IR 201: Comparative Legislatures and Executives
Monday and Wednesday, 12:30-1:45PM
Instructor: Olesya Tkacheva
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 2:00-3:00PM and by appointment
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Course description: Why do some countries enact policies that lead to economic growth and prosperity while others suffer from rampant corruption? What factors affect the durability of democratic governments? How do electoral rules impact policy outcomes? This course lays out the foundation for answering these and many other important policy questions by introducing students to the key tools of institutional analysis of public policy. The key objective of the course is to provide a thorough treatment of differences among governing institutions and to equip students with an analytical framework for understanding how these institutions induce certain types of behavior among office holders.

Evaluation:

- Class participation: 10%
  Students are expected to complete assign readings before the class and to participate in discussion.
- Midterm (October 19, 2009): 30%
- Final (December 16, 2009 at 7:15PM): 30%
- Policy paper (10-12 pages, double spaced,12-point font): 30%
  Students will write a policy paper that develops a reform agenda for countries currently facing economic or political crisis. The list of countries will be suggested by the instructor. This assignment will be completed in three steps. A two-page description of the project is due on September 30, 2009. A detailed outline is due on November 4, 2009. The final draft of the paper is due on December 7, 2009. No late papers will be accepted without a valid and documented reason.

Books Recommended for Purchase (available at the bookstore):


Other readings are available at the University of Rochester library e-reserve.

**Week 1: Introduction:**

No reading assigned

**September 7: No Class**

**Week 2 (September 9): Scope and Methods**


Suggested:


**Week 3 (September 14-16): Policy Process as a Collective Action Problem**


**Week 4 (September 21-23): Classifying Electoral Systems**

Clark, Golder, and Nadenichek Golder. *Principles of Comparative Politics*, Chapter 12


**Week 5 (September 28-30): Electoral Systems and Legislators’ Incentives**


Suggested:


**October 5: No Class (Fall Break)**

**Week 6 (October 7): Electoral Systems and the Provision of Public Goods**


Suggested:


**Week 7 (October 12-14): Electoral Systems and Corruption**


Suggested:


**Midterm Exam: October 19**

**Weeks 8 and 9 (October 21-28): Defining Presidential and Parliamentary Regimes**


**Week 10 (November 2-4): Regime Type and Democratization**

Clark, Golder, and Golder. 2009. *Principles of Comparative Politics*, pp. 743-762

America: Rethinking the Terms of the Debate.” In Presidentialism and Democracy in Latin America by Scott Mainwaring and Matthew Soberg Shugart, eds., pp. 12-54.

Jose Antonio Cheibub. 2007. Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, and Democracy, Ch. 1 & 6.


Suggested:


**Week 11 (November 9-11): Regime Type and Executive-Legislative Relations**


Jose Antonio Cheibub. 2007. Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, and Democracy, Chapter 4.

**Week 12 (November 16-18): Structural Constraints on Policy Making: Veto Players**


**Week 13 (November 23-30):** Regime Type and the Budget Process


**November 25: No Class**

**Week 14 (December 1-3):** Regime Type and Delegation


**Week 15 (December 7-9):** Regime Type and Regulatory Policy


**Final Exam: December 16 at 7:15 PM**