class discussion, which will be based in large part on theories and concepts introduced in the readings. The reading load is reasonable, but some of the material is technical, so you should give yourself ample time to work through it. Statistical expertise is not a prerequisite, but you will still be expected to understand the arguments and conclusions of the more technical articles.

To complement and inform the class discussion, each week we will have presentations by two students that will provide detailed information on a specific election. As such,
these case studies will present concrete examples that will enable us to flesh out and evaluate the theories and concepts introduced in the readings. Each presentation will last for 15-20 minutes, and will provide relevant background information about the country in question, along with a detailed narrative of the specific election under investigation. In addition, presenters should apply the conceptual material introduced in the readings to the case at hand, considering how applicable the theories and concepts are to the case, how they help us to understand it, and how the case itself may help us refine and develop the theoretical arguments. You will be expected to undertake a significant amount of independent research into the case, and should discuss it with me during office hours well in advance of the presentation. The presentation will contribute 25% of your overall grade.

There will be an in-class midterm exam in Session 7 (3/03) and a final exam at 4:00pm on Tuesday, May 6, which will contribute 25% and 40% of your overall grade, respectively. In the midterm you will be required to answer two essay questions, covering material from sessions 3-6. In the final you will be required to answer three short answer questions covering material from the entire course, and two essay questions covering material from sessions 8-14.

Students in the W sections: You are required to write a 3,500 word paper in which you compare and contrast two elections, one of which may be the same as that addressed in your presentation. Your comparative analysis should consider both how and why the two cases differ in relation to one of the key issues addressed during the course. Word counts should not include references. The essay is due in Session 10 (3/31). I shall correct and return it with comments in Session 12 (4/14), and a revised version will be due in Session 14 (4/28). The overall grades for students in the W sections will be based on: participation 10%, presentation 20%, midterm exam 20%, essay 25%, final exam 25%.

Exam Policy

The exams are closed book and closed note (meaning also no internet access and no cell phones). The exam dates are firm, and missed exams may only be re-taken under the following circumstances: (1) a death in the family, (2) participation in a University-sponsored academic or sporting event (extra-curricular events do not count), (3) an unforeseen medical emergency. In the case of (1) and (2), you must inform me within 24 hours of the exam that you will miss it. In some cases I may require supporting documentation (e.g. a doctor’s note) out of fairness to the other students.

Paper Extension Policy

Hard copies of papers must be turned in at the start of class on the due date (emailed versions will not be accepted). Extensions will only be granted in the case of: (1) a death in the family, (2) an unforeseen medical emergency. In case of such an emergency,
please let me know as soon as possible. In some cases I may require supporting documentation (e.g. a doctor’s note) out of fairness to the other students. *Turning a paper in late without an agreed extension will result in the loss of one third of one letter grade for every 24 hours that the paper is late.*

**Academic Honesty**

While I encourage you to discuss the course readings and assignments with your fellow students, all written work must be done independently. Papers require full citations listed in a consistent format. Lastly, all class activities must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester’s Academic Honesty Policy ([http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty](http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty)). Under UR rules I *must* report possible violations to the Board on Academic Honesty. Plagiarism is a very serious problem, and you should pay particularly close attention to the University’s rules on what constitutes plagiarism, and how to avoid it.

**Resources**

Reading materials will be available on blackboard, although many can be found easily online or in the library. In addition, the following represent useful resources for presentations and essays:

- [http://aceproject.org](http://aceproject.org)
- [http://www.ndi.org](http://www.ndi.org)
- [http://www.cartercenter.org](http://www.cartercenter.org)
- Lexis Nexis and Factiva search engines
COURSE SCHEDULE

Session 1 (1/20): Introduction
Why study elections? What is significant about the context of developing countries?
Readings:

Session 2 (1/27): An African Election (film)
What is distinctive about this election? How is it different from elections in the US?

Session 3 (2/03): Cheating
How and why do you rig an election? Is electoral fraud more likely in developing countries? Why? What are the implications for democracy? How can we measure fraud?
Readings:
- “How to rig an election” The Economist March 3rd 2012.
- “How to save votes” The Economist February 28th 2012.
- “Democracy 1, vote-rigging 0” The Economist April 14th 2011.

Session 4 (2/10): Ways to Prevent Cheating
What are the possible ways to prevent cheating? How effective are they? How can we measure the effect of efforts to prevent cheating?
Readings:
**Political Studies** 40(12): 1533-1556.


**Session 5 (2/17): Pre-Electoral Violence**

What are the different types of electoral violence? What is the purpose of pre-electoral violence? When does violence occur in the electoral cycle? How does violence affect elections? How can it be prevented? Is violence more likely in developing countries? Why?


*Readings:*


**Session 6 (2/24): Post-Electoral Violence**

Why do elections lead to violence? When are elections more likely to lead to violence? How can it be prevented? Should the international community intervene?


*Readings:*

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Session 7 (3/03): Midterm

Spring Break

Session 8 (3/17): Vote Buying
What is vote buying? How does it work? Whose votes get bought? How does it affect democracy? Is it more likely in developing countries? Why? How can we measure it? How can it be reduced?
Readings:

Session 9 (3/24): Clientelism
What is (and what isn’t) clientelism? How is it distinct from vote buying? Who gets targeted and how does it work? Why is it likely in developing countries? What does it mean for democracy? Should it be prevented? How? How can we measure it?
Readings:

Session 10 (3/31): Ethnic voting
What is ethnicity? How can we measure it? Why might people vote on ethnic lines? Is ethnic voting more likely in developing countries? Why? Does it matter?
Readings:
  • Chandra, Kanchan. 2006. “What is Ethnic Identity and Does it Matter?” Annual
Review of Political Science 9: 397-424.


Session 11 (4/07): Political parties
What role do parties play in elections in developing countries? Is it comparable to that in more developed countries/democracies? What do parties look like? Are they ideological, ethnic, mass-based or elite-led? What do party systems look like? Why do developing countries have such high levels of party system fragmentation and volatility? What does this mean for elections?
Cases: Kenya 1997, Mexico 2000
Readings:


Session 12 (4/14): Accountability 1
What do we mean by accountability? Why should we care about it? Why is it important in democracies? Why might formal electoral institutions not be sufficient for it to be realized? What are the obstacles to it in developing countries?
Cases: Ghana 2004, Honduras 2013
Readings:


**Session 13 (4/21): Accountability 2**

How can the obstacles to accountability in developing countries be overcome? To what extent does accountability operate in developing countries? What is the effect of democracy on the provision of public goods and services? How do we know this is related to accountability?

*Cases*: Uganda 1997, Mongolia 2013

*Readings:*


**Session 14 (4/28): Elections in Nondemocracies**

Why are elections held in non-democracies? Can electoral accountability operate in these contexts?

*Cases*: China.

*Readings:*

APPENDIX: Further Reading

Session 1 (1/20): Introduction

Session 3 (2/03): Cheating

Session 4 (2/10): Ways to prevent cheating

Session 5 (2/17): Pre-Electoral Violence

Session 6 (2/24): Post-Electoral Violence
Domestic Incentives for Post-Election Violence.” *Unpublished manuscript.*

**Session 8 (3/17): Vote Buying**


**Session 9 (3/24): Clientelism**


**Session 10 (3/31): Ethnic voting**


**Session 11 (4/07): Political parties**

**Session 12 (4/14): Accountability 1**


**Session 13 (4/21): Accountability 2**