How and why do political parties emerge? What determines party success and failure? What are the causes and consequences of adopting different electoral rules? Under what conditions does strategic voting occur? What role do the economy, ideology, and partisan identification play in shaping the choices voters make? The goal of this seminar is to examine the classic and contemporary literature on political parties, electoral systems, and voting in comparative politics. We consider multiple methodological approaches to these topics and compare the dynamics of parties, elections, and voting across a range of empirical contexts, including old and new democracies and electoral authoritarian regimes.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

This course is a seminar. Students are thus expected to actively contribute to the discussion each and every week. This necessitates a careful reading of the material prior to the class. In preparing for class, students should think carefully about both the substantive and methodological aspects of each reading individually and in comparison with each other. Student responsibilities include leading discussion of one (or a subset) of the readings in each seminar, drawing the class into describing and comparing the readings substantively and methodologically. (There will be some flexibility about this depending on the size of the class and the readings for the week.) A one page handout of notes per reading should be provided. Grades will be based on these presentations and general class discussion (33%); the take-home “midterm,” (33%); and a take-home “final” (33%), covering the 2nd half of the course.

**Barring extraordinary circumstances, late exams will be marked down a third of a grade (for ex. A to A-) for each 24 hour period after they are due. Thus, if a paper is turned in any time during the first 24 hours after it is due, it is penalized a third of a grade. Any paper not turned in within a week of the assigned due date will automatically receive a zero.**

**REQUIRED READINGS**

In this course, we read a combination of books, book chapters and journal articles. Articles and book chapters will be available through Blackboard. The books for the course are listed below. One copy of each book will be on reserve in the library, but you will probably find it easier to purchase them.


Academic Honesty Policy
All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy. More information is available at: www.rochester.edu/college/honesty

In this course, the following additional requirements are in effect:
You are encouraged to discuss course readings with your fellow students. However, all written work – one-page handouts and exams – must be done independently and not in collaboration with another.

CLASS SCHEDULE

January 24: What is a Party?


January 31: Why Do Parties and Party Systems Emerge?


February 7: Party Systems


February 14: Party Positioning


February 21: Explaining Party Success and Failure I


Kitschelt, Herbert. 1994. The Transformation of European Social Democracy. Cambridge:
Cambridge UP. 112-49.


**February 28: Explaining Party Success and Failure II**

Meguid, Bonnie M. 2008. *Party Competition between Unequals: Strategies and Electoral Fortunes in Western Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. Chapters 1-4 plus 1 case study chapter (either ch 5, 6 or 7)


**March 7: New Parties and Political Challenges**

**Take-Home Midterm handed out in class. Due March 10 by noon.**


**March 14: no class; Spring Break**

**March 21: Voting I: Issue and Partisan Voting**


March 28: Voting II: Strategic and Expressive Voting


April 4: Voting III: Economic and Clientelistic Voting


April 11: Turn-Out


April 18: Institutional Rules


April 25: Electoral Aggregation


May 2: Emerging Research on Parties and Elections

Selected conference papers (TBA)

**Take-Home Final Exam handed out in class. Due TUESDAY, May 9 by noon.**